



Debates

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Wednesday, 19 February 2020

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Wednesday, 19 February 2020

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.

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration (Tissue Donor Acknowledgment) Amendment Bill 2020

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

Title read by Clerk.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (10.01): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Today I introduce the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration (Tissue Donor Acknowledgment) Amendment Bill 2020. This bill will amend the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act to provide two formal opportunities for recognition that a person was a tissue donor, at the written request of a next of kin. Before I go on I wish to clarify that the term “tissue”, under the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1978, includes organs and tissue. So, while, for clarity, I will use “organ and tissue donation” and “organ and tissue donor” in this speech, for the purposes of the act, and for anyone reading this bill, “tissue” is technically the encompassing term.

At any one time, there are around 1,400 Australians waitlisted for an organ or tissue transplant. Many more still are not yet waitlisted but would benefit from a transplant. But the decision to donate organs and tissue can be a difficult one. It can be a difficult decision if you are a living donor and it can be a difficult decision on the occasion of someone’s death, when the decision is ultimately for the family and where the circumstances which allow for organ and tissue donation usually mean that the death was sudden and unexpected.

Of course, being registered on the organ and tissue donor register helps inform a family of what their loved one’s desires are, and I absolutely encourage Australians and ACT residents to register. But, ultimately, in each state and territory in Australia the decision remains one for the family in these circumstances, a decision at a time when they are often in shock and only just beginning their grieving process. What it comes down to is that the decision to donate organs or tissue is a decision about the gift of life. Indeed, the decision often provides for gifts—plural—of life, with multiple lives often saved. It is only appropriate, then, that we in this jurisdiction provide opportunities for acknowledgement and recognition that are commensurate with, and reflect, the enormity and significance of the decision, and the enormity and significance of the gift.

In the ACT, there currently exist a number of avenues for acknowledgement and recognition of the decision and gift of organ donation, as well as opportunities for

awareness raising. This includes annual services of remembrance, one of which is being held this coming Saturday. There is also the annual Gift of Life walk being held next Wednesday, and now in its 14th year—an opportunity for awareness raising and commemoration—and there is the Gift of Life garden at the National Arboretum, a place of quiet reflection to acknowledge and commemorate organ and tissue donation.

It has been an honour and a privilege to attend these services and walks, and to have officially opened the Gift of Life garden in late 2018. However, donor families and advocates here in the ACT and across the country have raised with me that, apart from an acknowledgement letter, usually from the hospital via DonateLife, there are few formal, tangible avenues where the significance of the donation is acknowledged. As a result, some families have reported that they feel that the significant decision and the significant gift of organ donation are under-recognised.

So, with my very first private member's bill I am proposing to amend the legislation to go to some way to change that for families. I believe this is an Australian first. This bill creates a new section 38A in the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act to provide families with two formal opportunities to have the organ or tissue donation of their loved ones acknowledged. The first opportunity for recognition is that, on request in writing by a next of kin of the deceased person together with verifying information, the Registrar-General must include in the death register a statement that a person was a tissue donor, with "tissue" being the technical term for organs and tissue. The reason for including this in the death register is that only information that is in the death register can be included on a death certificate issued by the Registrar-General. So, on the occasion of the Registrar-General entering this information into the death register, families will then be able to apply for a death certificate which reflects that their loved one was a tissue donor.

"Verifying information" is very deliberately not defined in the bill. This is because what might be information that verifies the donation and the donor may change depending on the time and nature of the donation, but examples include acknowledgement letters and consent forms. The second opportunity is that, as part of the request for death register inclusion, the next of kin has an option of requesting a written acknowledgement from the Chief Minister, via the Registrar-General, provided that they do this in writing and provide their name and address.

The notion behind a letter from the Chief Minister is that it is a letter from the leader of the Australian Capital Territory personally acknowledging, on behalf of the ACT, the significance of the decision, and the significance of the gift of the person who had died, no matter whether the donation occurred while the deceased person was living, or on the occasion of death. Like the acknowledgement on the death register and then a death certificate, this would be formal, tangible. It would mean that the head of this jurisdiction not only was aware of the decision and the gift, but took the time to acknowledge it formally.

I need to stress two important aspects of these opportunities for formal acknowledgement. The first is that these opportunities are optional. I absolutely accept that, for some families, the acknowledgement they currently receive may well be sufficient, so there is no obligation for families to have these acknowledgements occur. They will only come about at the request of the next of kin.

The second aspect is that the family does not need to seek to have this recognition at a particular point in time; these opportunities are not time limited. This bill proposes that these opportunities for acknowledgement can apply in relation to a deceased person who was a tissue donor and whose death is, or is to be, registered under this act.

What this means in practice is that the family can make these requests for acknowledgements soon after the death has occurred, but also at a later date if they wish. No urgency is required in the decision about the acknowledgement. This provision also means that families in the ACT whose deceased loved one was an organ or tissue donor in the past will, if they wish, be able to have the death register updated to reflect this and, in turn, apply for an updated death certificate and seek an acknowledgement letter from the Chief Minister. These acknowledgement opportunities being optional, entirely up to the family and not time limited gives the family control and agency in deciding if, how and when they wish to have their loved one's donation recognised. It is entirely in the family's hands to decide what is appropriate for them.

Before I go to my concluding remarks, I want to briefly address some technical issues and questions that arise from this bill. The first is the question of privacy and having the tissue donor included on the register and having the Chief Minister receive these details. Because it is the family which makes one or both of the requests, and because it is done voluntarily only, the number of people with whom this information is shared is limited. The number of people who have access to the death register is also limited for a significant time period.

Second, I want to clarify that this bill does not cover body donations for medical purposes. I understand that institutions which receive body donations subscribe to consistent, national confidentiality standards and it appears that including body donations in this bill would require these institutions to step outside these standards, and that would require a longer conversation.

Third, because of the nature of the act that the bill is amending, the bill does not provide for circumstances where a next of kin only wants to receive an acknowledgement letter from the Chief Minister. The bill provides for the letter where the next of kin has first requested the acknowledgement on the death register. But there is nothing stopping the Chief Minister from establishing his own arrangement, whereby he is able to receive requests for an acknowledgement letter only, and this can be done outside legislation and communicated to families. So, at the conclusion of this speech, I will be writing to the Chief Minister to ask him to create this arrangement to sit beside this legislation in the event that the legislation passes.

Finally, the bill does not provide for what might be appropriate in an acknowledgement letter from the Chief Minister. Given the significance of the letter, and what it may mean for families, I will also be writing to the Chief Minister seeking that he engage with donor families and other stakeholders on what text might appropriately be included in letters that are written, so that the significance of the decision and donation might best be reflected in the most meaningful way.

There are many people I wish to acknowledge and thank, who have made contributions in the drafting of this bill, including a number of people who are in the gallery today. Thank you to the many families who have spoken to me about this, from advocating to answering my questions and sharing their very personal stories. I acknowledge that there are families here today, including Marjorie and Michael Taylor, the mother and brother of Annette, who was the first organ donor in the ACT at 11 years old. I believe this year will mark 45 years since Marjorie fought for the donation of Annette's kidneys in the absence of any legislation, and it means an enormous amount to have her and Michael here today.

Penny Mitchell—in many ways this is for her—has doggedly campaigned for years to have organ donation recognised on death certificates, not in the ACT but in Victoria. She collected thousands and thousands of signatures by sitting outside markets and shopping centres. Penny has done an enormous amount to raise the importance of this issue and she has been very generous with her time on what has been a difficult subject for her, particularly with the frustration of Victoria not having yet made a move on this.

Leanne Campbell shared her story at the inaugural Donor Families Australia conference last year, which drove home to me how critically important it is that we better support families. I thank the Gift of Life board, especially David O'Leary and former member Genevieve Jacobs, who were always available, helpful and encouraging as I put this proposal to them. I thank Donor Families Australia for their support and encouragement, and especially Professor Holly Northam, who is also here with us today, who absolutely crystallised the importance of the issue for me and has both guided me and been a sounding board, and received and responded to many e-mails and phone calls over quite a long period of time.

I thank Parliamentary Counsel Mary Toohey who has expertly navigated and interpreted my instructions on something that seems simple but was ultimately quite complex. Legislation is hard, and I have enormous respect for people who propose bills and especially those who draft them. Finally, I thank the Chief Minister who has been enthusiastic in his support for the proposal, which is pleasing because a good deal of it concerns his position.

I will conclude with some comments from families who have explained to me exactly what this would mean to them. One family said to me, "The donation of organs and tissue is a blend of great sadness and feelings of great hope for the recipients. The provision of a formal mechanism whereby families of donors can be comforted by the inclusion of the donation on the death certificate will add a very positive step in the grieving process."

Marjorie said, eloquently and simply, that it is about putting history in place. Helen Day, whose son Stewart died in a motorcycle accident in Canberra in the early 2010s, said that this is so very personal, and having the option will mean a lot. Helen said:

It would show he was able to help people. It's a personal thing and I know it may not be for everyone ... but for myself and others they would find it was helpful to have that acknowledgement.

Penny Mitchell said to me, “You don’t know what this means to me.”

Finally, Madam Speaker, there is one particular donor family I wish to acknowledge, which holds a very dear place in my heart. I will be frank; they were honest with me that they were not sure they would take up these opportunities for acknowledgement if they became available, but they stressed to me that it was having the option that mattered. That is what I am proposing in this bill—options. Some families might not wish to pursue these options, but the opportunity to have formal acknowledgement could and would mean the world to other families. I cannot overstate the significance of the decision to donate organs and tissue, let alone the significance of the gifts themselves. It is simply the right thing to do. It is the right thing to do, by these families and by these donors, to have more formal acknowledgement opportunities to reflect and emphasise the significance of these gifts—gifts of life. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Cost of living

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (10.18): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) after 19 years of Labor, thousands of Canberrans are struggling with the cost of living;
- (b) despite year after year of record revenue, the ACT Government has amassed \$3 billion of debt;
- (c) Canberrans are paying more than ever before for rates, taxes, fees and charges;
- (d) Canberra has the most expensive average rent in the country; and
- (e) the ACT Government is receiving record revenue from the Commonwealth; and

(2) calls on the Government to bring down the cost of living for families in Canberra.

In many ways, consistent with what Ms Cheyne has just said, there are some things that are central to what we are in this place to do and to achieve. Our primary function is to make the lives of Canberrans better. We are charged with the responsibility to improve this city and to do everything we can to ensure that Canberrans are having the best lives possible.

That is why the cost of living in this city should be central to our thinking in this place. At the moment, I am concerned about the thousands of Canberra families that are struggling because of the taxes, rates, fees, charges and other costs that exist in this city that are pricing them out of the market. It should not be the case that so many Canberra families cannot afford to live here. It should not be the case that people have

to go over the border to buy an affordable house. This jurisdiction collectively is letting down so many people, and so much of that is because of the punitive measures of this government.

After 19 years of Labor, we have 30,000 people in the ACT living below the poverty line. About 7,000 kids are living below the poverty line. That is what you get after two decades of Labor. I wonder if you asked people, including the then Chief Minister, in 2001, would you be satisfied that in 2020 there would be 30,000 people, including 7,000 kids living in poverty? Very few people would say yes.

We have had record revenue in this jurisdiction, year after year. We have had ample opportunity but, unfortunately, this government simply does not care. Right now, Canberrans are paying more than ever before for housing, and so much of that is due to this government's planning policy, land supply and particularly its rates and land tax policies. These policies are harsh, they are unfair and they disproportionately hurt people on low incomes. And this government does not seem to care.

Interestingly, you have a government of 14 members, including two Greens, and not a single one of them seems to object; not a single one seems to say, actually, maybe it is not quite right. Maybe our housing policies are not quite right. Of course, that would take some courage. It would take some conviction. But I, and so many other Canberrans, are so disappointed that not one of them is committed enough to the territory to raise that objection.

Why is it that we have the most expensive housing in the country when it comes to rent? Why is it that Canberra families have to go across the border in order to buy a house? It just should not be that way. It does not need to be that way. I want Canberrans to have higher expectations for their government, because Canberrans deserve a good government. They deserve a government that is on their team. Instead, we have a government that is far more interested in its own grandeur than in the welfare of the people it is meant to represent. That is why we have 30,000 people in the ACT living in poverty. That is why we have 7,000 kids living in poverty in the ACT.

The *ACT Cost of Living Report* of May 2019, put out by ACTCOSS, lists so many areas where people are being priced out of the market. Fuel prices in Canberra rose by 15 per cent in a year, from 2018. They have risen by 30 per cent over the proceeding decade. Energy prices in the ACT continue to increase above the national rate, with electricity prices rising by 11 per cent, from 2018 to 2019. Fuel and energy costs account for around 12 per cent of income in the lowest income households, compared to just four per cent of income in highest income households. What that means is that the energy policies we have in this city disproportionately affect those on lower incomes.

That is the same for so many of our policies. We also know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the territory, people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability and women are overrepresented in Canberra's low-income households. These are the losers of the government's policies. I accept that there will be a few winners along the way, but there sure are a lot of

losers. That is why we have 7.7 per cent of the total population of the ACT living in poverty, about one in 12. So, when you are driving around Canberra, every twelfth house is a family living in poverty.

Unlike many other cities and other jurisdictions, the geography and demography do not always match up in the ACT. You do not necessarily have whole regions or whole suburbs of disadvantaged like you might in some other cities. That means that so much of the disadvantage, so much of the poverty, is hidden. When it is hidden, it is so easy to be out of mind, because it is out of sight. That is why it is so important for people in this place to stand up for all these people who do not have a voice, all these people who are too proud to say that they are struggling, all these people who are being shamed by their community or by their government. We have to stand up for these people. There is an imperative that we do that.

I mentioned the cost of housing in the ACT. House rents at \$580 a week is the median in the ACT, which means it takes \$1,200 a fortnight after tax to pay for rent. It is staggering that people pay this, because they have to. I repeat: \$1,200 a fortnight after tax for housing in this city. That is what you get after 19 years of Labor. That is what you get after two decades of promises that never quite eventuate.

We must bring down the cost of living in this city. The Canberra Liberals are proud of our commitment to bring down the cost of living in this city. We believe it is incumbent upon us, as the Opposition, and of a competing party in this election year to present the alternative. That alternative is making sure that there is affordable housing in this city, making sure that there are fewer people living in poverty, making sure that the kids of today can afford to live in this city tomorrow.

As Mr Stanhope has said, Labor has gone from representing the bottom two quintiles to representing the top two quintiles. Labor simply does not care. In many ways, I think Labor members are ashamed of their working-class base or they are taking those people for granted. Right across Canberra, there would be thousands of people weighing up whether Labor has served them well since 2001, and what is the trajectory? Is the trajectory good or is it bad?

I think there would be very few people who would think that Labor members are somehow going to turn the ship around and suddenly start caring for all these people that they had forgotten about. The Canberra Liberals are committed to bringing down the cost of living for everyone in the ACT and we will do everything we can to ensure that this is achieved.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tertiary Education, Minister for Tourism and Special Events and Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment) (10.29): I move the amendment circulated in my name:

Omit all text after “(1) notes”, substitute:

- “(a) that Canberrans enjoy a quality standard of living due to earning the highest median incomes in the country, access to free healthcare, free education, and well-planned and delivered infrastructure;

- (b) that the ACT unemployment rate in December 2019 of 3.1 percent is the lowest rate of all jurisdictions;
 - (c) that the ACT annual employment growth rate, at 3.3 percent, is the highest of all jurisdictions, representing 7500 jobs created in the ACT in 2019; and
 - (d) that Canberrans pay among the lowest charges for electricity in the country;
- (2) also notes that the ACT Government:
- (a) through the mid-year budget review, has stepped in to provide financial support to the Canberra community at a time of economic uncertainty;
 - (b) has set the payroll tax threshold at the highest in the country, meaning most ACT businesses pay no payroll tax;
 - (c) has abolished stamp duty for eligible first home buyers;
 - (d) currently offers a range of initiatives to assist Canberrans with household expenses;
 - (e) acknowledges the cost of fuel remains a significant expense for motorists and is actively pursuing a range of measures to bring down retail fuel prices;
 - (f) has made investments into renewable energy which is predicted to bring down electricity costs for consumers;
 - (g) has made significant investment into infrastructure that will ensure that we have the essential services our population needs as it continues to grow;
 - (h) has continued to invest in nurse-led walk-in centres in the ACT which provide free medical treatment to support Canberran families;
 - (i) has continued the rollout of universal three-year-old education; and
 - (j) has provided over 20 000 Chromebooks to ACT public school students and will continue to provide all ACT public school students in Years 7 to 12 with a free Chromebook device;
- (3) further notes:
- (a) research shows that the Commonwealth Government's Newstart allowance is one of the lowest unemployment benefits in the developed world; and
 - (b) reckless cuts to revenue will reduce Canberrans' quality of life, by reducing services, cutting staff, or halting necessary projects for a growing city; and
- (4) calls on the ACT Government to continue to invest in essential services and economic infrastructure, while working with the community to effectively reduce cost of living expenses."

The amendment circulated in my name goes to highlight the importance of strong economic growth, low unemployment, targeted assistance to those most in need, and highlights a range of initiatives the government has put in place to provide financial support to the Canberra community at a time of economic uncertainty.

We are very proud of our record of job creation for this city, and it is important that this debate also encompasses the effort to ensure that people remain in long-term, stable, secure employment. And the government has pursued policies over an extended period that go both to encourage the creation of new jobs in our economy and to make jobs, particularly low paid jobs in our economy, more secure over the longer term.

It was very pleasing to see that the ACT had the nation-leading level of employment growth with 7½ thousand jobs created in calendar year 2019 and an employment growth rate of 3.3 per cent which leaves every other state and territory in our wake and comes at a time when the national economy has not been performing particularly well. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the nation and we have more job vacancies in Canberra than we have unemployed people at this point in time. And that reflects the government's focus on jobs.

Nothing will assist a family more in addressing cost of living than having stable, secure, long-term employment. And nothing supports a family more, particularly those who rely on penalty rates to assist them to meet their household budget, than having policies in place to support that consistent, secure, long-term employment. For the opposition leader, whose party has mounted a national campaign against penalty rates for low income workers, to come in here with that speech reflects very poorly on the values of the conservative parties in this nation.

I note the ACTCOSS report that the Leader of the Opposition referred to. It goes to great lengths to point out that those most in need in our society and in our city, just as in every other Australian city, are those who are statutory benefit receivers from the commonwealth. And they go to great lengths to highlight the need for an increase in the Newstart payment.

It is not just that particular commonwealth payment that has not been keeping pace with inflation in this nation. There has not been a real increase in Newstart for 25 years. That is why my amendment goes to highlight that significant issue, and a significant and practical thing that could be done to support thousands of Canberrans who are on the Newstart allowance would be for that to increase. That is why I have been calling for that for quite some time.

The amendment I have moved also goes to highlight the range of assistance that the ACT government provides and the range of new policy initiatives in place to address some of the issues that were raised in the ACTCOSS report and, indeed, have been highlighted by Canberrans.

We acknowledge that the cost of fuel has been a problem—it is not just in Canberra, it is across the nation—but we have some specific market factors in our city that have led to higher prices. We had a constructive parliamentary committee process that made a series of sensible recommendations that the government is adopting and we are already seeing the benefits of that. And you can now buy fuel at a variety of independent retailers up to 20c a litre cheaper than what some of the major fuel companies are selling fuel at. It is worthwhile noting that during the committee's

inquiry and during the work that the ICRC is undertaking, Canberra's fuel prices were, in fact, lower than those experienced by Sydney motorists.

In relation to energy, I do not think that we need to canvass this morning all the reasons why energy costs in this nation are higher than they should be, but the lack of investment certainly is one factor. Another is the ongoing civil war inside the Liberal and National parties in relation to renewable energy and the need for there to be a more secure investment framework and some clear national energy policy to guide new investment in energy production.

The cheapest new energy to produce in this nation now is renewable energy. And that is why this year we achieved our 100 per cent renewable energy target and why we will see, as the ICRC has already foreshadowed, the already low electricity prices in the ACT comparable with across the border in Queanbeyan and, indeed, in other parts of the nation, are going to fall further as a result of our investment and our encouragement of investment in renewable energy.

Until the Leader of the Opposition's speech just then it was assumed that this was a tripartisan position but the Leader of the Opposition has just signalled in his speech a deviation from what was previously Canberra Liberals' policy, as we understood it, to be in support of 100 per cent renewable electricity for our city. The Leader of the Opposition in his remarks just then has suggested that that policy that was previously supported by the Canberra Liberals has somehow been the cause of an increase in energy prices in the ACT when in fact what the ICRC have just released in their forecast for electricity prices for the coming fiscal year is that it will be our renewable energy generation that will contribute to a near seven per cent reduction, an anticipated near seven per cent reduction, in electricity prices in the territory.

Now that the Leader of the Opposition has signalled that it is no longer Canberra Liberals' policy to support renewable energy production we obviously have a new point of difference in territory politics on the future of energy and how it should best be produced to ensure lower prices for Canberrans longer term, but also sustainability and environmental responsibility and responding to climate change are, again, issues of significant political difference in the ACT. I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has put that on the public record. I suspected that was always his view and he has now confirmed that in this debate this morning.

As we look to other measures that the government has introduced to reduce cost of living, one that comes to mind, because it started just this month, is the new motor accident insurance scheme that was opposed by the Leader of the Opposition. The contribution that that makes to simpler, fairer and more effective coverage for those injured in motor vehicle accidents has been canvassed extensively through numerous debates in this place.

But importantly what we are seeing, and what Canberra motorists are experiencing, is that the previous scheme in today's dollars had premiums as high as \$680. What we are now seeing is premiums down in the \$460, \$470 range, nearly a couple of hundred dollars a year saved by every Canberra motorist on their CTP insurance. That is in

effect now. That is another practical example of what the government has been able to do to put downward pressure on cost of living in this city.

We have also worked diligently to remove the stamp duty burden for first home buyers. Young people face barriers to entry into the housing market not just in this city but across the nation. But there is one government in this country that has been focused over a number of years on reducing the burden of stamp duty—one of the worst taxes levied in Australia, one that significantly impacts on people's ability to get into the housing market. That is a practical and tangible benefit that is saving households not only thousands and thousands of dollars upfront but means that their mortgage repayments are less each week, each fortnight or each month because they are not paying interest on stamp duty.

On the other side of the equation is what government can do in terms of universal service provision, and that is why my amendment goes to highlight the importance of the provision of free public health, public education services for this community as well as the range of community service initiatives, programs and support available. We run an extensive concession scheme that assists low income households in the territory, and that scheme has been refined in recent times to further direct benefits particularly to low income rental households who previously were not receiving the same level of benefit from the utilities concession, for example.

We continue to invest in community-based health initiatives—nurse-led walk-in centres as an example—to provide free medical treatment to support Canberra families. The Deputy Chief Minister is leading work on the rollout of universal three-year-old preschool education. And there is the provision of Chromebook technology for students across our public school system to support them through their learning in a way that ensures that low income households do not miss out on access to that technology.

As I have noted, the commonwealth government's Newstart allowance is a problem. It is not sufficient and is one of the lowest unemployment benefits in the developed world.

What we face this year is, of course, a choice, a choice around policy direction and a choice around how the government budget is used to support public services and public infrastructure and how we can best direct available resources both to assist low income households and also to invest in the public infrastructure that is necessary for a more equitable society. The amendment calls for the government to continue to invest in essential services and economic infrastructure whilst working with the community to effectively reduce cost of living expenses.

There are a number of measures that the government has announced and that the government has delivered over this parliamentary term and, indeed, prior to this term of government. And there are more initiatives we can put into place, which we will, to respond to circumstances in the first part of the decade ahead. The amendment that I have moved reflects the work that the government has undertaken, acknowledges that there are challenges ahead but also goes to focus on the work that the government has undertaken in order to address those specific challenges.

I commend the amendment to the Assembly. It represents the government's views in relation to a range of new services that we can provide, the range of initiatives that we already have underway and, I think importantly, provides some very practical and tangible examples of how our policies are saving households hundreds and hundreds of dollars each year. Whether you are a motor vehicle owner, a user of energy, the beneficiary of one of the many concessions that apply across a range of ACT government services, if you are looking to buy your first home, if you are a renter from a private landlord and you receive a range of additional benefits associated with your utility use that you did not receive previously, all of these are practical measures that go to support low income households in this territory but, most importantly, support income, what people receive by way of statutory benefits from the commonwealth if they do not have employment. Having a long-term, secure job and having access to penalty rates are important measures that the government also influences. These are things that we should be talking more about.

I note that the Leader of the Opposition has been completely silent on the adequacy of Newstart, completely silent in advocating for workers to be able to access penalty rates. In fact, his party has led the charge to see people's incomes reduced, and the stated policy of the commonwealth government was to see wage growth reduced. They have certainly achieved that. (*Time expired.*)

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.45): In focusing on these issues today, I would particularly like to start by acknowledging that poverty and hardship in Canberra are important issues and ones that we Greens take very seriously. We always have, and we will continue to stand up for people who are struggling in Canberra. That is why, in our time in the Assembly, we have pursued a whole range of policies, legislation and other advocacy to improve the lives of people who are in financial need in the ACT.

Let me give you a couple of examples. Through our parliamentary agreements we have implemented mobile dental services to improve health care for low income Canberrans. We introduced free bus travel for seniors and concession cardholders during the off-peak period. We have introduced and expanded the flexible bus service, primarily for elderly Canberrans. We have created an affordable rental real estate management model through Community Housing Canberra, and co-housing projects through an affordable housing innovation fund.

We have increased the problem gambling assistance fund levy to better support projects and research that help reduce the harms associated with problem gambling in the community. We have introduced a range of energy concessions and the energy efficiency improvement scheme to reduce energy bills for Canberrans. We have developed the Common Ground housing project for people experiencing homelessness, and we established the Street Law service for people experiencing homelessness.

These are just a few examples of real and practical policy changes that the Greens have secured through our parliamentary agreements. There are many more, and there are also many bills and motions that we have moved in this place over the years to support people who are struggling financially.

Unfortunately, in light of the remarks he has made today, it is necessary to reflect on the position that Mr Coe and the Liberal Party have frequently taken that stands in the way of these kinds of reforms. For example, the Liberal Party did not support Greens legislation that implemented a variety of flexible payment options to assist people who are struggling to pay traffic fines and parking fines because of their circumstances. Those are changes supported strongly by the ACT community sector, including ACTCOSS, which Mr Coe cited this morning, the organisations that deal with people who are financially struggling, and that see the spiral of hardship that these fines can cause.

The Liberals did not support the payment of fines by community work or social development programs. Mr Coe also said that the Canberra Liberals do not support the waiving of fines, not even in special circumstances, even when someone might be homeless, have a serious illness, be financially destitute or have some other life circumstance. That is a harsh position but it is also an inconsistent position, which makes the harshness even more stark, because in other circumstances the Liberal Party do advocate for the waiving of fines. For example, in instances where people have received parking tickets for parking illegally at school fetes or at cricket matches, the Liberal Party have advocated for all of those fines to be waived.

That really makes one wonder what the underlying philosophy is here. Mr Coe says that the Liberal Party will not support the waiving of fines, not even in special circumstances. That could be, for example, a person in severe financial hardship who has no home, who is living in their car and who receives a parking fine. But in other situations the Liberal Party are happy to argue for blanket waivers. Maybe it is just a populism thing or maybe there is a deeper philosophy. I will leave it to others to speculate on the motivations.

The second example that I want to highlight is the Liberal Party's opposition to the government's energy efficiency improvement scheme. The Canberra Liberals say they support low income households, but they recently voted against the legislation to continue this important and effective scheme. This is a scheme that recently won a national award for its effectiveness in supporting low income households. It has already saved \$15 million off the energy bills of ACT low income households, and over the lifetime of the scheme it is expected to deliver \$240 million in savings for households and businesses. These are real cost of living savings, yet Mr Coe and his Liberal colleagues voted against this scheme, a position that flies in the face of their claim to support low income people and to want to help people with their household costs.

An issue you always hear the Greens raise in the context of cost of living is the issue of climate change. Unchecked climate change is an economy destroyer. People who care about social equity should care about climate change because it is the most vulnerable in our communities that are most impacted, and we saw that through the course of this summer. The spiralling costs to communities from extreme climate change scenarios are astronomical, and we all have to pay.

Ms Le Couteur mentioned this in the recent MPI on cost of living. One of the great things about taking steps to combat and prepare for climate change is that these steps also reduce costs for members of our community. For example, houses that are built to be efficient and keep out the heat from rising temperatures are also houses that are cheaper to operate, so they have lower energy bills. The Greens have emphasised this repeatedly and there is plenty of research that demonstrates it. Taking action on climate change is a net economic positive and, when done well, it is good for people's cost of living.

Members will have seen the recent positive news that renewable electricity is predicted to reduce the average Canberra household's electricity bill in the next year, on average by \$113 per year. That is from the draft determination from the ICRC, who have made their proposal for next year's standard energy prices. That is a 6.75 per cent reduction or 8.1 per cent in real terms. The reasons for that are a bit complicated. The increase in renewable generation capacity in Australia has reduced the cost of national green schemes, as well as wholesale energy purchase costs. But the point remains that making the switch to renewables is good for both the environment and people's hip pockets.

I find the actions of the Liberal Party disappointing and disingenuous because by opposing climate change action they are also opposing measures that will improve the cost of living for Canberrans. The Liberal Party might say they support climate change action because they recognise that that is what the Canberra community wants. But their actions constantly belie those statements. When the government released its new climate change strategy, the Liberal Party attacked it and went to some lengths to wage a disinformation campaign.

They have made false and deceptive claims that "the government will ban cars" or that it will "disconnect your gas". This is simply a diversion from the real policy issues of climate change and fairness, and these are tests which the Liberal Party fail. It also fails to recognise that reaching zero net emissions—a policy they claim to support—actually requires phasing out fossil fuels like gas and changing Canberra's transport patterns.

While the Liberal Party make occasional platitudes about believing in climate change or about caring for financially disadvantaged Canberrans, they are actually wolves in sheep's clothing. Their actions reveal their true ideology. They will make accusations or speak in platitudes, but the real commitment to helping vulnerable Canberrans is not there.

The last issue I want to mention is Mr Coe's campaign about freezing rates and other taxes, as if this is a panacea for financial hardship. It is not: it is actually a ruse. Firstly, in freezing rates and taxes, Mr Coe is promising to freeze the government's revenue, even as the population in Canberra grows and the need for services increases. The question then is: which services will be cut to pay for this? Public transport? Hospital beds? Rangers? Environmental programs? Perhaps all of the above. The community deserves these answers, because you cannot cut revenue and not cut services. There is no magic pudding. I call on the Canberra Liberals to be absolutely transparent about this as we head towards October's polling day.

Secondly, this magic pudding problem is exacerbated by the fact that the Liberal Party is promising a whole lot of extra things, such as the return of school buses, primarily for private schools that are already covered by other routes. Again, returning these school buses means taking buses from other routes, so which routes will be cut? The community needs to know this.

Thirdly, as most of us know, the progressive tax reform program that has led to rate rises is contingent on the abolition of other taxes in the ACT, such as stamp duty. The question for Mr Coe is: will he be reinstating all of those other taxes? Will stamp duty go up again? Will insurance tax come back? Certainly, if stamp duty goes up again, that is not good for first home buyers, and if stamp duty is to be abolished then it is just another slice of Mr Coe's magic pudding, and the question is: which services will be cut in return?

Fourthly, I urge Mr Coe not to overlook the fact that a large proportion of Canberrans do not pay rates. They are not property owners. These are people like renters, and we saw recently how the Liberals opposed reforms to offer more rights to renters. The non-ratepayers also include a large cohort of people who are genuinely struggling with disadvantage. They might be single mums, survivors of domestic violence, people with a disability, homeless people or people sleeping rough, people who have addiction or mental health issues, people who have been incarcerated, and others.

I do not believe that Mr Coe and the Liberals are interested in policies to help these people. Just as Mr Coe said he would not waive fines for people who are genuinely falling through the cracks and struggling in our society, but rather said he would waive fines for people who park illegally at the school fete, the Liberal approach appears to be one of populism and electioneering. The Greens will be supporting the amendment moved by Mr Barr.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.55): Canberra is a beautiful place in which to live, and we are very lucky. But Canberrans are hurting, and people in Tuggeranong are hurting. I know this because at every mobile office that I hold at a shopping centre people tell me about cost of living pressures. With every door I knock on, people talk about cost of living pressures. At every school fete I attend, people talk to me about cost of living pressures. At every sporting event I attend, people talk to me about cost of living pressures. At every meeting I hold, people talk about cost of living pressures.

After 19 years of this Labor government, Canberrans are struggling with the cost of living. Many of us are fortunate. Many of us have a privileged position in terms of the income that we have. But that is not the case for every Canberran, and we cannot let our own privileged position poison our view of how people out there in the suburbs of Tuggeranong are suffering.

After year after year of record revenue, the ACT government has still amassed \$3 billion in debt. Canberrans are paying more than ever before in rates, taxes, fees and charges. Let us not forget that we have the most expensive average rent in the country, and the ACT government is receiving record revenue from the commonwealth. We cannot keep blaming external factors, as the Chief Minister likes

to do. It is time to stop blaming the commonwealth. It is time to acknowledge that the cost of living pressures in Canberra are a result of the deliberate actions of 19 years of this government.

We want to make sure that Canberra is and remains the best place to live, work and raise a family, but how can we do that when so many of our residents are suffering under the skyrocketing cost of living? We have the highest rents, the most expensive petrol, the highest costs for owning and running a car, the highest gas prices, the highest childcare prices, and the second highest land prices. These things will disproportionately hurt people on low incomes. Do not forget that 7.7 per cent of our population are living in poverty. I especially acknowledge the effect on older people and people on fixed incomes of these skyrocketing fees, charges, taxes and rates.

Since 2012 Labor have tripled our rates. Rates have increased from \$209 million in 2011-12 to \$652 million in the 2020-21 year. In the 2019-20 budget, rates for houses and rural properties increased by seven per cent, rates for unit-titled properties increased by 11 per cent and land tax increased by seven per cent. For the first time in Canberra's history, a government, this Labor-Greens government, will collect revenue exceeding \$7 billion, yet they are borrowing record amounts. Under Labor, Canberrans will be paying interest on these borrowings for decades, further adding to increases in their costs of living.

Let us not forget that the 2015 *Dropping off the edge* report on persistent and entrenched hardship indicated the postcodes of disadvantage in the ACT. 2620—Tuggeranong—was one of those postcodes of disadvantage in the ACT. 2905—Bonython and Chisholm—was also a postcode of disadvantage. In the next chunk below, not quite so disadvantaged but still making the list, was 2902—Kambah.

It is worth noting that in the 2007 report only the Tuggeranong 2620 postcode was in that list of the most disadvantaged. Between the 2007 report and the 2015 *Dropping off the edge* report, Bonython, Chisholm and Kambah have come onto the list. No wonder people in Tuggeranong tell me they are struggling with the cost of living; it is quite apparent from the data.

In Tuggeranong the importance of reducing the cost of living is even more evident. Not only are our costs of living increasing but services are diminishing. People tell me that they feel like they are paying more and getting less. Tuggeranong residents are sick and tired of this. They are sick of the increases in costs and at the same time the reduction in services. They are sick and tired of feeling neglected.

Our commitment is to bring down the cost of living, and Canberrans deserve this, not only for those who are most disadvantaged but for many in that middle tier in Canberra who are struggling. We believe in reducing the costs of living for Canberra families. Freezing rates is one way that we can do this. Better management of the budget overall will also bring that benefit to struggling families right across our city.

MR GUPTA (Yerrabi) (11.02): I am pleased to speak to Mr Coe's motion on the cost of living in Canberra. Canberra is an inclusive, progressive and connected city, but we know that cost-of-living pressures weigh more heavily on some Canberrans than

others. The ACT government wants to ensure that Canberrans can enjoy our beautiful city; this is why the government provides concession, rebate and payment plans to make sure that the everyday cost of living does not derail the wellbeing of any family or individual.

Ensuring that the cost of living is sustainable for Canberrans is a priority of the 2019-20 budget, with several measures being introduced across multiple portfolios to help Canberrans financially.

The government has introduced a number of initiatives aimed at reducing utility costs, particularly for low income families, because we understand that utility costs can weigh heavily upon the family budget. This includes a utilities concession of up to \$700 a year, which is available to eligible concession card holders to help them with water, electricity and gas bills. This concession is one of the most generous in Australia, as it combines water and electricity into a single concession and provides equal support to both home owners and tenants.

The government also partners with ActewAGL to fund the energy support fund, which makes energy vouchers available to community groups, giving extra assistance to some of the most vulnerable Canberrans in paying energy bills such as those for heating in Canberra winters.

The government has continued to maintain price regulation of water services, as well as retail electricity prices, in order to ensure that prices remain reasonable for all members of the community.

We also provide a free home visit assessment service, which helps households to identify ways to reduce their energy and water consumption, and includes free draught-proofing for Canberrans on low or fixed incomes. This allows consumers to make choices to reduce their consumption bill and empowers Canberrans.

Additionally, the government has introduced the energy efficiency improvement scheme as part of the ACT's transition to a zero-emission future. Under the scheme, energy retailers assist households to implement energy saving measures. The scheme focuses on low income households. We are also working on introducing minimum energy performance standards for rental properties, further assisting tenants with lowering their energy costs.

As well as supporting Canberrans with utility costs, we provide extensive support to reduce the costs of transport, particularly for Canberrans on low or fixed incomes. This includes free vehicle registration and drivers licence renewal for pensioners who hold pension concession cards, and either a 50 or 65 per cent discount for Canberrans on Newstart. We also reduce the cost of transport by providing free public transport for eligible seniors and concession card holders, and we have reduced the age of eligibility from 62 to 60, allowing more Canberrans to access these concessions.

In light of the recent hailstorm and the subsequent damage to around 30,000 vehicles, the government has announced that it will assist with government fees and charges Canberrans may have to pay in order to get back on the road. In particular, we will

provide a motor vehicle stamp duty rebate of up to \$100 for eligible vehicles, rebates for registration transfer fees and roadworthiness inspections, and backdating of registration cancellations. These measures should be in place by the end of February this year.

We recognise that fuel costs are a concern for many Canberrans. Following investigations into the ACT fuel market, the government will be asking the ICRC to regularly monitor, analyse and report on the Canberra fuel market, to allow increased transparency and accountability around fuel prices. We continue to explore further possibilities to reduce fuel costs, including further efforts to increase competition in the market as well as potentially joining the existing New South Wales FuelCheck scheme, which requires retailers to deliver real-time petrol pricing information to consumers.

Further, the government will provide cheaper parking at Canberra Stadium by reducing early bird parking fees to \$5 for major fixtures, half the cost of regular parking.

The ACT government understands that financial pressures weigh on some more heavily than on others. We know that people with young families face unique challenges. As someone who has raised a young family, I understand the challenges of raising a young family. It is a stressful enough task, and financial burdens exacerbate this stress. This is why the government provides support with education costs for low income earners who are supporting full-time dependent students. We also assist with dental services for children and young people, as well as for adults and seniors holding Centrelink cards.

The ACT government is committed to assisting small business. In recent months, small businesses, both in Canberra and throughout the region, have faced a loss in revenue due to bushfires and, more recently, concerns over coronavirus. I have spoken to many business owners in Gungahlin who have seen a huge drop in trade over the past few months.

In order to combat this, the government has introduced a free 12-month trial for any new applicants for an outdoor dining period, allowing those applicants to offset some of the many costs associated with opening a new business. We are also giving a 50 per cent discount to businesses who already hold an outdoor dining permit, which will save thousands of dollars for businesses, and help cafes, restaurants and bars which have been negatively impacted by the many challenges the territory has faced this summer.

In conclusion, Canberra is a progressive and inclusive city. We understand that some Canberrans face more financial challenges than others. We are working to alleviate some of these challenges through government initiatives so that all Canberrans can live in and enjoy our beautiful city.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11.09): What

we see here today with this motion is Mr Coe replicating the actions of his conservative idol Mr Tony Abbott. The words he spoke are the very hollow ones that Mr Abbott spoke in opposition. He then proceeded to cut support for the most vulnerable Australians when in office. This playbook must not be replicated. This opposition leader's fondness for Mr Abbott extends to laziness and mendacity.

I draw the chamber's attention to the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission's media release of 4 February this year. It says:

The Commission's draft decision, based on data to 29 January, estimates that a typical customer on ActewAGL's standing offer contracts could expect to see a 6.75 per cent reduction in average retail electricity prices in 2020-21 ...

We are achieving this at a time when this city is powered by 100 per cent renewable electricity.

Madam Assistant Speaker, Mr Coe is not fit to govern, let alone lead anything. No wonder there were so few of his colleagues in the chamber when he moved this motion. And it is his set motion this week.

Contrast Mr Coe's motion to the amendment moved by the Chief Minister and the chief's remarks. They show a comprehensive step that this government is taking to help all Canberrans. I am proud of this government's economic achievement and the fact that they have more job vacancies here in the ACT than job seekers in this city.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (11.10): I am grateful to Mr Coe for moving this very important motion in the Assembly today. Far too many families and households in the Ginninderra electorate are worried about Canberra's soaring cost of living, often deeply so. As this motion notes, Canberrans are paying more than ever before for rates, taxes, fees and charges. As we also know, cost-of-living increases disproportionately affect lower income households.

On average, those living in my electorate have the territory's lowest income. Our Belconnen households take home nearly \$200 less per week than the territory average, but they are paying only \$13 less per week to service their mortgages and only \$20 less per week on rent. That means that people in the Ginninderra electorate are facing many of the same expenses as their neighbours but have less in their pockets to meet those expenses. This puts enormous pressure on families and individuals.

And after 19 years, our tired old Labor-Greens government seems to have no clue how much people are suffering or what the government should be doing to make things better. As a result, the cost of living in the ACT continues to go up at a rate far greater than in other jurisdictions. In the past year, housing costs in Canberra increased 4.8 per cent compared to a national average of 1.5 per cent. At the same time, utility bills in Canberra soared 5.9 per cent compared to only two per cent nationally, and transport costs increased 4.8 per cent compared to 2.8 per cent elsewhere.

Those opposite may want to dismiss these increases as a few dollars here and a few dollars there. After all, it was Chief Minister Barr who laughed off increased parking costs by claiming that they were less than “the price of a bottle of sparkling mineral water at some of our high-end restaurants”. Such sneering disdain for Canberrans and their daily struggle to keep a roof over their heads and food on their tables should receive no welcome in this Assembly or by the public.

The people in my electorate know all too well that even small increases in parking, transport, electricity, gas, water, rent, car registration, property rates and so forth all add up. This government’s determination to continually increase the cost of doing business makes both goods and services more expensive for everyone. The end result is extreme hardship.

I know what I am talking about, Madam Assistant Speaker. After moving to Canberra, my husband and I struggled for years to pay our rent. We skipped heating our home in winter. We fed our children two-minute noodles and leftover bread that we picked up from our Belconnen bakery after it closed. We shared the bread with dozens of other families in similar or worse circumstances.

People in my electorate are hurting. People across this territory are hurting. This motion calls on the Barr government to bring down the cost of living for families in Canberra. Simply put, Madam Assistant Speaker, we have had enough. On behalf of the people of Belconnen, I add my voice to the voices of my Liberal colleagues in support of this motion.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (11.15): I am happy to speak on this motion today, particularly on the Chief Minister’s amendment to Mr Coe’s motion. I want to start with the Chromebooks that the ACT government has been providing to senior school students in the ACT, because not only does this improve equality within our ACT government schools but it means that teachers do not have to navigate across, and troubleshoot across, a number of devices, that they can have some expertise across one and not spend so much time away from the class.

It also, obviously, removes that burden of decision-making from families, but particularly that financial burden that families have to bear each year when they start school. That initiative is a \$400 support that the ACT government provides to senior secondary students in our ACT government schools that would otherwise be a cost to families in the ACT. I wonder if the support for the provision of Chromebooks, the textbooks of today, will be supported and continued by the Canberra Liberals. We have been rolling that out now for three years, with over 20,000 Chromebooks delivered, relieving that financial burden on families in the ACT.

In addition to that, education should not be a financial burden on families in the ACT. Additional support for those families that need it is provided and available at schools through bursaries when families might need additional support for uniforms,

for sport and for other school activities, to ensure that families on low incomes are appropriately supported. That is something that ACT Labor has always stood for. Of course, the ACT government is serious in making sure that families, particularly those who need extra support, are getting it through our phase-in of early childhood education, or universal access to free early childhood education, preschool, for three-years-olds, expanding the program from four-year-olds.

Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to convince the federal Liberal party to support our campaign to ensure support for the first two years of preschool, prior to kindergarten starting, some of the most important time for brain development and providing support for the social wellbeing of our children before they start school. We could not get that support from the federal Liberals, so we have gone out on our own to offer free preschool for three-year-olds for those families who need it most in the ACT.

The ACT Labor Party has always supported workers in the early childhood sector. It is a challenge because, unfortunately, early childhood education has become a profit-making market. More and more we see early childhood providers making money off the back of some of our most important education experiences for young people and our most precious young people, our children. But ACT Labor has a strong record of supporting these workers, unlike the Canberra Liberals.

When workers in the early childhood sector, a workforce that is predominantly female, campaigned with their union for pay equity, they were campaigning because, when compared to more male-dominated sectors with the same qualifications, they were paid 10 per cent less. You cannot deny the importance and the value of early childhood education for our community and how important it is that quality early childhood education is provided and is accessible, is provided by qualified workers and is affordable for families.

When that workforce took their claim to be paid an equitable pay rate—the same pay that more male-dominated sectors get—to the Fair Work Commission, it was knocked back and it was not supported by the federal Liberal Party. When those low-income workers in the ACT—and I include contract cleaners—were provided with portable long service leave here in ACT, the ACT government stood up and provided a portable long service leave scheme for these workers who are insecure in their work and are on low incomes.

They now have some certainty through a portable long service leave scheme, but the scheme was not supported by the Canberra Liberals. In fact, cleaners who were here during the implementation of the portable long service leave scheme for cleaners can still recall when Kate Carnell turned her back on those cleaners and walked out when that bill was being introduced. They have never forgotten that the Canberra Liberals turned their back on them at a time when they were being respected for the essential services that they provide to the ACT community.

ACT Labor will always stand up for improving equality for low-income families and workers in the ACT, because the Liberal Party's policies go in a very different direction. You do not have to look very far for what the Liberal Party stands for and

the kinds of things that the party would support in the ACT as far as low-income families and workers are concerned. It is right to ask the Canberra Liberals: what is it that they are going to cut? What is it that they are going to privatise? What is it that they are going to sell off, if they are going to stop ACT government providing opportunities to low-income families and low-paid workers in our community? What are the Canberra Liberals going to cut?

Today, I also want to touch on Newstart. I know that ACT Labor had invited the Canberra Liberals to support our calls on the federal government to improve Newstart payments to low-income families in the ACT. That has not occurred. It has not been supported by the federal Liberal Party, but it is very clearly one of the barriers that people who are on low incomes face in trying to make ends meet in this town. There are decades and decades of low incomes from welfare payment, because the commonwealth government's Newstart allowance is the lowest unemployment benefit in the developed world.

That speaks volumes for how we care for people who are on low incomes in the ACT. What does the ACT government do? It continues to introduce policies to support those people who are on low incomes, through no fault of their own but through the policies and the ideologically driven decisions that the Liberal Party makes.

Finally, I want to talk about penalty rates. The ACT Labor Party has been absolutely solid in its support for low-paid workers being paid for work and time spent away from their families to deliver services so those people in the ACT can go out and have their coffee on the weekend, or go out and have their bacon and eggs in the morning on the weekend. These workers spend time away from their families. They are already on low incomes and they are continuing to have their penalty rates cut for the services that they provide to everybody else in this community.

Penalty rates have been an important part of the pay of the Australian workforce, particularly those 20,000 in the ACT who have been affected by those cuts. These cuts to penalty rates in the ACT that affect 20,000 workers were supported by the Canberra Liberals. If they are fair dinkum about saying that they support low-income families in the ACT, let us have a look at some of the systemic causes of that low income that have been supported by the Canberra Liberals and their colleagues in the Australian parliament over decades.

The Canberra Liberals' support for these causes has forced so many people in our community into poverty and into a really tough life, but the ACT Labor Party has never left those people behind and will continue to support them through the measures that we have talked about today. Labor supports them through the provision of Chromebooks so that every student, regardless of their background or their family's income, can afford to get a really great free education. ACT Labor will support them to get really great free universal access to preschool, which has been expanded to three-year-olds, particularly for those families who need it most.

I commend the Chief Minister's amendment to Mr Coe's motion, and I look forward to hearing from Mr Coe and the Canberra Liberals exactly what it is that they are

going to cut. I hope that we will be honest about how they are supporting low-income families in the ACT.

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (11.25): What we have heard from those opposite is that they are proud of the fact that one in 12 households in Canberra are living in poverty. What we have heard from those opposite is that everything is just fine in the ACT and all their policy levers are doing exactly what they are meant to do. We on this side of the house disagree. We on this side of the chamber think that we can and should do better as a jurisdiction. But, of course, those opposite—all 14 of them—are so stubborn that they refuse to accept that there are people in the ACT who are struggling as a result of their policies.

Of course, we saw a desperate attack from the Chief Minister. His vindictive nature was on full display, as it so often is. He blames the commonwealth, he blames the opposition, he blames everyone but himself. We all know what happens when you are on the wrong side of this Chief Minister. We all know what happens to community groups, to people, to businesses, to anyone who disagrees with this Chief Minister.

He went on to tell a pretty significant falsehood regarding our stance on renewable energy. We have a voting record that backs up our stance. We have countless statements that back up our stance regarding our commitment to 100 per cent renewable power. We are also committed to making sure that we deliver that in the most efficient and effective way possible. But the minister for energy has come into this place before and told the Assembly that there are good ways, bad ways and better ways to deliver 100 per cent renewable power. When you look at the subsidies that have been paid over the years, obviously there are better ways and there are worse ways. We on this side of the Assembly unashamedly will always strive for the best deal for taxpayers of the ACT.

We will not buck-pass to the commonwealth at every opportunity. This Chief Minister refuses to take responsibility for his actions. This Chief Minister on one hand grandstands and tells the world about his achievements, but on the other hand every time he comes in here, he says he is powerless and it is the commonwealth's fault. You cannot have it both ways. You are either responsible and accountable or you are not. He ducks and weaves at every opportunity.

Then, of course, we had Mr Rattenbury's contribution. He comes in here and rants about the Liberals rather than actually addressing the motion. He comes in here and demonstrates that his ideological hatred for the Liberals is greater than his passion to help those who are doing it tough. He is far more likely to stand up for the Labor Party than he is to stand up for those living in poverty in the ACT. His entire speech was about the Canberra Liberals, as opposed to ideas about how to bring down the cost of living the ACT. It shows how ideologically driven he is against the Liberals rather than trying to achieve some form of social justice.

So many people are being let down by this government. We see it year after year in the ACTCOSS report. Nineteen years of Labor and you look at the situation that we are in as a jurisdiction. It could be so much better. It should be so much better.

Then, of course, we had Ms Berry's curious contribution, which was hardly relevant to the motion at all. But the thing that was particularly interesting was what she had to say about early childhood education, this, incidentally, coming from the person who put forward legislation that involved the sacking of every migrant worker or non-citizen in the cleaning industry who could not work under her policy.

The minister came in here and said that there should not be anyone making profit in early childhood education. I would happily give way to the Deputy Chief Minister to clarify this case. Ms Berry, I am giving you this opportunity right now to reaffirm your position. The Deputy Chief Minister can keep having this conversation, but the reality is she will keep blaming the commonwealth. She will blame everyone but herself. Is it her position that there should be no profit or no businesses in the early education space? That is what she just said.

She said that we have all these horrible for-profit providers in the ACT. There are hundreds of people working in this industry. Thousands of Canberra families depend on these child-care centres right across the ACT. The other particularly interesting thing about this is the Labor Party, through the 1973 Foundation, gets \$631,000 a year from a for-profit childhood education provider; that is, \$630,000 from GH Education goes into the 1973 Foundation, which is the funding arm for the ACT Labor Party. That means \$630,000 comes from the very industry that she says has been horribly privatised.

Once again, you see the extreme hypocrisy on display. Those opposite say they do not like pokie revenue, but pokies rake in millions for this ACT Labor Party. They say that they do not like for-profit early childhood education providers, yet they get \$630,000 a year from their tenant in Sydney, the 1973 Foundation. Let us not forget that this is the 1973 Foundation that does not invest in Canberra. It invests in Sydney, at Five Dock, where GH Education is a tenant.

This government, comprising members from Labor and the Greens, is so hypocritical. Its members do not care about those who are doing it tough. They do not care about the 7,000 kids in the ACT living in poverty. They do not care about the struggling families, the working poor, the retired poor. They do not care about the thousands of people experiencing transport disadvantage as a result of their policies. They simply do not care about anything other than clinging to power—and that can all change in October.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (11.34): Madam Assistant Speaker, I seek leave under section 47 of the standing orders to be heard again. I have been misquoted or misunderstood in my speech.

Leave granted.

MS BERRY: Madam Assistant Speaker, as is usual in this place, when Mr Coe gets up to speak, he misquotes, misrepresents or deliberately misunderstands when people get up to speak on a motion. He misquoted me and said that I had referred to early childhood operators in this town as “horrible”. I did not. I have a very good, clear record of representing workers, in particular in the early childhood sector, since well before you were born, Mr Coe. It is unacceptable.

Mr Coe: Are you sure about that?

MS BERRY: The way that you behave, mate, is unacceptable. The way that he misrepresents and misquotes people in this place is completely unacceptable.

Mr Coe: Getting an insight into the next Labor leader.

MS BERRY: Madam Assistant Speaker, I sat and listened in silence to Mr Coe; even when he was misrepresenting me, I did not interrupt or have a go at him.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Hanson: A point of order.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Cody): Mr Hanson.

Mr Hanson: There are a couple of things. When Mr Coe was speaking, Ms Berry was having an ongoing conversation with Mrs Jones, and started the whole process—

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, what is your point of order?

Mr Hanson: Under standing order 42, Ms Berry needs to directly refer to the chair. Rather than just standing there and hurling abuse directly at Mr Coe, she needs to go through you.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, I heard my name called out many times. Ms Berry, have you finished?

MS BERRY: No, I have not; thank you, Madam Assistant Speaker. I was also misrepresented and was attempting to explain myself to one of the members opposite. I realise that I should not be having conversations across the chamber, but it was an attempt to explain myself regarding Mr Coe’s misrepresentation of what has occurred—which is a great outcome, I might say, for the contract cleaners in this town who have had wages stolen from them and who have been taken advantage of. Members of the Canberra Liberals have represented a particular employer of those people in this place, and the ACT government, ACT Labor, has provided those workers with employment with the ACT government because we could not be sure that they would be employed, and be treated respectfully and with dignity, unless they were employed by the ACT government.

The assertion that the ACT government should employ illegally is not acceptable by the ACT government. Every worker that could be legally employed was employed under the contract arrangements for the ACT government. Mr Coe basically lied when he spoke just then, Madam Assistant Speaker.

Ms Lawder: A point of order—

MS BERRY: I will withdraw that, but he definitely misrepresented me. He made up words that I did not use during my speech.

Mrs Jones: Under the same standing order that Ms Berry used, standing order 47, I seek leave to make a statement of clarification.

Mr Rattenbury: On a point of order, Madam Assistant Speaker—

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Can I deal with Mrs Jones first? Mrs Jones, that was for being misrepresented. My understanding is that you did not speak—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, you can't be misrepresented.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: so you cannot ask to seek leave under that standing order.

Mrs Jones: I did not use the word “misrepresentation”. Thank you, Mr Rattenbury, for your interjections; they are most helpful.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 13

Noes 10

Mr Barr	Ms Orr	Miss C Burch	Ms Lee
Ms Berry	Mr Pettersson	Mr Coe	Mr Milligan
Ms J Burch	Mr Ramsay	Mrs Dunne	Mr Parton
Ms Cheyne	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson	
Ms Cody	Mr Steel	Mrs Jones	
Mr Gupta	Ms Stephen-Smith	Mrs Kikkert	
Ms Le Couteur		Ms Lawder	

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Transport Canberra—network 19

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (11.43): I move:

That this Assembly calls on the Minister for Transport to apologise to Canberrans for introducing the transport disaster that was Network19 and ignoring the feedback given during the Network19 consultation process that anticipated the issues that have since become a reality.

I rise today to once again bring the Assembly's attention to the disappointing and disrespectful conduct of Minister Steel. While hundreds of Canberra families have faced months of transport chaos at the hands of this government, it is not the chaos alone that frustrates so many Canberrans; it is this government's and this minister's attitude towards them that frustrates them so greatly.

Despite making a huge number of tweaks and recently announcing what can only be described as a significant overhaul of the network, the minister still refuses to acknowledge that, firstly, they completely got it wrong and, secondly, they have totally refused to listen to Canberrans.

The facts remain, Madam Assistant Speaker. Months ago, the government had enough feedback and information to anticipate every single tweak or adjustment that has now been made. They had almost 18 months of consultation prior to this network being rolled out. They have received over 13,000 pieces of feedback, 10,000 petition signatories, hundreds upon hundreds of emails and comments on social media, and over 40 news articles since June 2018, which I read out in this place only last year, and yet they continue to refuse to listen. Over and over again they ignored or dismissed the concerns and feedback of Canberrans.

What I found baffling throughout this entire ordeal was the minister's continued claims that these changes have reflected a process of listening to Canberrans when it is just so obvious that network 19 has reflected anything but.

The minister said last week that he had been "listening to feedback on the network" and that they are "making changes". What happened to the scathing feedback contained in his first ministerial brief about the network changes? What happened to the 10 months of consultation undertaken from mid-2018 right up until the network was rolled out last April? Where is the your say report that depicted in great detail the concerns of parents, children and the elderly who rely on the network to get around Canberra? Where has the minister buried the feedback contained within the petitions totalling over 10,000 signatures and tabled over the course of nine months? What about the petitions lodged on 30 July 2018, 1 October 2018, 13 February 2019, 23 March 2019, 4 June 2019, or 14 May 2019? It is baffling, it is arrogant, and it is completely disrespectful.

To be honest, Madam Assistant Speaker, even if the minister did choose to ignore the thousands of signatories of the petitions or the damning patronage data declaring the new network a disaster, he only needed to open the *Canberra Times* to get a real sense of just how badly he had failed. I refer to an article dated 25 July 2018 entitled "Insulting': bus route changes hit elderly, defence personnel" and one from 5 September 2019 titled "Canberra bus network changes leave elderly housebound".

They are two articles published just over a year apart, both describing the same story and the same old issues.

These are not insignificant numbers. There were over 10,000 submissions to the your say consultation process in 2018, over 10,000 signatories to petitions in 2019, and over 40 news articles detailing all of these concerns and all of these impacts on Canberrans across the territory. But we are supposed to just believe the minister when he claims that he needed six months of new network data to tell him what Canberrans had been telling him for months before the network had even begun.

The minister claimed last week that he is briefed every week on the data. Which data would that be, Madam Assistant Speaker? The patronage data that showed that patronage was down five per cent in Woden and Tuggeranong? The customer satisfaction data that has been at its lowest levels in years, at 62 per cent? Perhaps he is referring to Labor's polling data, showing that the minister needed to do something in an election year to stop haemorrhaging votes down south.

What has the outcome of all this listening been? Let us look at his track record. Canberrans told Mr Steel that cuts to dedicated school services would cause anxiety and stress for children. The minister then rolled out a network which cut dedicated school services and left children in tears. Did he apologise? No. Parents told him that they would return to their cars if school-aged children were made to use the public network. The minister then endangered the safety of schoolchildren by forcing them to change at interchanges, and school student patronage on weekdays fell as a result. Did he apologise? No.

Seniors and mobility impaired Canberrans told Minister Steel that they would not be able to get to the doctor or see their friends because of the extra walking distance needed to access the bus network. The minister then cut over 750 bus stops and confined elderly and mobility impaired people to their homes. Has he apologised for this? No.

The TWU told the minister and the government months, if not years, ago that they would not have enough drivers to staff the new network weekend timetable. The minister promised Canberrans that they would have a true seven-day network, but instead went on to cancel heaps of weekend services. Will he apologise? No.

Instead of pulling his socks up, doing the hard yards and fixing the chaos that his government has created, Minister Steel has resorted to spreading blatant mistruths and using dirty tactics. He said last week in the chamber:

The opposition wants to cut 22 services in peak times. That is their policy; they have announced and reiterated this policy this week. They will cut 22 buses.

This is a complete fabrication by the minister to hide from the school services, the bus stops and the weekend services that he and his government have cut.

You can tell that the minister is on the back foot because he has been searching far and wide for any good news story that distracts from his inability to fix this chaos. We

saw this with the re-announcement last week of a ticketing system which was promised three years ago and is yet to be delivered. It will not be delivered for another few years.

What has not crept into his playbook is any form of humility, self-awareness or sense of remorse. Disrespect and disdain for Canberrans seem to be the common theme running through Mr Barr's government. They are the only things they have consistently shown over the past four years.

Mr Steel has shown complete disdain for the real and genuine concerns of Canberrans. Nowhere can this disdain be more clearly seen than in his treatment of south-side Canberrans. These concerns have been well documented. We heard about school students from Gowrie being stranded in 2018, stressed and confused following the chaos and cuts to school services. We have heard about hardworking weekend workers, some of whom have been struggling to hold down a job or have had to change jobs because of service cuts.

We have also seen the emotional toll that this has taken on the elderly in our community. I refer to a *Canberra Times* article titled “‘We’re the forgotten people of the south’: bus changes opposition heats up”, in which a Wanniasa resident stated, “They’ve taken our bus routes without any consultation and without any thought to the people who are living in this area.” What has Mr Steel’s response been? He continues to refuse to acknowledge these failings and he refuses to apologise. Mr Steel’s answer, was:

... I live on the south side, in Kambah. I realise that I live there every day when I wake up and go to work.”

There was no acknowledgement, no reasoning and no apology for the chaos and the cuts that he and his government have caused. There was no apology for their absolute continuous refusal to listen.

This is what we have come to expect from a minister who has, since day one, overpromised and underdelivered. We only need to look to his commitment to hiring bus drivers to see this. The minister spent the better part of last August and September doing media interviews and speaking about the driver hiring blitz which he had undertaken in order to staff the services that he had promised. Mr Steel was proud to speak of that in this place, about his commitment to more public transport throughout the city, despite only embarking on this hiring blitz after news broke that his government had known about these chronic staff shortages for years.

We have had two weekend network timetables, hundreds of weekend service cuts, 136 tweaks to the regular network and 10,000 signatories from petitions calling on the government to do better. But over the same time, we have still had zero apologies from the minister. “I got it wrong and we are sorry.” Why is that so difficult? It might not seem like much, but to the hundreds of Canberrans who feel as if their concerns have continuously fallen on deaf ears, this would mean an awful lot.

This is a government that has known about these issues for 18 months. This is a minister who has been complicit in this failure since he became the minister last year. If the past nine months are any indication of what we can expect until polling day, Canberrans will continue to have a minister for transport who is so arrogantly out of touch that he cannot bring himself to admit failure and to apologise for not listening, let alone apologise for the mistakes that he has made.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.53): The Greens will not be supporting Miss Burch's motion. I am sorry to disappoint you all, but I am someone who is a bit of a details person which, I agree, is a disadvantage in my current line of work. I really would like factual accuracy. I know that many voters seem to believe that politicians routinely lie. I do not. I try to be as accurate as possible and I am afraid that Miss Burch's motion, sadly, is not really factually, totally accurate.

As I said last time we debated network 19, it has been a case of people who win out, people who miss out and a botched rollout. But one fact that cannot be totally ignored, a fairly crucial fact, is that patronage is substantially higher, as of course is the number of services. But we have to remember this: more people actually are taking buses and light rail. The last data I have, for the three months from 1 July to 30 September 2019, showed that overall patronage was up by six per cent compared to the same time in 2018. Whatever you say about network 19, it really cannot be described as an overall transport disaster. Patronage has gone up in total.

Furthermore, some parts of Canberra are particularly benefitting from network 19, and this includes, in my electorate, Weston Creek and the Molonglo Valley. It is really hard for me to say, as a local member for Weston Creek and the Molonglo Valley, that network 19 is an unmitigated transport disaster when patronage from the former is up by 12 per cent and the latter by 25 per cent.

However, it is important to recognise that despite the overall higher patronage there are some places that have not done nearly as well. There are some places where things have not changed and there are some people for whom the network has gone backwards. It is true, as Miss Burch has highlighted, that network 19 has caused significant problems for some people and some parts of Canberra. I certainly acknowledge and agree with this and have made numerous representations on this matter.

Apart from anything else, some of the parts of Canberra that have not done well out of this change have been the other half of my electorate, that is, Woden Valley. Woden Valley journey starts, as measured by our MyWay cards, were down five per cent in the three months from July to September 2019 compared to 2018. And that is clearly a problem that needs fixing. From my point of view, the other smaller part of my electorate, Tuggeranong, also suffered a decrease in patronage, and I am pleased to see that there will be some tweaks of that in—I am not quite sure what we are calling the new network—network 19.

In many places there are also individual people who have been disadvantaged by the changes. Getting rid of the Xpresso services has been an issue in Tuggeranong in

particular but in Weston Creek as well. I have been contacted by some of the people in Weston Creek who have been disadvantaged by the Xpresso services being cut. One of them was a woman. I am confident that, as a whole, patronage was probably up when her Xpresso service was cut. The buses were presumably redeployed to somewhere in the network that was previously under-served. It is understandable that she is unhappy.

One of the issues that we need to address is the under-resourcing of our bus networks. We need to look at a bus network which will better serve all Canberra. And I mention again one of the other issues in my electorate. On Beasley Street there are some aged care units which have a bus stop next to them. The bus stop is still there but no buses service it because Transport Canberra made the understandable decision that very few people wanted to use that bus stop because basically people would walk—most people, apart from the residents of the aged care units—to Athllon Drive which is only about another 250 metres away because there were much more frequent busses.

It was a plus for overall patronage but a minus for this particular group of people. And that has happened, as far as I can see, throughout the network rollout. Public servants have concentrated very much on solving the problems that they saw but in some instances this has been, unfortunately, at the cost of causing other problems. The issue really is: what do we do now? How do we fix the problems that I have talked about? The declining patronages in Woden, Tuggeranong and specific instances such as the aged persons units; how do we fix those problems while we keep the gains?

Miss Burch called for an apology. This Assembly, me included, has been very critical of Minister Steel at times when his actions have warranted it, particularly over his very regrettable decision to cut weekend bus services back to two-hourly on local routes. As one of the bus users in Canberra, I have to say I am actually very pleased that Miss Burch and the Liberals have made bus performance a political issue because I, as a public transport believer and a regular bus user, would like to see a lot more emphasis placed on public transport and buses in particular in Canberra.

But the problem is that an apology is not actually going to address the problems, although it obviously is a quite useful political stunt. An apology, to put it bluntly, will carry no passengers. Right now is the time to make changes to network 19 to fix those problems that it has caused some people and for some districts which have missed out, while keeping the good things that are causing more people to catch public transport overall.

It is also time to bring back as many of the weekend services as possible, and I am disappointed that we did not have a more complete answer to Mr Milligan's questions yesterday on the subject of weekend bus services. I was going to ask a similar question but clearly that is not really of much point. I think I can say to the minister, "While I do not wish for an apology over the weekend bus services I would like to hear very soon about the improvements to the weekend bus services," because they really were somewhere where we could see the people of Canberra said, "Yes, this is great. We have got a bus service at the weekend that we can actually understand and use and we will use it." But it is very unfortunate that that early gain has been put back by the unreliability and then cancellation of services.

The minister has announced that there will be a network update to start in April. This update does make a substantial number of changes. It brings back some of the lost weekend services, we understand, but keeps most of network 19. It does look promising. It certainly will address some of the issues that I am aware of, and I am absolutely confident that it will be a step forward.

I am also absolutely confident that the public servants who do the network planning and timetabling are genuinely trying to improve services and increase patronage. I totally believe that, with the resources that they have available to them, they are doing the best job they feel they possibly can with what they have got. It does involve some difficult decisions if you have got X number of buses and Y number of drivers. There is a limit to what they can do with that. Within that, I have absolute confidence that the government and the transport planners are doing the best they can with the resources they have.

I think that we in the Assembly should also give them the benefit of the doubt, particularly in terms of this update. I am sure it will fix some of the problems. Of course it will not fix every problem. Nothing ever does. But it will fix some of the problems. I am sure it will be a step forward.

In conclusion, as I said earlier, network 19 has been a case of people who win out, people who miss out and a botched rollout, particularly for the weekends. Overall, patronage is substantially higher than under the previous network. The way forward is to fix the problems while keeping the gains and I do not think that Miss Burch's call for an apology will lead to positive action in terms of fixing the issues.

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 12.04 to 2 pm.

Questions without notice

Housing—affordability

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, why has revenue from land sales fallen, as indicated in the budget review?

MS BERRY: Because there have not been as many land sales.

MR COE: Minister, has demand for standalone homes decreased or is there still the same demand and it is simply a function of prices being too high?

MS BERRY: It is a whole bunch of complex issues that have come together and caused land sales to go down. It is not only the ACT government that is experiencing a downturn in land sales but also other developers in town, and not just for standalone homes but also for units.

MR PARTON: Minister, can you detail more of those issues that you speak of. What impact is lower cost land over the border having on SLA sales?

MS BERRY: Thank you for that question, Mr Parton. I have not been advised that there has been any effect from sales of land across the border on the downturn in sales of land in the ACT, including from SLA, Denman Prospect and Ginninderry. A whole lot of matters have come together that have meant that people are not purchasing at the moment. Some of that is to do with the banking royal commission and how the banks lend money. There was an election last year that also affected people's decision-making on when they would purchase a home. So there are a whole lot of reasons but I have not been advised that there has been any effect from land sales across the border.

National Multicultural Festival—women's safety

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Minister for Women and relates to women's safety audits for the National Multicultural Festival this weekend. Minister, assuming that a safety audit has been undertaken, are you aware of any adjustments that have been made or recommended to protect women's and others' safety at the festival?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Le Couteur for that question. Yes, a safety audit is conducted of the Multicultural Festival each year. It has not occurred yet; it will occur tomorrow. Members of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women will be participating in that audit as well. If any issues arise out of that, that are identified through the audit, they will be addressed.

MS LE COUTEUR: Can you reassure the community that as well as the members of the ministerial council there will be some people doing this who are vulnerable women? I would suspect that the members of the ministerial council—how can I put it?—by definition are not the most vulnerable within the ACT. We are looking for the impact on people who feel vulnerable and are vulnerable, which is probably not your committee.

MS BERRY: The ministerial advisory council membership is quite diverse, and the women on the council are representatives of a whole lot of organisations, including the YWCA and the Women's Centre for Health Matters. There is a pretty good understanding from members on the women's advisory council of the needs of all women, but particularly women who might be more at risk.

Housing—affordability

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. According to the Domain rental report for the December quarter, Canberra's median asking rent for houses was up 3.6 per cent year on year and 5.5 per cent over the quarter, the biggest jump in the nation. Former Chief Minister Jon Stanhope has said:

The housing affordability crisis in Canberra is in large measure a direct consequence of decisions deliberately taken by Andrew Barr ...

Minister, what are you doing to fix this?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Parton for that question. The government has taken a number of initiatives even this week around rental reforms to ensure that people who are in rental accommodation are fairly treated.

Mr Parton: That is going to bring the rents down, I think.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ignore the interjections would be my advice, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will do my very best to follow your advice and ignore the interjections by Mr Parton. We always welcome people's comments, including Jon Stanhope's. It just might not be the case that we necessarily agree with them.

MR PARTON: Minister, when will you acknowledge that your housing affordability policies are failing Canberrans in the private rental market?

MS BERRY: They are not.

MR COE: Minister, is there a housing affordability crisis in Canberra and, if so, what is the cause?

MS BERRY: I think housing affordability is an issue that the country has been grappling with over the last little while and in the ACT we have been challenged by that. That is why we held a summit, to talk with the sector, including builders and the housing industry—Mr Parton attended the summit—to develop a housing plan into the future that addresses issues around housing affordability. There is not one solution. There are multiple activities that the ACT government is undertaking to ensure that people can get into a home of their own.

Mr Coe: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the question specifically was: is there a housing affordability crisis? The minister has not yet answered that.

MADAM SPEAKER: She made reference to challenges of housing affordability.

Mr Coe: Yes, she did mention that.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think the minister has resumed her seat. Unless you have something further to add, minister? No.

Housing—affordability

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, Canberra has the highest median house rents in the nation and the highest

rate of repeat homelessness. How are the ACT government's policies resulting in these outcomes?

MS BERRY: I remind members that the ACT government has committed to a significant funding injection into the provision of public housing for the ACT, the highest, per capita, in the country. We are investing \$100 million in the renewal of over a thousand properties and the addition of another 200 properties in the ACT.

There have been a number of initiatives more recently to assist people who need extra support—the housing first model. CatholicCare has been funded to provide that additional support, particularly to those people who are sleeping rough in our community, to get them into a home and wrap around them the supports that they need so that they can sustain a tenancy long term and not return to rough sleeping. Already they have had significant success, since starting this project just before Christmas, and it is making a difference to people's lives. But it is a complex issue and these people have complicated lives.

Mr Coe: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe.

Mr Coe: Whilst the minister's response is interesting, she has not answered the question, which was: how are ACT government policies resulting in these outcomes? It is about cause, rather than what the government is going to do to address homelessness.

MADAM SPEAKER: To me, the question was around the contribution on homelessness: programs to address it. I think that that is in order, so there is no point of order.

Mrs Dunne interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne, you can keep your advice to yourself, please, unless you want to stand and raise a point of order.

Mr Coe: Madam Speaker, with the specific question, there was a preamble, then the question was: minister, how are ACT government policies resulting in these outcomes? To date she has not addressed the cause of the significant problem we have in the territory.

MADAM SPEAKER: The question was around rental and homelessness and the government's contribution to that. The minister was in order, as far as I am concerned. The time has expired.

Mr Parton interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Parton, no more.

MS LEE: Minister, how does the \$234 million a year interest bill to service the \$3 billion debt bomb undermine the government's ability to care for Canberrans experiencing homelessness?

MS BERRY: The government has been clear that it will not stop spending to support people in the ACT just for the sake of a surplus.

MR PARTON: Minister, how will the government's \$3 million debt bomb and massive interest repayments hurt those suffering from homelessness in the future.

MS BERRY: I think I have answered that question in my previous response, which was that the government will not be stopping any kind of support for people who need it most. In fact, we have made it very clear that we will continue to support people who need that additional support. We had a big conversation this morning about all of the different kinds of supports that were in place and the ACT government has delivered on. I do not know whether Mr Parton was here listening to that, but if he wants to check—

Mr Parton: I was listening; don't worry.

MS BERRY: Okay, cool, then you know.

Light rail—stage 2 federal government approvals

MR GUPTA: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Can the minister advise about the progress of negotiations with the federal government on the environmental and heritage approvals required for light rail stage 2?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Gupta for his question. Our government is building on the success of light rail stage 1 by getting on with the work of extending the benefits of light rail to other parts of Canberra. We are investing in infrastructure now to ensure that Canberra does not end up like Sydney and Melbourne in terms of their congestion.

That is why last year we referred the extension in two parts to the commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act process. The light rail project is progressing as expected to the next stage of that process, with stage 2A to be assessed as a controlled action based on preliminary documentation.

This decision from the federal government reinforces our choice to deliver the light rail extension to Woden project in two stages. The process of assessment for stage 2A means that we can get on with the job of extending light rail to Woden sooner.

We always expected that an extensive environmental impact statement process would be required for the more complex stage 2B extension through the parliamentary triangle under the commonwealth environmental approval process and the EPBC Act. We look forward to that process proceeding to consider the environmental and heritage issues in parallel with work on stage 2A.

MR GUPTA: What are the advantages of wire-free light rail for stage 2?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Gupta for his question. As part of the referral we made to the commonwealth last year, which I referenced in the answer to his first question, we have announced that we will be undertaking wire-free running as part of stage 2A, which offers many advantages, the major one being that it has a narrower track slab, as it does not require poles to carry catenary wires.

London Circuit is much narrower than Northbourne Avenue, and it is the only section of our light rail network to feature on-road light rail. We want to ensure that there is enough space for vehicles, light rail, pedestrians and cyclists to interact safely along that particular part of the corridor. Wire-free light rail also contributes to maintaining an accessible, attractive, high-quality and distinctive city centre. Our heritage buildings around London Circuit and the broader parliamentary corridor will be unimpeded by poles and wires. Along the Commonwealth Avenue section, wire-free light rail will maintain the heritage vistas from Parliament House through that corridor, comply with the recommendations of the parliamentary joint committee inquiry for light rail through the parliamentary zone, and assist in obtaining National Capital Authority planning approval so that we can get on with the work of building this important project.

To support wire-free running, new and existing light rail vehicles will be fitted with onboard energy storage on the roof, and will have regenerative braking capability. Our government is getting on with the work of extending the benefits of light rail to other parts of the city, and this particular part will be wire free

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, can you tell us about the median strip treatment on Commonwealth Avenue planned for light rail stage 2A?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Pettersson for his question and his interest in light rail, with Mr Gupta, people who are using light rail on a regular basis and see that it is being used. We want to extend those benefits down to Woden. We want to make sure that as we do so we are maintaining the current character of the Commonwealth Avenue gateway to our city from the south. To do that we will be building a track slab with grass tracks. Some members of the community might have seen this in Victoria Square in Adelaide. It looks very attractive and will maintain the character of this important corridor. We are continuing to work with the National Capital Authority on the broader landscape design for the corridor. I look forward to updating the Assembly as we progress to make sure that we extend the benefits that we have seen from light rail stage 1 in places like Gungahlin to the rest of the city and particularly the south side.

Housing—affordability

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, a 72-year-old constituent in west Belconnen lives on a fixed income of \$894 per week. She has spent months desperately trying to find a modest one-bedroom flat to rent, but the handful of properties in her price range have all been

leased out to people willing to pay more than the list price. Distraught, this former Canberra Hospital worker now fears the extreme social isolation that will result if she is forced to leave Canberra, which has been her only community since 1953. Minister, what do you expect older Canberrans to do if they do not qualify for social housing or the affordable rental scheme but lack the income necessary to afford Canberra's record rents?

MS BERRY: I am not aware of the circumstances behind the individual Mrs Kikkert has described. However, I would encourage Mrs Kikkert to put that person in touch with OneLink at Belconnen, who may be able to connect that individual with different kinds of accommodation and could support that individual into housing or rental affordability.

Of course, that is not the circumstance that we would want anyone in our community to be in. The ACT government's housing strategy has a number of objectives and actions to ensure that people who are in situations like the one that Mrs Kikkert has described can have opportunities to get into homes of their own, whether that is through a private rental or that is through public housing if they are eligible. If they are not eligible, community housing could be an option.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, how many older female Canberrans are currently facing homelessness, and what are the future projections?

MS BERRY: I do not know that there is data on the number that Mrs Kikkert is after. I certainly do not have it on me today but I can get that information if it is available and provide it to the Assembly. Of course the projections coming from the sector are suggesting that more older women will be left out of housing because of a lack of superannuation, which means that when they retire they will not have the income to be able to survive. All these issues are, of course, concerns to the ACT government and some of the actions and objectives that have been identified in the housing strategy go towards supporting women in these kinds of situations.

MR PARTON: Minister, why has the ACT government allowed cost of living increases to create a situation where some who have worked their entire lives cannot afford to remain in Canberra in their retirement?

MS BERRY: I do not agree with the presumption made in that question.

Mr Parton: So there are no people in that—

MS BERRY: That is my answer.

Government—mingle program expenditure

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, why did the launch party for a book box or street library in Moncrieff cost mingle over \$7,000, in effect, the value of three local households' rates for the year?

MS BERRY: I do not have the detail on that, so I cannot provide an answer on the cost of it, but in new suburbs there is investment made in building strong communities. Little libraries have become very popular across the ACT. Almost every suburb now, I think, has a little library. The mingle program is about making sure that communities like Moncrieff have that infrastructure in place to support building strong communities. On the cost of that particular little library, I will have to take advice on notice and come back to the Assembly.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, when you come back to the Assembly with more advice can you inform us what was the money spent on and how many people attended the event?

MS BERRY: Yes, I can do that.

MR COE: Minister, were you invited to this launch party? Were any other MLAs invited to this launch party? What was actually delivered at this \$7,000 event?

MS BERRY: I am generally informed about these events that are put on by mingle to support the building of strong communities in new areas of development across the ACT. I did not attend that event. Again I will have to check the detail and come back to the Assembly if there is any more information that I can provide.

Work safety—mental health

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety. Can the minister please update the Assembly on the launch of the new mentally healthier workplaces campaign

MS ORR: I would like to thank Mr Pettersson for the question and acknowledge his ongoing efforts to improve workplace safety. On Friday, 14 February I was pleased to launch the ACT government's new mentally healthier workplace campaign. This campaign seeks to improve the mental health and wellbeing of working Canberrans by providing businesses and employers with the resources and support they need to create mentally healthier workplaces.

We know that working people spend the majority of their day at work, whether it is in an office, on a construction site, in a café or restaurant, retail store or small business. This means that all our workplaces can play a big role in the mental health of staff and, as an extension, the whole community. In launching this new campaign, the government is calling for businesses, unions and employees to work together to pledge to improve the mental health of everyone in the workplace.

At the launch, we heard from Sabrina Clarke, a hospitality worker here in Canberra. Sabrina shared her experience as an employee in the hospitality industry and the impact it has had on her mental wellbeing. She recounted events that have occurred where customers have harassed and abused her and her colleagues, as well as situations where her employers have not provided the right kind of support.

Unfortunately, we know that Sabrina is not the only person to have experienced a situation at work that has impacted on her mental health. That is why the government has launched this new campaign to improve the mental health of working Canberrans. I would like to thank unions, including the United Workers Union, of which Sabrina is a member, as well as the Canberra Business Chamber, whose representative spoke on the day, and the team at WorkSafe ACT, who put this program together, for their commitment in ensuring that this campaign is a success.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how will the campaign improve the mental health of working Canberrans?

MS ORR: The mentally healthier workplaces campaign has six key action areas that will enable employers and employees to improve their own mental health and ensure that psychosocial risks at work are reduced. With the support of healthier work and WorkSafe ACT, employers will be encouraged to minimise harm, promote protective factors in the workplace, strengthen the resilience of managers and staff, intervene early when issues arise, support the recovery of people with mental health issues or illnesses and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health. Initial resources, including fact sheets and informative videos, have been developed and more work will be undertaken to publish up-to-date tools and advice for participating workplaces to utilise.

With one in five employees taking time off each year because of mental ill health and the Australian economy losing around \$11 billion per year to untreated mental health conditions, it is vital that all of us take action to improve our own mental health and the mental health of those around us. The mentally healthier workplaces campaign is just one way that this government is committed to protecting working people in this city, and I encourage all employers and workers to get on board and take the pledge.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what else is this government doing to protect working people from physical and psychosocial risks at work?

MS ORR: I thank Ms Cheyne for her supplementary. The ACT government continues to support working people and protect them from both physical and psychosocial risks at work.

We are delivering on our commitment to establish a new independent WorkSafe ACT and we will be providing WorkSafe with a significant funding boost to enable them to undertake strong compliance and educational activity in workplaces across the territory. We are supporting young workers through the service agreement between the government and UnionsACT to provide a young workers advice line, which we know is providing a valuable resource for young Canberrans.

This government has strengthened legislation to make it easier for people to bring forward fair work complaints as well as our work health and safety laws to ensure that they are effective and respond to the needs of a modern workforce. The mentally healthier workplaces campaign is another initiative delivered by this government that will improve the work health and safety of people in the ACT.

Canberrans know that this government will always deliver better outcomes for working people, and that is what we will continue to do.

Seniors card—eligibility

MS LAWDER: My question is to the minister for seniors. Minister, the government has had more positions than an AFL team on eligibility for the seniors card. Why are you changing the eligibility yet again this year to allow 60-year-olds and older to get a seniors card, but only after July, just in time for the election?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Lawder for her question. We are very pleased to be changing the age of eligibility for the seniors card. As I have made clear in this chamber and in public before, there were a number of circumstances that led to the decision that the age for eligibility would increase. That was in line with other jurisdictions, with New South Wales and with the commonwealth.

What we have done is to bring that back. That is an important matter because seniors cards around Australia are largely recognised across jurisdictions. We wanted to ensure that local senior Canberrans know the value that this government places, which is a very high value, on our senior Canberrans, and to make sure that they know that they have the opportunity to fully participate.

We also thank COTA for the work they do. We thank the businesses that contribute. We believed that it was appropriate, as we worked through the changes that would take place and, as is the case with a number of matters of a financial nature, that it would take place at the beginning of the financial year. That is a very common thing in relation to eligibility and financial changes. In fact the changes that were taking place for the age of eligibility to increase, under both the former policy and that of other jurisdictions, regularly take place on 1 July each year as well.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why will you not grant seniors card eligibility now to anyone currently 60 or over who will become eligible on 1 July, back to where it used to be before your more recent change?

MR RAMSAY: I refer to my previous answer on that very point. It is commonplace with changes to eligibility, in relation to 1 July, that that is the case, as it was the case when the matters were increasing. We believe that this will help around 8,500 Canberrans. We believe that that is a very important step. Again I place on record my thanks, my appreciation, to COTA for their work. We believe that it is important to be able to work alongside COTA and alongside businesses, so that things can occur for people.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, are you going to apologise to all those seniors who have been caught out and have missed out in your saga of eligibility data bingo?

MR RAMSAY: What we have heard from the opposition again today is that apologies are now becoming a political tool. That is deeply disappointing. What we will be doing on this side of the chamber is not playing politics with cheap apologies.

What I am pleased to do is to advise Canberrans that they are eligible from 1 July this year. We are pleased that that is recognised across jurisdictions as well. We are pleased to continue to work across the jurisdictions. We are pleased to work—

Opposition members interjecting—

MR RAMSAY: I note the interjection. I know it would not generally be appropriate to respond to interjections but the interjectors are asking why it was being done in the first place. I again refer opposition members to my previous answer, the very first answer that I gave today. That was that it was being done alongside other jurisdictions, and that it was important to be able to keep matters in line with those other jurisdictions. We are working alongside other jurisdictions now to change the date back to 60.

Government—health system

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, the ROGS data tells us that each and every Canberran pays \$1,000 more per head for public hospitals than people in other jurisdictions. Your mid-year budget cash injection of \$60 million will add approximately \$140 to that bill. Minister, why is the ACT Labor-Greens government propping up, by your admission, an inefficient health system by assuming that it has unfettered access to the wallets of Canberrans?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Dunne for the question. I reject the way that she has interpreted that. We know that the ACT health system, and we have known for a very long time, is more expensive than that of other jurisdictions. We see that across a range of human services in the ACT.

We continue to provide the number of beds per thousand of population that we have for the past few years, and we have seen some of those efficiencies come down. In fact, I know that I provided a response to a question on notice asked by Mrs Dunne recently that showed a significant improvement in some of the relative costs for the ACT compared with the national efficient price and compared with our peer hospitals just a few years ago.

There is a lot of work underway to continue to improve the efficiency of our hospital system and our health system, and we will continue to make those investments. But, as I said yesterday, in the past 12 months we have been really focused on ensuring that we can address some of the issues that were identified in the culture review, that we can build a climate of trust, a climate where people want to come forward with innovative ideas to improve the efficiency of the system. I can assure members opposite and other Canberrans that we are very focused on improving the efficiency of our system.

Yesterday the questions were about why we were improving the efficiency of our system. Today they are about why we are not improving the efficiency of our system. If the opposition could get one message, if they could have one policy in the health space, that would be very helpful for them.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, exactly what are you doing, along with the health bureaucrats, to address inefficiencies in the health system, and why are you continuing to rely on cost shifting to Canberrans rather than on really getting on with the job?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I am sure that Mrs Dunne is aware that there is not one thing you do to improve the efficiency of health and hospital systems. One of the things that we are doing is the implementation of a timely care strategy, which I know Mrs Dunne has been briefed on previously and which I have talked about many times in this place. That is about improving the flow of patients through our hospital, reducing the amount of time that patients spend in hospital, and reducing bed block so that we can treat more patients.

There are many strategies in place. I have spoken about them many times in this place. There is no one silver bullet. But as we have seen from the numbers, as we have seen from the improvements against the national efficient price and against our peer hospital comparators, we are making improvements, and we will continue to do that.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Can I ask members to stop the internal chatter because it is difficult to hear the minister responding.

MRS JONES: Minister, after 19 years of a Labor-Greens government, when can the people of Canberra expect the government to manage their hospitals as well as occurs in other jurisdictions?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Jones for the question. Actually, we manage our hospitals extremely well. When you look at the front pages of newspapers in every other jurisdiction, you will see concerns about hospital systems. You will see front pages about ambulance ramping in other jurisdictions. We do not ramp ambulances here in the ACT.

When I get feedback from people who go to hospital, yes, I receive some complaints in my office from people who have not had the world's best experience in hospitals, but I also get a lot of letters and a lot of feedback from people who have used the Canberra Hospital and who have had an excellent experience, or indeed Calvary Public Hospital in Bruce or the University of Canberra Hospital. We get so much positive feedback about the way our hospitals operate, about our dedicated staff and the support that they give to patients, not only the clinical treatment that patients receive but also the care that is provided to patients in our hospital system.

The ongoing record of those opposite is to talk down our hospital system, to talk down their record of treatment, when what we see from patients coming through the system, and what we record every quarter in the quarterly performance report about people's own experiences, is satisfaction levels of over 90 per cent, when people are actually asked about the treatment they receive in the hospitals.

If those opposite could actually come up with a health policy, rather than a health complaints system, or a health complaints strategy on their part, if they could actually say something positive about health in our community, that might help them to take a step forward in thinking about health in our community.

Government—fees and charges

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Business and Regulatory Services. Minister, the fee for a learner driver licence in the ACT is twice that of New South Wales. Why does it cost Canberrans twice as much to get a learner driver licence here as it does across the border?

MR RATTENBURY: I have responsibility for these areas of policy, so I will take the question, Madam Speaker. As members know, we have just introduced a new system for learner licences and the whole graduated licensing scheme. One of the interesting and, I think, really important parts of that scheme is a discount that has been provided so that when people move from the P1 to the P2 phase, if they have not had any driving offences, they get a significant discount. We are endeavouring to use behavioural incentives—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, Mr Hanson and Mrs Dunne, please give it a rest while the ministers are on their feet.

MR RATTENBURY: I was simply referring to the fact that we are putting in place, certainly when it comes to P-plates, price incentives to try to encourage safer driving behaviour.

Mr Hanson: I thought it was about the cost for learner drivers.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, you will be warned next time I have to come back to you.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, will you rule out further increases to the cost of learner drivers licences?

MR RATTENBURY: That is a matter for budget cabinet. It is fair to say that each year there is a range of government charges that increase by WPI. I cannot think whether this specifically is one of them. I will take advice on that and provide an answer to Miss Burch on notice.

MS LAWDER: Minister, how does an L-plater's driving history affect the cost of their licence?

MR RATTENBURY: Obviously it does not, Madam Speaker.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Coe: Right. So your first answer was—

MR RATTENBURY: About P-platers, Mr Coe. You probably were not listening because you were too busy interjecting.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs Dunne interjecting—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne, you are warned. Mr Coe, you are warned.

Government—fees and charges

MR HANSON: My question is to the minister for regulatory services. Minister, according to a report by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, Canberrans have the highest weekly spend on vehicle registration. Minister, why are Canberrans paying the most on vehicle registration in Australia?

MR RAMSAY: Noting that the minister for regulatory services does not have portfolio responsibility for the setting of the fees, I will take that on notice and consult with my colleagues.

Mr Coe: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Coe?

Mr Coe: Perhaps the minister could advise, for everybody's benefit, who is the responsible minister, and the responsible agency.

MADAM SPEAKER: The question was put to the minister for regulatory services. Do you have a supplementary question, Mr Hanson?

MR HANSON: I do. I am not sure whom it is to. It is a bit of a lottery. We will see how we go. Minister, will you rule out any further increases to the cost of vehicle registration?

MR BARR: Decisions in relation to fees and charges are obviously informed by line areas but are ultimately taken by budget cabinet. That is the answer to the substantive question. In relation to the costs of registering a vehicle in the ACT, I can advise members that that cost has come down significantly as a result of the change in CTP insurance schemes and that motorists in the ACT are paying hundreds of dollars less than they were several years ago and hundreds of dollars less than the preferred scheme of the Canberra Liberals.

MISS C BURCH: Chief Minister, what information does the line area provide to treasury in order to make that assessment?

MR BARR: They would provide an estimation of the total number of, in this instance, vehicles that would be registered and the various discounts that apply, and that would then inform the total level of revenue collected. There are, of course, provisions in place for a number of these fees and charges to be indexed, in line either with the consumer price index or the wage price index. The government, through various previous budgets, has also—in the context of registrations—provided some further, additional concessions or expanded the scope of concessions. In relation to drivers licences, which have been the subject of previous questions, the government has also provided incentives for safe drivers.

Bushfires—wildlife protection

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Minister, what steps did the government take to protect animals prior to the bushfires?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Cheyne for the question and her interest in the environment across Canberra. The ACT government has been proactive in protecting native animals during the current bushfire season.

Our parks and conservation team have been relocating several threatened species to safe locations away from the Orroral Valley fire. Twenty-six endangered eastern bettongs, part of the Tidbinbilla threatened species recovery program, were evacuated by ADF aircraft to secure facilities at Mt Rothwell in Victoria. Two critically endangered southern brush-tailed rock wallabies and two yellow-footed rock wallabies, which require ongoing care, were transferred to Taronga Zoo. More brush-tailed rock wallabies were also relocated from Tidbinbilla to Mt Rothwell by ADF aircraft. A small population of critically breeding northern corroboree frogs and Tidbinbilla's captive koalas were transferred to purpose-built facilities at the Australian National University. This follows the successful relocation of seven platypus from the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve to Taronga Zoo at the end of December.

In addition to relocation efforts, bushfire preparations were undertaken to make the area safer for remaining animals. This included fuel reduction burns, installation of containment lines, removal of vegetation around key enclosures, and the installation of sprinkler systems in the holding areas. This work would not have been possible without the support of our partners, including the Australian National University, the Australian Defence Force, Mt Rothwell, Zoos Victoria, Taronga Zoo, Icon Water, our catchment groups, ParkCare and Landcare.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has helped to successfully relocate our threatened animals. I look forward to their safe return to our nature reserve.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what update can you provide about the impact of bushfire on the ecology and heritage?

MR GENTLEMAN: The Orroral Valley bushfire spanned over 80,000 hectares and saw the ACT enter a state of emergency, becoming the territory's worst-ever environmental disaster.

While Canberra has been saved, and we have not lost a house, property or life in the ACT, the impact to Namadgi—an area that all of us love—has been significant. While the efforts of parks and conservation and the Emergency Services Agency have ensured that many of our key environmental and heritage assets have been saved, 80 per cent of Namadgi National Park has been affected by the fire.

I am pleased to report that the ACT government's recovery and resilience efforts are well underway, with the rapid risk assessment team of specialists assessing how the fire has impacted threatened species, habitat and water quality, as well as threats from debris flow as a result of rain. I will continue to update the Assembly as this important work progresses.

MS CODY: Minister, what investments has the government made to support environment groups?

MR GENTLEMAN: This is an important question. The government is committed to supporting our local environmental groups, including those who will play a key role in bushfire recovery. Last week, I was pleased to announce a significant increase of funding for the ranger assist program, as part of the mid-year budget boost, of more than \$7.8 million of investments across environment and planning.

The ranger assist program supports volunteers to work directly on important environmental conservation in our region with parks and conservation staff, including bushfire recovery. This additional mid-year funding will also ensure the continuation of ACT Waterwatch, which brings the Canberra community together to help to monitor and care for our sensitive catchment areas. I am pleased to supply this additional support to these programs and would like to thank all Canberrans who are involved in this important work.

Motor vehicles—registration

MR WALL: My question is to Minister for Business and Regulatory Services. When a Canberran buys a car privately interstate it is a requirement to transfer the rego into the ACT within a month. In order to register the vehicle in the ACT, two inspections are required. One is a vehicle identification check, and the second a roadworthiness inspection. The wait time for the vehicle identification inspection is currently beyond one month. What is it that your government expects Canberrans to do who are unable to register their vehicle within the 30 days?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Wall for the question. Making sure that those checks are done is something that we class as a priority for road safety across Canberra and to make sure that people have confidence. I will take on notice the details of the wait time, how that is being dealt with at the moment so that we can continue to provide the best quality services for the people of Canberra.

MR WALL: Minister, why are Access Canberra and the road transport unit failing to adequately meet the demands of Canberrans, particularly following the hailstorm, when a significant number of vehicles are being brought in from interstate, and why is it that Access Canberra fails to advise residents when they seek to make a booking that two inspections are required and that they should be made at the same time?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Wall for the supplementary question. I will take the second part of the question on notice.

In terms of the first part, there is obviously a substantial increase in matters relating to inspections of vehicles in relation to the unprecedented hailstorm that moved through in January, which has been classed as the worst hail in at least 20 years. Access Canberra is doing a fantastic job, and it is disappointing to hear Mr Wall talk down the people who are working so hard in Access Canberra and say that they are failing to provide services.

Access Canberra has some of the most dedicated and most highly skilled people across the ACT public service. They are providing an excellent service. They have worked extended hours. They have worked around the clock a lot of times throughout January and February. I place on record my highest regard and my appreciation for their dedication and work. At the moment, with that hailstorm, there are circumstances which are not usual. I commend the people of Access Canberra for working extremely hard and doing their best for the people of Canberra.

MS LAWDER: Minister, will you apologise to those Canberrans who have been inconvenienced by the delay in inspections of their replacement cars after the hailstorm?

MR RAMSAY: Madam Speaker, although the hailstorm was not within my control, and nor was it within the control of the people at Access Canberra, for those people who are affected by that at the moment—and there is a delay that is having a negative impact—I do apologise that the difficult and unprecedented circumstances are making it difficult not only for Access Canberra but for the people of Canberra.

To the extent that Access Canberra has not been able to meet those unprecedented demands, I apologise for any delay. I can assure you and other members opposite that the excellent staff at Access Canberra will continue to do everything they can to make sure that the very high satisfaction rating that Access Canberra staff have achieved over a number of years now—amazing success in terms of the satisfaction rating—not only remains but increases.

Emergency services—procedures

MRS JONES: My question is to the minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, I refer to audio from the RFS radio that gave RFS units permission to use lights and sirens to get to the Beard fire, and I quote: “Yeah, COMCEN to all units—well RFS units—you can utilise your lights and sirens at road speed to manage traffic. Feedback: utilise your lights and sirens at road speed to get through traffic. Over.”

However, the *Canberra Times* on 13 February stated that the ESA said that crews were not told they could use lights and sirens and were only granted exemptions to mount the verge to bypass traffic. Minister, given that RFS units were explicitly told to utilise their lights and sirens, how can the ESA say they were not given permission to do so?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mrs Jones for the question. I can advise that ACT Rural Fire Service volunteers and staff do not currently undertake urgent duty driving, or UDD, following an ACT Rural Fire Service chief officer's direction issued on 20 August 2019. WorkSafe ACT is working closely with the ESA on UDD policy.

The ACT RFS chief officer made a risk-based decision to cancel all urgent duty driving under lights and sirens for all ACT Rural Fire Service staff and volunteers. The direction was to address the fact that the ACT Rural Fire Service does not provide urgent duty driving training to members and there is no currency or skill to be maintained. UDD is a dangerous undertaking.

Mrs Jones: I raise a point of order on relevance, Madam Speaker. The minister is talking about the category of UDD, but I did not mention UDD in my question. The question was why they were told to use lights and sirens in a recording and then the minister's own department stated that they were told they could mount the verge. Those are two totally different things. Can the minister please be directly relevant to that question.

MADAM SPEAKER: In the time you have left, minister, can you provide some clarification on that?

MR GENTLEMAN: Madam Speaker, I did say lights and sirens in my answer and I will refer Mrs Jones to that earlier answer. There was no change in policy during the Beard fire; however, an exemption, as Mrs Jones has indicated, was given to a select number of vehicles. They were not issued an exemption for full UDD. They were not given permission to go through traffic lights or increase speed. They were given permission to use the verge of the road to safely bypass heavy traffic on Pialligo Avenue. The exemption was granted due to their proximity to the fireground. *(Time expired.)*

MRS JONES: Minister, given that the order was to utilise lights and sirens with no mention of the verge, when was the direction clarified?

MR GENTLEMAN: I have not been given any update other than what I have just presented to the chamber, so I will seek further information from the directorate.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you now begin training RFS volunteers in urgent driver duty so that they can utilise their lights and sirens in future bushfires?

MR GENTLEMAN: I have had briefings from the chief of the Rural Fire Service. He has provided me with the information that, in his view, UDD is not required by the Rural Fire Service at this time. If there is a change in the advice from ESA then I am happy to pursue extra training for the Rural Fire Service. They receive very good

training, and I am very pleased with the work that ESA does with the Rural Fire Service.

Can I congratulate them again for the fantastic work that they have done, along with the rest of the ESA over this recent period—an incredible challenge for all the ACT—and our ESA has outshone the rest of Canberra. Canberra has supported them. In all the forums that I have gone to there has been not one word of negativity about the work that ESA has done. Let me congratulate them again on behalf of all Canberrans.

Education—school cleaners

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, what is the government doing within the education portfolio to ensure secure, good jobs for Canberrans?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cody for the question and note her interest in supporting good and fair workplace conditions, particularly for low paid workers in the ACT.

Within my portfolio responsibilities I have been particularly focused on improving the employment conditions of government school cleaners engaged by contracted service providers. The ACT government welcomed 272 school cleaners into the public service on 1 February this year. These workers were previously employed by private contractors. The government made the important decision last year to insource school cleaning. It became clear to the government that achieving the government's high standard was unlikely to occur through an outsourced service.

Our new cleaning teams are working hard to keep the ACT's 88 public schools and more than 132 individual sites all over Canberra in a good state for learning and teaching. In the coming weeks, specialty cleaning teams will come online to provide additional services across schools such as floor treatments, chewing gum removal and specialised carpet cleaning. These teams will also help get schools ready ahead of events like open nights to ensure that each school is presented in its best light.

A range of new cleaning equipment is being delivered to schools to improve the ongoing nature of cleaning services. These include scrubbers and buffers to better maintain hard floors, broad area vacuum machines to create efficiencies in some schools, and trialling some new initiatives to improve cleaning results.

I was so happy to join our school cleaners to hand out their uniforms a few weeks ago. These uniforms provided a sense of identity amongst the school cleaners, and their sense of pride in becoming ACT public service employees was incredibly moving.

MS CODY: Minister, what does this change mean for our school cleaners?

MS BERRY: Insourced cleaning will not only benefit our schools but improve the lives and wellbeing of cleaners through secure and decent employment. The government believes that all workers are entitled to fair, safe working conditions and secure employment wherever possible. The government is proudly taking on responsibility for providing this to public school cleaners.

Contrary to the repeated incorrect claims of the opposition, I can advise members that no cleaner previously employed by a contractor who expressed interest in direct employment with the government was declined this opportunity due to visa issues. If a cleaner was legally entitled to work in Australia within their visa conditions, they had the opportunity to be employed by the ACT government.

Secure employment with the government in fact contributes to visa holders and refugees being accepted within the broader community.

The government is now also able to take steps to better value this workforce. For example, cleaners have access to career pathways through ongoing public sector employment. This will be supported by individualised plans that provide the opportunity to obtain recognised skills or to transition into other roles within the ACT public service.

Cleaning staff are valued for the contributions they make to providing high quality learning institutions. They are an important and valued part of the school community, and they also add incredible value to the school environment.

MR GUPTA: Minister, how will this change benefit the ACT community?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Gupta for the supplementary question. The ACT government values the work of cleaners in our schools. Cleaning is important. It provides students, teachers and other staff with comfortable and safe workplaces to learn and work. Insourcing cleaning services means better value for money. Members should know that ethical, industrially compliant employment is required for the territory to get good value for money.

This change also means more flexibility in how cleaning services are delivered. The schools cleaning service will provide schools with an integrated cleaning program addressing cleaning needs. Site-specific cleaning plans have been developed in consultation with schools to ensure that the needs of each site are met. These plans identify daily, weekly, quarterly and annual cleaning services. Staff management, including managing unplanned leave arrangements, is now coordinated centrally, meaning a more effective service across the school system.

The government is also enhancing inclusion in our community. This is an extremely diverse workforce, many of whom are migrants or refugees. Around 93 per cent identify as not speaking English as their first language. A large number of these workers are from the S'gaw Karen people now living here after fleeing conflict in Myanmar. There is also a cohort of Iranian refugees and some who are Bhutanese migrants. Securing good jobs for these people where they are respected and treated fairly will make an important contribution to continuing our shared commitment to embracing and celebrating cultural diversity.

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

Supplementary answer to question without notice Housing—affordability

MS BERRY: I wanted to clarify that my office has received a letter from Mrs Kikkert about a constituent. However, it would be helpful if, with the permission of the constituent, she could be identified so that my office could make sure that she was supported. But I confirm that I have received a letter from Mrs Kikkert.

Transport Canberra—network 19

Debate resumed.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for City Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Recycling and Waste Reduction, Minister for Roads and Active Travel and Minister for Transport) (3.01): In my first press conference as the Minister for Transport, I said:

We've seen a significant increase in the number of journeys being taken across our public transport network compared to this time last year. So we're starting from a very good position. We'll continue to monitor how the transport network is operating and to make sure it meets the needs of all Canberrans.

The starting point for the network is seeing a significant increase in the number of people using the public transport network so that's a very good outcome but we need to listen to feedback and see how we can further improve the network to make sure it meets the needs of all Canberrans.

We are continuing to see more and more Canberrans using public transport. There were 7.1 per cent more journeys made on public transport in the three months ending 31 December compared to the same time period in 2018. This reflects the high take-up of 10 rapid services that were implemented, the seven-day-a-week network and the greater span of services to better connect Canberra. However, we have also been closely monitoring the MyWay data, how the public transport system is being used, particularly over the first six months of operations, and how it can be improved, particularly local bus services to the suburbs.

During the first six months of bus operations we made 136 tweaks to the network. From term 2 we are now making more significant changes in our network update to some routes as a result of community feedback on network 19 and analysis of patronage data, changes designed to encourage even more Canberrans to catch public transport. We have heard that the residents of Tuggeranong want to be able to access the Canberra Hospital more easily, and, as of term 2, three local route services from Erindale will travel through to Woden via the hospital and a bus will travel through Wanniasa to Woden on Athllon Drive as well.

We heard that the R4 was very busy during the peaks. That has been the case for a longer time period than network 19 has been in service, and we are adding extra capacity by making sure that R5 services are available on the same direct route to Civic as the R4, which will further increase the capacity of those services and also

help to cut travel times for Tuggeranong residents who are looking to use the R5 to get directly into the city.

Another key improvement that we are making is that we will be establishing a new route to service Barton through Russell from Woden and the city that will be running very frequently. I will be releasing the timetable in mid-March with further detail about that. Local services from Palmerston, Crace, Nicholls and Casey will be provided to Belconnen. Improved services will be provided through Giralang, Kaleen and McKellar, with more routes and direct local services to Gungahlin. Better access to Mitchell will be provided through route 18 being extended to Dickson, reducing the need for multiple transfers. We are making further changes that respond to feedback that we have had through the network being implemented last year.

In relation to students, I know that Canberra's students have adapted well to the new network with 2.2 per cent more journeys being taken by students on the public transport network compared to the same time in 2018. Young people are now choosing to use public transport for journeys outside of their school trips. It is great to see young people using public transport to do other things, to go to recreational activities on the weekend. They are being supported by Transport Canberra customer service officers at our interchanges, if they need it.

We have been listening to schools, school communities and their representatives on what improvements can be made to better connect students with public transport since the new network started. I will be announcing further improvements to public transport for schools, based on feedback, when I release the timetable around mid-March.

In relation to weekend services, we have seen a very significant increase in the use of public transport journeys taken on weekends, with 19.9 per cent more journeys on the weekend in the last quarter of last year compared to 2018. Last week I tabled in the Assembly the second quarterly update of the weekend transport action plan quarterly update that outlined a number of actions that have either been completed or are in the process of being delivered to improve the reliability of weekend services.

Weekend reliability has dramatically increased since I made changes to the weekend timetable last year to improve reliability. We made the decision to clearly prioritise reliability while we took actions that are outlined under the weekend bus action plan to increase the number of bus drivers. We have recruited 87 new bus drivers since our recruitment drive got underway, and we are funding an addition 43 in the funding that was announced in the budget review to help us deliver a frequent and reliable public transport network.

This means that Transport Canberra will be increasing bus services for local bus routes on Saturdays during the day from term 2. I will continue to update the Assembly as we work on actions to improve weekend reliability and frequency, including how we can improve services on Sundays going forward.

The government is making ongoing investments in growing and improving our public transport system, which includes building light rail to Woden and other parts of

Canberra; the procurement of a new ticketing system for buses and light rail that will incorporate smart technology; providing better information for customers by replacing the ageing NXTBUS system; extending the am and pm peak services for light rail and increasing frequency from term 2 from six-minute to five-minute headways in am peaks; a new bus depot in Woden to service an expanding bus fleet; investing in 84 new buses to provide better, more comfortable, more efficient bus services for our growing city; replacing all the older buses that are not wheelchair accessible or air-conditioned with new buses by 2022; expanding popular park-and-ride services at Wanniasa, north Weston and other places through the development of a park-and-ride strategy; making dozens of upgrades to local bus stops; and investing in improvements to wayfinding and signage in major interchanges, including the city and Woden, as well as in Lanyon.

The ACT government is continuing to get on with the job of improving our public transport system to better connect Canberrans. More people are using public transport. We are continuing to monitor usage and listening to feedback on how it can be improved. We have made changes and will continue to make improvements to our public transport network, with 136 tweaks last year and a network update in term 2 this year. We will continue to improve our public transport system every year into the future.

While our government is investing in better public transport for Canberrans, it is clear from the content of today's motion, or the lack thereof, that the Canberra Liberals have no plan for our public transport network. There is no vision for the improvements that they would like to see in this motion. It is an election year and they have given up. Maybe it is because they are too scared to outline core Liberal Party policy: the privatisation of Canberra's bus services. This is exactly what the Liberals have done in coming to government in South Australia and in New South Wales.

Ms Lawder: You know it is a lie. You know it is a lie.

MR STEEL: If it is a lie, rule it out. Rule out privatisation of Canberra's bus services.

Ms Lawder: You are making it up. You are making it up as you go along.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Pettersson): Mr Steel, please resume your seat. Ms Lawder, I think I just heard you say that was a lie.

Ms Lawder: I said, "You know it is a lie."

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I would ask you to withdraw that.

Ms Lawder: On what basis, Mr Assistant Speaker?

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: You are implying that the minister is a liar.

Ms Lawder: I think I am, yes.

Ms Berry: It is clearly unparliamentary, Ms Lawder.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Are you not going to withdraw it?

Ms Lawder: No.

Ms Cheyne: Name her.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: You are warned.

Ms Lawder: Thank you.

MR STEEL: Members of the opposition must come clean with Canberrans over their plans to privatise Transport Canberra's bus services. Our government's vision is clear—the government is continuing to get on with the job of delivering public transport for Canberrans and keeping bus services in public hands. We will continue to look at data, we will continue to listen to the community on how our public transport network is operating and we will continue to make practical changes to improve the transport network and bus routes, expand the success and benefits of light rail to other parts of our city and encourage even more people to use public transport.

Those are the things that I said we would do and those are the things that we have done consistently since network 19 has come in and we will continue to do going forward. We will continue to listen to the community and we will continue to look at the data, we will continue to make improvements to the system, as we have done over the past 10 months and as we have done in the many years before that as well. This is what we will continue to do in the future to improve public transport and to increase the very significant growth that we have seen in public transport patronage in this city.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (3.11): This motion lacks detail, and I think that is by design, because this motion is about some very simple concepts. It is essentially about the concept of human decency. In this motion we are calling upon the minister to apologise. We understand that, in the big picture of the changes that are being made to the transport system, there are some good stories. We have heard Minister Steel roll some of them out, and there is no doubt that there have been some winners. But there are also a lot of really, really bad stories.

Minister Steel spoke of young people who are getting on public transport for the first time. I have two young people at my house were forced to buy cars because, at the point that the changes were made, they were not able to get to their destinations on time. It is wonderful for Ms Cheyne to roll her eyes, but for one of those young people it would have required a 6.15 am bus to get from Theodore to Narrabundah on time.

I think that everybody, in their hearts, agrees that the trashing of the bus network—or at least the changes to the bus network—has had a massive negative effect on the lives of many people, irrespective of the positive effect that it may have had on others. There have been a large number of people who have been negatively impacted. I have spoken firsthand to many who have been severely affected by the changes. They are angry and hurt, and one of the decent things to do for these people is to apologise.

To sort of quote my Labor colleague the Deputy Chief Minister, or to continue a practice of taking Ms Berry wildly out of context and to quote her in part, I would say to Minister Steel, “I’ve been saying sorry to people since before you were born—and some of them were probably childcare workers.” I had enormous problems saying sorry when I was nine years old. I can vividly the long stand-off that I had with my parents. Ultimately, there was a particular incident during which I was confined to my room until I was big enough to come out and say that I was sorry. My mother wondered if we could confine the minister to his office, but I told her that was not possible.

Everyone messes up from time to time, but what sets healthy relationships apart from unhealthy ones is the ability and willingness to own up to mistakes and/or politics. What we are talking about here is the relationship that Minister Steel has with his electorate and with the city generally. That is what the motion is about. It is part of the human condition to want to be right all the time, but we cannot achieve that.

We are all going to make mistakes. All we were asking for was an admission that some people have been negatively impacted and to apologise. The first step is recognising that apologising is not about who is right or wrong in any given situation. It is about acknowledging the other person’s feelings and taking accountability for your part in that, however large or small. Is it really that difficult?

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Ms Lawder, upon further consideration, if you do not withdraw your previous statement, I will have to name you.

MS LAWDER: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. It is a tough choice. It is very difficult with my principles. I believe the minister was saying something that he knew to be not the case.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Ms Lawder, it is not a debate.

MS LAWDER: At your ruling, Mr Assistant Speaker, I withdraw.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms Lawder.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (3.16): I thank Miss Candice Burch for bringing this motion before the Assembly today. I rise to speak in full support of the idea that the Minister for Transport should apologise to Canberrans for disastrous changes to the transport network. In doing so I wish to share the experiences of a Canberra resident who recently contacted me to explain his situation and ask for redress. Nick, as I will call him, is a young man who works as an apprentice in Hume. When he accepted his apprenticeship, he understood that he would be able to travel to the worksite each day by taking the No 88 bus from Symonston to Hume. This gave him the confidence and sense of independence that allowed him to start this new and important chapter in his life.

This tired old government then decided it could somehow improve the bus network by axing people’s buses and removing their stops. In Nick’s case, he found himself

working in a suburb that no longer has any public transportation at all. Hume is filled with businesses that are engaged in light manufacturing, providing many opportunities for young Canberrans to apprentice in a trade, but now it has been cut off for any who do not own their own vehicles or are too young to get a licence.

Nick has tried to deal with this disastrous change by catching rides to and from Hume with others he knows who also work there. This fix, however, proved unreliable, and consequently Nick struggled to consistently get himself to the worksite on time. Sometimes, despite his best planning, he could not get there at all. The end result is that Nick faces losing his apprenticeship, along with the hopes and dreams attached to it.

This is the last thing he wants to happen, so Nick has started travelling to Hume via taxi. This costs him \$25 each way, he explained to me. If he also needs to take a taxi home afterwards, the total expense is \$50 per day. To put this into context, that is almost half of Nick's daily pay rate. The Barr government's decision to cancel his bus nearly cost Nick his job, and now it is costing him nearly half of his income.

I hope, Mr Assistant Speaker, that you understand how Nick feels. I think it should be obvious to every member of this Assembly what Nick thinks of this government's so-called improvements to the bus network. Nick has done everything right, but this government's failed transport changes have made his life very hard. Nick deserves an apology, and forgotten Hume deserves a bus. Nick wants to complete his apprenticeship, and that means the bus needs to come back.

I join with my Liberal colleagues in calling on the Minister for Transport to apologise to Nick and the many thousands of Canberrans like him. I also hope that those opposite will have the good sense to genuinely fix this nightmare and bring Hume's bus back.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.19): Mr Assistant Speaker, Mr Steel has referred to the fact that they are making improvements to the bus network, but you can ask any resident of Tuggeranong whether that is the case and they will say no. The government's own figures back that up. There has been a reduction in patronage of public transport in Tuggeranong since the introduction of network 19. This is not an improvement. As with many other things that this government do, they take things away. They have taken away bus services in Wanniasa, for example; then, when they have forced people to go to the park and ride, they have said they will increase the number of car parks at the park and ride. Now they have to put in more footpaths to lead to the park and ride, and the park-and-ride footpath from the car park goes through a floodway.

There are many problems here. But the crux of this matter is that the government have taken their bus services away, given them some paltry little thing, and expected them to be grateful. I can tell you, minister for buses, that the people of Tuggeranong are not grateful for these little crumbs.

Apart from the petition that my colleague Miss C Burch put to the Assembly, containing about 7,000 signatures, there was a specific petition about buses in

Wanniassa, signed by nearly 700 residents, calling broadly on the government to reinstate some, if not all, of the bus services cut from Wanniassa. Why was this the case? The number of patrons dropped dramatically. Many bus routes went through areas where there are few stops or where the stops are remote from residences. Large areas of the suburb have no nearby bus service.

The bus routes take little account of not just the climate in Canberra, where it can be enormously hot during summer and really cold during winter, but whether the walking distance of up to a kilometre or more is suitable and appropriate for residents, including elderly residents, and especially in a suburb like Wanniassa where there are a number of hills. To get to their nearest bus stop, elderly or other residents now have to go up over a hill and down a hill to get to that kilometre-or-so-away bus stop. And the same is the case on the way back. It is not easy for them. It is not easy, and it is having an adverse impact on them—on their inclusion and on their ability to participate in their community and in social events.

It is about elderly people. It is about people with mobility issues or people with disability. It is about parents with prams, and it is about grandparents who are looking after grandchildren and trying to take them out and about during the day. It is evident that this bus network is not meeting the needs of those people.

They are not providing adequate coverage of the suburbs. Bus stops have been closed. Why can we not ensure that Tuggeranong has an adequate bus service? Why? The commencement of the tram from Gungahlin to the city meant cutting bus services and bus stops in Tuggeranong. Why? The people of Tuggeranong just cannot understand why that is the case. I cannot understand why that is the case.

The new network has seen well over 100 tweaks. Now there are more changes coming. I am unsure when tweaks become changes and when changes become a new network; it is just a matter of muddying the waters to show how dismally that bus network is failing the residents of Tuggeranong.

That is just one small snapshot from Tuggeranong as to why my colleague Miss Burch's motion calling on the minister to apologise for this debacle, this transport disaster, is being debated today. It shows the minister's dismissal of and disrespect for Tuggeranong residents. It is no wonder that the residents of Tuggeranong, in return, talk about their distrust of this government.

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (3.24): I thank my colleague and fellow member for Kurrajong, Miss Burch, for bringing forward this motion for debate, and for her advocacy for the Canberrans that this government has clearly abandoned in its abysmal handling of public transport.

It matters little whether this is network 19 version 2 tweaks or network 20; whatever they want to call it, it is still a dud in so many ways. There are schools that have no buses, despite promises. Other bus users were told they would be listened to but they have not been. There is still no certainty about weekend services, especially Sunday services.

In February last year I raised the concerns of many constituents in old Narrabundah, in my electorate. I told the Assembly then:

Under several different route names, the No 5 route has serviced the residents of the inner south for decades. In particular, the residents of what is affectionately known as old Narrabundah have relied on this bus to take them to the city, Russell, Canberra Hospital or the Woden town centre. Similarly, the No 4 route, which connected residents of Red Hill, Narrabundah and Griffith with Woden and the city, was a popular route that many residents of the inner south had come to rely on.

In October—

2017—

all of that changed. The No 5 route was cancelled altogether and the No 4 route was changed in a poor attempt to fill the void left by the cancellation of the No 5. Two bus routes were hastily stitched together to create a monster route by the poor judgement and short-term thinking of its creator. Let us call this the Franken-route.

Ironically, the government that is so very good at talking the talk about looking after our vulnerable Canberrans has created a public transport network where many of our vulnerable Canberrans do not even have direct access to essential medical services.

Two years later, these residents are still waiting to learn whether a simple request for a direct route to Woden will be realised. However, those who in the last two years have needed to get to Canberra Hospital or to Woden have probably already given up on the public transport system, anyway—given up on wishing, hoping and thinking that perhaps this ACT government is actually listening to them.

We know this government do little for residents in the inner south, perhaps presuming that they do not need to catch a bus, or perhaps they simply do not care. In any event, when they have asked for a new bus stop or improved bus routes—and I have raised their concerns on numerous occasions—it has always fallen on deaf ears.

In November we wrote to the minister, seeking a new bus stop opposite Narrabundah College for residents wanting to travel to the city, because the arrangements at the time involved a difficult crossing and a very long walk, especially for many of my constituents who have mobility issues. We asked for a new bus stop on Sturt Avenue so that residents could access the No 6 rapid bus. Still no luck.

It is unacceptable that the Minister for Transport still absolutely refuses to accept any responsibility for the shambles that this government has made of our bus network. And the ones that suffer because of this incompetence and this arrogance are the hardworking, everyday Canberrans who rely on buses to get around our city.

It matters little whether the total failures of this bus network were caused before Minister Steel's time. It matters little whether his government simply got it wrong. It

matters little whether he was given a hospital pass with this network. What does matter to Canberrans is that their concerns are indeed being listened to. What matters to Canberrans is that they have access to a reliable public transport network that will get them where they need to go when they need to go. What matters to Canberrans is a minister that will take responsibility for the role that he has been entrusted with and a minister that is big enough to acknowledge that his government got it wrong.

I commend Miss Burch's motion to the Assembly and I thank her for her continued efforts to stand up for Canberrans left behind by this government. My constituents know that, after 19 years of Labor, the only way they will get a service that works for them is via a change of government, and, like us, they cannot wait for October.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Health and Minister for Urban Renewal) (3.29): I was not intending to speak on this motion, but I need to respond to Ms Lee's comments because she is yet again misleading the people of Narrabundah in relation to this matter. When the previous changes were made—changes that preceded network 19, with the introduction of the green rapid route R6 route—Ms Lee, and probably Miss Burch, were trying to tell the people of old Narrabundah that there was no longer any bus that was servicing Narrabundah shops.

This was not true. The Canberra Liberals caused a lot of confusion to the old Narrabundah community through the messages they were sending about bus route changes. I had people coming up to me at my mobile offices saying, "My goodness, there will no longer be any buses servicing Narrabundah shops." I said, "Well, that's not right. That's not true."

Ms Lee: Point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker. The minister is referring to certain comments that I have apparently made that have misled the residents of old Narrabundah. Can she please specify what those comments are, because she is just talking in a vacuum?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: What I say in debate should not be dictated by Ms Lee.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Pettersson): There is no point of order. If Ms Lee thinks that she has been misrepresented she can take it up outside the debate.

Ms Lee: That may be so; however, I do not know what the member is referring to, so I do not know what to respond to when she says that I am misleading.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Ms Lee, there is no point of order. Ms Stephen-Smith.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. As I said, I was referring to comments that were made to me at my mobile offices which I hold regularly across the inner south. People were representing to me that they understood there would no longer be a bus service in old Narrabundah and at the Narrabundah shops. That was clearly part of the messaging from the Canberra Liberals—that all of the bus service was being removed from old Narrabundah. That was never true. At that time there

was a change of route in order to facilitate the introduction of the green rapid, the R6 route, which has been extremely popular. In fact, with the take-up of the green rapid R6 route in that part of Canberra there has been an increase in ridership.

I certainly acknowledge that concerns were raised in relation to this change, which preceded the network 19 introduction. Certainly, a lot of concerns were raised with me about the change, and about the lack of a direct route to Woden in those changes preceding network 19. People were concerned about the need to change buses on Goyder Street, and we took up those concerns—I certainly did as a member of the Legislative Assembly representing the electorate of Kurrajong.

I had many conversations with Minister Fitzharris and her office about changes that could be made to address these issues. One of the changes to route 56 was to have it travel along Caley Crescent to provide some additional stops in the other part of Narrabundah. Most importantly, Ms Lee has completely ignored the fact that network 19 reintroduced a direct service from old Narrabundah to Woden via Canberra Hospital. It has been called, and is currently called, the AMC shuttle and it runs five days a week. It provides that direct service from old Narrabundah to Woden via the Canberra Hospital.

In the changes that Minister Steel recently announced, which will come into effect from 28 April, there will be a new route formalising the AMC shuttle and giving it a proper route name. I admit it is sometimes a bit hard to find if you do not know what to look for. The Canberra Liberals certainly will not tell you that it is there—I am sure they do not want to advertise the changes the government has made—but route 902 is going to be introduced in the new changes. As a member for Kurrajong I am very pleased to see this change; it is a demonstration that we listen to our constituents, including the people of the inner south. We recognise that people in Narrabundah have a direct link to Woden. Many people there see Woden as their town centre. So, under these new changes route 902 will provide a seven-days-a-week route connecting Woden, via Canberra Hospital and old Narrabundah, to Hume. Yes, it is a bus to Hume—a direct, seven-days-a-week service to Hume.

Hopefully it will also be of assistance to the constituent that Mrs Kikkert referred to. The changes are in response to the feedback that we have received from people. I acknowledge that Ms Lee and Miss Burch received concerns from members of the community, in the same way that I did, but it is absolutely untrue to say we have not listened to those concerns. We have consistently advocated to make these changes to the route and I very much welcome the new route 902, which will come into effect from 28 April. I encourage Ms Lee and Miss Burch, if they are talking to constituents in Narrabundah, to ensure that they are aware of the existing AMC shuttle service that runs five days a week.

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (3.35): Well, that was quite a pathetic, shameless response from the minister today—typically dirty politics that we have been seeing from him recently. He has claimed that he will continue to listen to feedback from Canberrans. However, given that he has not been listening so far, I do not know why he expects Canberrans to believe him now. He still has not addressed the issue that we

have been talking about today, and that is the fact that all of these problems with the bus network had been raised prior to the rollout of the new network.

We knew prior to the rollout that journeys from Tuggeranong would take longer. We knew that the lack of services between Barton, Russell, Woden and the city were a problem. We knew that there were not enough services to the Canberra Hospital. Back in August 2018, hundreds of residents signed a petition calling for services to be maintained between Palmerston, Crace, Nicholls and Casey, and Casey to Belconnen. Again, hundreds of residents had already raised issues about the lack of services for Giralang, Kaleen, McKellar and Mitchell. We also knew that weekend services would continue to be a problem.

This is all a little bit too *Yes, Minister*, because this government has cut many services, bus stops, weekend services and dedicated school bus services and has only now, in an election year, restored a fraction of those services. Yet the government expects Canberrans to be thankful. The minister is not listening to the Canberra Liberals, either. That is not at all surprising, given that he has not listened to the 13,000 pieces of feedback the government received during consultation, the 10,000 petition signatories or the dozens of media and news articles written during that time. He is not listening to Canberrans. He is not listening to the Canberra Liberals. Ironically, the most passion we see from the minister in this place is when he talks about the Canberra Liberals' apparent plans to privatise our buses. As I said last Tuesday—I will say it again, because the minister still does not get it—the Canberra Liberals have no plans to privatise bus services and will not do so.

Again, it is the government which has privatised public transport. The government privatised light rail services. The only person in this place who needs to come clean about having misled, misinformed and deceived Canberrans is the minister, with his continuous claims that he has listened to them. This minister is incapable of listening. He is incapable of admitting failure and he is incapable of apologising.

Ms Cheyne: Point of order. Mr Assistant Speaker, I seek your advice as to whether the word “deceived” is unparliamentary, given that it seems to have the same connotations as “misrepresenting” and “lying”.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Yes. Let me check that.

Ms Cheyne: If not, perhaps you could make a ruling.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Having consulted the previous rulings, I am of the view that it is unparliamentary language and I ask that you withdraw it.

MISS C BURCH: I withdraw it.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you.

MISS C BURCH: Every time we raise concerns that constituents have raised with us, the minister dismisses them. When residents raise concerns directly with the government through the consultation processes, he dismisses them. Today has been no

different. Yes, as Mr Parton said, this motion is deliberately lacking in detail. It is direct and to the point and it is the first motion, I believe, ever put in this place that has not been replaced with “replace all words”. The intention of the motion is simply to seek an apology from the minister.

To the point Ms Le Couteur made before lunch, I realise that this motion will not increase services or patronage; however, it would mean a great deal to all the people who have been left stranded by this government’s continued refusal to listen. It would mean an awful lot to those families that continue to suffer. This is, once again, an arrogant, pathetic and disrespectful response from an arrogant, heartless and out-of-touch government.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 10

Noes 13

Miss C Burch	Ms Lee	Ms Berry	Ms Orr
Mr Coe	Mr Milligan	Ms J Burch	Mr Pettersson
Mrs Dunne	Mr Parton	Ms Cheyne	Mr Ramsay
Mr Hanson		Ms Cody	Mr Rattenbury
Mrs Jones		Mr Gentleman	Mr Steel
Mrs Kikkert		Mr Gupta	Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Lawder		Ms Le Couteur	

Question resolved in the negative.

Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin

MR GUPTA (Yerrabi) (3.45): I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) recognises the significant impact Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin had on Canberra, by:
 - (a) winning the design competition for the plans of Canberra in 1912, shaping it into the modern and unique city we know today;
 - (b) influencing and overseeing the initial design of both North and South Canberra after becoming the Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction in 1913;
 - (c) creating the Commonwealth Heritage listed Pialligo Redwood Forest, Australia’s largest stand of mature Redwood species;
 - (d) designed several heritage listed institutions in the ACT, such as Canberra’s grave for Sir General Bridges on Mount Pleasant and Canberra’s Garbage Incinerator;

- (e) designing several buildings across Australia, such as the Capitol Theatre in Melbourne and numerous residential estates along the Sydney Harbour headlands; and
 - (f) influencing the field of architecture, such as being credited as one of the first designers to incorporate the idea of a carport into a residential design;
- (2) notes that after leaving Canberra, Walter Burley Griffin:
- (a) moved to India to design several new buildings, including a library for the University of Lucknow; and
 - (b) passed away on the 11th of February 1937 in Lucknow, India, where his gravesite continues to stand;
- (3) further notes the existing efforts to commemorate his contribution to Canberra, including:
- (a) the naming of Lake Burley Griffin;
 - (b) the viewing area on top of Mount Ainslie was renamed Marion Mahony Griffin View in 2013;
 - (c) Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin were recipients to the ACT Honour Walk in 2012;
 - (d) the Australian Government's National Capital Plan is the strategic plan for Canberra and the Territory and it ensures (amongst other things) "respect for the key elements of the Griffins' formally adopted plan for Canberra";
 - (e) numerous architectural drawings held in the National Library of Australia; and
 - (f) numerous archival materials held in the National Archives of Australia; and
- (4) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) acknowledge the significant contribution to our capital and consider naming future public places, for example, street names after Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin; and
 - (b) investigate how we can see further recognition of Walter Burley Griffin's gravesite in Lucknow.

Today I stand to discuss the lives and significant impact of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, and how we endeavour to recognise them in the future. The contribution they have made to Canberra, our surrounding regions and the field of architecture has been immense. Despite existing efforts to commemorate this impact, I believe there is more that could be done to commemorate their lives in the ACT and to respect Mr Griffin's final resting places in Lucknow, India.

As everyone in this chamber would know, Mr Griffin played a crucial role in the final design of our beautiful city. Following an international design competition launched by the Australian government in 1911, Griffin submitted designs and beat 136 other entrants to win the competition. His success led him to move to Canberra permanently and take on the role of federal capital director of design and construction. In this role,

he influenced and oversaw the initial design of both the inner north and inner south of Canberra.

Despite not all of Griffin's designs coming to fruition, his impact is still deeply evident in the Canberra we know today. The parliamentary triangle and major arteries radiating out of State Circle remain the heart of the city's design. The light rail along Northbourne Avenue reflects his original plans for Canberra. Similarly, the various districts with their own town centres can be seen across Canberra, sympathetic to Griffin's original design. Griffin acknowledged the need for urban planning and was flexible to meet the changes in growth and demand over time.

Griffin designed several heritage-listed institutions in the ACT, such as Canberra's grave for Major General Sir William Bridges on Mount Pleasant and Canberra's garbage incinerator. His designs often focused on natural features, with vistas and suburbs engulfed in green and native vegetation. Griffin created the commonwealth heritage-listed Pialligo redwood forest, which remains Australia's largest stand of mature redwood species.

Not only have Griffin's designs had a major impact on the unique Canberra lifestyle we enjoy today but he was largely influential in the design of other buildings and towns around Australia. He is credited with providing plans for large elements of the towns of Leeton and Griffith in New South Wales as well as the suburbs of Eaglemont and Castlecrag. Griffin also designed several prominent buildings across Australia, such as the such as the Capitol Theatre in Melbourne and numerous residential estates along the Sydney Harbour headlands.

The impact of Walter Burley Griffin's original plan and his impact on the overall development of the city can still be seen today. That impact is profoundly positive. Just last week, Indonesian President Joko Widodo visited Australia. As part of his visit, he met with Sally Barnes, the head of the National Capital Authority, to discuss Canberra's origins. Indonesia is currently in the process of moving its capital city from Jakarta to East Kalimantan province. As part of this move, the Indonesian government is investigating cities all over the world for inspiration. The President was particularly impressed with Canberra and was very interested in sustainability and modernisation, looking to Canberra as a model. I can understand this feeling, as when I first came to Canberra I fell in love with this city and its people. I was only posted here for three months, and now I have been living here for 20 years.

Mr Griffin worked alongside his wife, Marion Mahony Griffin, and it would be impossible to speak about Walter Burley Griffin without also recognising the role that Marion played in his career. Mrs Griffin was a wonderful architect in her own right. Growing up in Chicago, she was surrounded by strong women fighting for women's liberation, education and labour reforms. She became just the second woman to graduate with a degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After graduating, she produced several drawings for Frank Lloyd Wright that would assist him in establishing his career. After marrying Walter, Mrs Griffin is credited with pushing him to enter his Canberra designs and was the person who drew the eventual plan of Canberra city. Many believe that her drawings swayed the judges in their decision to award the design prize to her husband.

Mrs Griffin collaborated with her husband on a number of the other projects I have mentioned. They worked as equals, which was highly unusual for the time. It is incredibly important that we acknowledge Marion Mahony Griffin and her wonderful contribution, as we know that historically women or partners who worked with men were, sadly, written out of history. I want to make sure that when we engage in this dialogue, we acknowledge the significant work of Marion Mahony Griffin.

In the latter part of their lives, the Griffins moved to the city of Lucknow in India. Here they both engaged in various building designs, including a memorial to King George V, a bank, municipal offices, the University of Lucknow student union building, a museum and many other private buildings. Mr Griffin died in India in 1937 and was buried in Nishatganj Cemetery in Lucknow.

Last month, I visited Lucknow to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association of India regional conference there. While visiting, I made it my mission to track down Mr Griffin's grave. After an hour of searching, I came across his grave. It was largely forgotten and unkempt, with weeds engulfing the headstone. I must say that, despite clearly never meeting Mr Griffin, it was a moving experience to stand by his grave. It was stirring to reflect on the impact that he had had on the city I love so much. Following this encounter, I arranged to have the gravesite cleaned up, with the weeds cleared and the small fence that surrounds the headstone repainted.

I have since written an article for *CityNews* detailing my expedition, and the response has been amazing. As well as starting some wonderful conversations about the legacy of the Griffins, I have heard from a gentleman from the UK who is currently planning a trip to India. His grandfather is buried in the same cemetery as Walter Burley Griffin, and I have been able to help him find his grandfather's grave, which he will be visiting with his family while on his trip.

I have also been in contact with Stephanie Norris, whose father, Graeme Westlake, first discovered Walter Burley Griffin's unmarked grave in a cemetery in Lucknow in 1987. I am pleased to see the family of Mr Westlake—Ms Norris and her mother and sisters—present in the gallery. Thank you so much for coming. I was told that Mr Westlake has written a book on his experience in Lucknow. Mr Westlake shared my belief that Walter Burley Griffin deserved a better resting place, and made a considerable effort to improve the gravesite and ensure that it was properly marked. I am glad that I was able to continue Mr Westlake's efforts, and now I hope to ensure that they are maintained going forward.

The Honourable Denzil Godin, a member of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, assisted me in organising a memorial service at the gravesite, which took place last week, on 11 February, the 83rd anniversary of Walter Burley Griffin's death. Several representatives from various community organisations in the area attended, as well as students from Lucknow Christian College, which Walter Burley Griffin helped design. I have seen photos from the memorial service, and it was touching to see so many people paying their respects to Walter Burley Griffin and acknowledging his contribution to the city of Lucknow.

Unfortunately, the existence of Mr Griffin's final resting place is relatively unknown to both Canberrans and people in Lucknow. I believe that this could be a good opportunity for both Canberra and Lucknow. I would like to see an investigation into how this could become a place where people can come and pay their respects to the famous designer. I can confidently say that people from Canberra who visit would have the same touching experience that I had.

While I am trying to establish a committee and an NGO that can look after Griffin's grave on an ongoing basis, there needs to be something more done to promote the fact that this grave exists to residents and visitors in Lucknow. Something such as a display board or a brief history of Griffin's work and achievements could be placed in the vicinity of his grave to inform people about who Griffin is and his significance to both Canberra and Lucknow. I call on the government to investigate how we can further recognise this gravesite.

I acknowledge the efforts in the ACT that have been made to commemorate the lives of both Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. Most obvious was the naming of Lake Burley Griffin by Sir Robert Menzies in 1964. In 2013 the Mount Ainslie viewing area was renamed the Marion Mahony Griffin view, celebrating her contribution to the design of Canberra. The Australian government's National Capital Plan ensures "respect for the key elements of the Griffins' formally adopted plan for Canberra". Additionally, numerous architectural drawings and materials are held in the National Library of Australia and the National Archives of Australia.

Nevertheless, we are living in their legacies, and I think more could be done to celebrate their lives. I believe we all recognise the significant contribution both Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin have made to our wonderful city. I call on the ACT government to consider naming a future public place—for example, a street name—in commemoration of the work of the Griffins. I believe this is a necessary step to further recognise the contribution they have made to our city.

On Monday I received a letter from the Walter Burley Griffin Society in the ACT. I am pleased to see that Mr Peter Graves, the chair of the Walter Burley Griffin Society Canberra chapter, is present in the gallery. The Walter Burley Griffin Society have been working for years to preserve the memory of the Griffins and their impact on this city. I am glad to know that we will be able to continue working with them going forward, as they share my belief that both Walter and Marion deserve stronger recognition within Australia and Canberra.

The contribution of the Griffins to the nature of Canberra today is immense. Although we have outgrown the original plan, its foundation can be seen throughout central Canberra. It is safe to say that we would not live in such a beautiful city without the first step having been laid by the Griffins and their original plan. I hope the Assembly will consider my proposal for further recognition to be paid to the Griffins and their legacy. I commend this motion to the Assembly.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.56): I thank Mr Gupta for bringing on this motion today. I note and share his interest in, enthusiasm for and admiration of the

exceptional contribution made to our national capital by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. The vision, the dedication, that they put into their vision for Canberra is something that we are all still benefiting from. That we today enjoy a vibrant and livable city is in no small measure a direct consequence of the work that they put in so long ago.

I also note Mr Gupta's interest in the special relationship between Canberra and Lucknow, as the final resting place of Walter Burley Griffin and the work that Mr Gupta has done to improve the final resting place of Walter Burley Griffin. I support Mr Gupta's view that we need to acknowledge the contribution of both Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. Of course, the most obvious examples of that already in place are Lake Burley Griffin and the Marion Mahony Griffin view on Mount Ainslie. I am particularly pleased that in more recent times we have seen good and proper recognition being given to Marion Mahony Griffin's role. I put on the record my appreciation of the often understated and under-rated contribution made by Marion Mahony Griffin in the creation of our great city.

Marion was born in 1871 in Chicago, Illinois. After graduation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Marion returned to Chicago, where she became the first woman licensed to practise architecture in Illinois. In 1895 Marion was the first employee hired by Frank Lloyd Wright and she went to work designing buildings, furniture, stained glass windows and decorative panels. Her beautiful watercolour renderings of buildings and landscape became known as an integral part of Wright's style, although she was not usually given credit by that famous architect.

Marion Mahony Griffin's watercolour perspectives of Walter Burley Griffin's design for Canberra, the new Australian capital, were instrumental in securing the first prize in the international competition for the plan of the city. In 1914 the couple moved to Australia to oversee the building of Canberra, and Marion Mahony Griffin managed the Sydney office and was responsible for the design of their private commissions.

Walter Burley Griffin was invited to design a library for the University of Lucknow in India and travelled there in September 1935. Marion arrived in April 1936 and soon took charge of the office, where she oversaw the design of many buildings. Less than a year later, in 1937, Walter died and Marion then wound up the office and returned to Australia. Later she returned to the United States and largely retired from her architectural career. She died in 1961, aged 90.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to recognise both Walter's but especially Marion's contribution to Canberra but more broadly to architecture and the broader pioneering role of women in professional life. Marion's example has been an inspiration to women for a century.

Finally, I appreciate Mr Gupta's suggestion that we should acknowledge the contribution made by both Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin by naming locations in Canberra and, in particular, the motion today making that suggestion. But I would suggest Mr Gupta contact the ACT Place Names Committee, the committee which provides advice to establish policies for the naming of divisions or suburbs and public places on territory land in the Australian Capital Territory.

I thank Mr Gupta for bringing this motion forward today, for the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (4.01): I move the amendment circulated in my name:

Add:

“(c) work with the Federal Government on inclusion of key elements of the Griffins’ legacy on the National Heritage List, in a way that protects Canberra’s heritage while allowing community needs such as housing, transport and environmental sustainability to be met.”.

The Greens will be supporting the motion. However, we want to expand it in an important way, which is the reason for my amendment. In our view, the best way for this Assembly to honour the legacy of Walter and Marion Griffin is a practical one—that is, to ensure proper heritage protection for it. The Griffins’ contribution to Canberra is not a theoretical and stale bit of history; it is a legacy that we live in. It forms the backbone of the inner parts of our city. Most well known are the parliamentary triangle and Lake Burley Griffin. These are daily parts of life for many Canberrans, me included, because the bus from Woden to here goes through the parliamentary triangle.

The Griffins’ plan and Walter Burley Griffin’s subsequent work on the capital extend much further than the parliamentary triangle. They include the major streets of inner suburbs: Limestone Avenue, Northbourne Avenue, London Circuit and Canberra Avenue. Walter Burley Griffin also oversaw the design of several residential neighbourhoods and, though these plans were modified before the suburbs were built, many features of his work remain, including the street patterns in parts of Kingston, Barton, Forrest, Braddon, Turner and O’Connor.

It is important to note that the Griffins’ legacy is not just about the lake and the alignment of streets; instead, the Griffins’ legacy is a landscape that Canberrans are very, very lucky to live in. It is the public access to the wooded parks and peninsulas surrounding much of the lake. It is the view from the Commonwealth Avenue bridge east past the art gallery. It is also the view from the Commonwealth Avenue bridge to the Brindabellas. It is the restoration of native vegetation across the inner hills, much of which had been cleared for sheep farming prior to Canberra’s foundation. It is the view west along Constitution Avenue from Russell to the city which increasingly is grouped around City Hill, as the Griffins planned.

The Griffins’ legacy is, of course, a substantial drawcard for tourists. Mount Ainslie sees a constant stream of tour buses and cars with interstate numberplates, and they are coming to see the beautiful Griffin plan laid out across the valley below.

It is not widely known outside town planning circles that the NCA’s National Capital Plan is based of course—once you think about it—on Griffins’ work. In 2004 the NCA released a planning document called “The Griffin legacy” which analysed the legacy of the Griffins in central Canberra, and this led to major changes to the National Capital Plan. We can see the real-world impact of these changes in the

mixed-use development that is sprouting up along Constitution Avenue and in the recent restoration of University Avenue through the ANU to an unbroken, open boulevard, as it was when I went to uni there.

Many people in Canberra's planning, architecture and heritage communities believe that the Griffins' legacy should be nationally heritage listed, along with other key features of the national capital. Currently there are listings for individual places like Old Parliament House, but there is nothing that brings together the whole designed landscape. Because so much of this landscape is federally controlled, this heritage listing needs to be on the federal government's national heritage list. The federal government has been working on a listing for the parliamentary triangle, the lake and the inner hills as a result of several nominations by Canberrans. However, the national listing process needs the cooperation and support of the ACT government.

I was saddened earlier this term to discover through committee hearings that the ACT government appeared to be stalling on the listing process, and that is why I am moving this amendment. While I understand that the attitude has been more cooperative recently, I believe that it is important for the Assembly to make its view clear that the national listing should go ahead.

I briefly touch upon the most obvious concern that might be raised about such a heritage listing—that is, it will stop our city being able to serve the needs of our local community in areas such as housing, transport and a transition to a low or preferably zero carbon future. This need not be the case, provided the listing is carefully drafted and sensitively administered. For example, it should allow future housing supply in and around the city centre while blocking proposals that are excessively high or have too much visual impact.

Many cities around the world are successful while having much more widespread heritage protection than we are talking about here. It is also important to recognise that the Griffins envisaged a far denser city than the one we have at the moment, not as tall perhaps but with many more people living in areas like Constitution Avenue. The Griffins also envisaged a train going into Civic and trams. We should not see the Griffin legacy as in any way stopping public transport. The Griffin plan, if protected with a heritage listing, would not be a call to freeze our city.

I echo Ms Lawder's comments about Marion Mahony Griffin. The biggest gap in naming is not, of course, of Sir Walter Burley Griffin. He has a lake named after him, and that is Canberra's biggest landmark. Everybody who moves to Canberra quickly learns the name of the lake. Marion Griffin only has the viewpoint on the top of Mount Ainslie named after her, and very few people are even aware that that is named after her. Yet historians say that Walter's entry only won the design competition because of Marion. He was allegedly something of a ditherer, and apparently history says he would not have even got the competition entry finished and submitted without her pressure. When it came to judging, it was her artist's impression that swayed the final decision. She is considered to have been one of the finest architectural artists of her generation. I also second Ms Lawder's comments about her role as a female architect and the importance of that.

In conclusion, in the Greens' view the best way to acknowledge the Griffins' legacy is to make sure that it has heritage protection through the national heritage list. National heritage listing has strong support from the community, including planners, architects and heritage groups, including the National Trust. Such a listing can be done in a way that allows our city to continue to meet the community's need for housing, transport and transition to a low or preferably zero carbon future. I call upon members to support my amendment and the original motion.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (4.09): As a proud Canberran born and bred, it has been my privilege to have heritage in my portfolio. It has come to my attention that the gravesite in Lucknow of Walter Burley Griffin is in a sadly neglected state. This has led me to reflect on the stature of this man and his wife, Marion Mahony Griffin, and how they are inextricably bound to this territory.

Over the last 108 years, Walter and Marion Mahony Griffin have endured as a central part of Canberra's fascinating history and heritage. Their story is an important part of our story. This motion is fourfold and, firstly, is to recognise the significant impact this couple had on Canberra. As tourism numbers build up again after a difficult summer, and for those showing off our city to visiting friends and family, as I do, Mount Ainslie is an essential destination. From this view we can best appreciate the results of the design competition that they won in 1912, shaping it into the modern and unique city we know today.

Walter came out in 1913 to take up the post of federal capital director of design and construction. After briefly returning to the US in May 1914, both Marion and Walter arrived here. Over the 20-odd years of their stay, both developed a close relationship with the environment of their new home, so utterly different from what they were accustomed to in distant Illinois. Walter found the brown landscape, gums aplenty, compelling. Marion was overwhelmed by our flora.

On 22 January 2020 a fire started in the commonwealth-listed Pialligo redwood forest. This is the largest stand of mature redwood species in our nation and was born out of Griffin's vision for nature to be entwined in Canberra's design—a city set into the landscape. A recent visit confirmed that unfortunately about 40 redwoods were burnt on the eastern side. Griffin argued with Charles Weston about planting 120,000 of these redwoods. The horticulturist responsible for the capital's afforestation advised that they were ill suited to our dry climate but was ignored.

This was to be a sign of things to come, with his ideals coming into constant conflict, leading Walter to be dismissed from his post. Prior to leaving, he designed Canberra's garbage incinerator, and the grave for General Bridges on Mount Pleasant at Duntroon. He went on to design Castlecrag in Sydney, Leeton and Griffith in our Riverina district, plus numerous other buildings in Australia.

Those familiar with the folklore of the city would know that when the time came in the early 1960s to name the new lake, an overwhelming number of the coalition parliamentary colleagues of Prime Minister Robert Menzies wanted the parliamentary zone's prized addition to recognise their long-term leader. Of course, a zealous advocate for his adopted city and a keen student and mentor of Canberra's progress, Menzies refused, insisting that the American designer of Canberra should be accorded the honour. As with most things back then, the PM got his way and Lake Burley Griffin was formally named in 1962.

I note that other commemorations to both Walter and Marion include being inducted into the ACT's Honour Walk in 2012. The National Archives and National Library are recipients of numerous architectural drawings, Marion's superb paintings and other documents.

Whilst Walter received accolades, Marion, on the other hand, would continue to be marginalised, forgotten, for many years to come. This was rectified in Canberra in our centenary year, when the viewing area atop Mount Ainslie was named Marion Mahony Griffin view. The placename celebrates the viewpoint taken for the magnificent triptych *View from summit of Mount Ainslie* drawn by Marion Mahony Griffin for the international competition for the design of the federal capital won by her husband, Walter Burley Griffin, in 1912.

Marion was the second-ever female to graduate as an architect at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the first to obtain a certificate to practise. The visionary Canberra plan was truly a collaborative venture. Peter Muller put it best in his memorable 1976 Walter Burley Griffin lecture when he said that the Griffins were:

... unique as individuals and as a couple, a fine mixture of Yin and Yang. He—primarily concerned with matters of principle, of origin, of form. She—their immaculate execution, of detail, of design. Both being interlocked, essential to each other's personal fulfillment and individual creative spirit.

Walter and Marion moved to Lucknow, India, to design several new buildings for the university there. He died there on 11 February 1937. Marion lived until 1961 and is buried in Illinois. She was able to see a little of our fledgling capital's development. In the centenary year, Robyn Archer, the artistic director, and Dr David Headon, our official historian, visited Walter's gravesite in Lucknow.

In Canberra, I am pleased that the ACT Place Names Committee has been able to recognise a different aspect of Walter Burley Griffin's architectural contribution by endorsing the naming of Knitlock Street in Taylor. The name commemorates the modular concrete construction system developed by Griffin comprising mortarless interlocking wall blocks and roof tiles. Two prototype Knitlock cottages, "Gumnuts" and "Marnham", were built at Frankston, Victoria, in 1919.

I support the motion calling on the government to further acknowledge the significant contribution by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin to our capital.

I will ask the ACT Place Names Committee to investigate further opportunities to recognise the couple through the placenames process, in consultation with other agencies, including the City Renewal Authority and the Canberra National Memorials Committee.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.16): I fear very much that this amendment is moving us away from a very respectful and deserved recognition of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin and well into a planning space and what may happen in the future. I have absolute support for Mr Gupta's motion and, as I have already outlined, the very appropriate recognition of not just Walter Burley Griffin but Marion Mahony Griffin as a pioneer in her field and a pioneer for women. I think the amendment changes the whole character of this motion, which gives me pause for thought.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 2

Ms Le Couteur
Mr Rattenbury

Noes 21

Ms Berry	Mrs Kikkert
Miss C Burch	Ms Lawder
Ms J Burch	Ms Lee
Ms Cheyne	Mr Milligan
Ms Cody	Ms Orr
Mr Coe	Mr Parton
Mrs Dunne	Mr Pettersson
Mr Gentleman	Mr Ramsay
Mr Gupta	Mr Steel
Mr Hanson	Ms Stephen-Smith
Mrs Jones	

Amendment negatived.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

Illegal dumping

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (4.22): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that, despite the numerous complaints from the residents of Yerrabi, there has been insufficient action on the illegal dumping and litter occurring across the electorate;
- (b) this includes the abuse of charity bins, roadside litter and illegal dumping on vacant blocks and public spaces;

- (c) that the ACT Government has available a range of penalties under the Litter Act 2004 and the Dangerous Substances Act 2004 that are seemingly not enforced;
 - (d) that the ACT Government is also able to deploy the city rangers to inspect and enforce this legislation, but that they need to be resourced effectively to conduct preventative activities;
 - (e) that the slow rollout of once a year kerbside pickup for bulky waste is unlikely to resolve this issue given many of the dumped items include clothing and smaller household objects. Furthermore, given the new scheme is only once a year and requires a booking, it is unlikely to deter illegal and ad hoc activity;
 - (f) that current complaint mechanisms through Access Canberra are arduous for residents and do not seem to result in effective response times; and
 - (g) that sadly these complaints are not unique to Yerrabi but, in fact, are occurring throughout the ACT; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) acknowledge that litter and illegal dumping is of growing concern to Canberrans;
 - (b) review what resources and authority the city rangers currently have to enforce penalties relating to litter and illegal dumping and whether they are adequate to address the issue;
 - (c) review the current reporting process for residents to make a complaint and assess the viability of a more user-friendly and efficient process; and
 - (d) report back to the Assembly on these matters no later than 18 June 2020.

Today I want to bring to the Assembly an issue that is very real and very frustrating for the residents of Yerrabi. Illegal dumping is a blight on our local communities. It makes our shops look ugly and our neighbourhoods look neglected. It makes residents feel frustrated and business owners feel taken advantage of.

We all know that, since 2010, residents in the ACT have had their rates triple, yet the same cannot be said for the quality of basic services. Local businesses have also had their rates skyrocket under this government and yet there is no associated increase in the maintenance of commercial precincts. The basic expectation from the community is that the government should effectively manage rates, roads and rubbish. Sadly, this tired Labor government cannot hit any of those targets. Illegal dumping is happening more and more around our suburbs.

The question I keep asking is: why are we paying more but getting less? The answer is that ACT Labor, this tired Labor government, has lost any sense of direction and our communities are the ones that are suffering. I am sure every person here can tell a story about illegal dumping. We all know a site in our suburbs, a street, a block, a park that is often littered with rubbish. Sadly, for me in Yerrabi, there are several. The abuse of charity bins in the Gungahlin town centre has been of particular concern for some time. Piles of rubbish often rise up around the bins, as goods left are either in not good enough condition or damaged from being left out in the weather.

I have spoken to various charities over recent times who have charity collection bins around Yerrabi, and they all talk of the high cost of maintaining them, cleaning up the rubbish that is frequently left there and disposing of goods that are not and cannot be used. Charities have mounted their own campaigns to encourage consumers to think about the quality and value of items before donating. As it stands nationally, charities are spending approximately \$13 million a year on sending 60,000 tonnes of unwanted items to landfill. This problem is not just around charity bins. Often those unused items litter the footpath outside charities, so organisations have no choice but to clean those areas up, often on a daily basis.

Having spoken to charities over the past few weeks I know that, despite the costs to charities, donations received this way are still an incredibly valuable revenue stream. Some charities are using these goods purely to resell for fabric and material. Others try to pass the goods directly on to those in need. Either way, they are taking the burden off the taxpayer, off the government, and they are trying to reduce the amount of material going to waste.

We should support them, work with them and try to fix the problem. We could be moving these bins to better locations, helping with lighting and CCTV and having better signage and simplified reporting processes. These are commonsense things that could make a big difference. We could have a more proactive approach from city rangers and increased enforcement to deter those that continue to do the wrong thing. This would show a genuine partnership with our local not-for-profit sector. These are strategies that would complement the great work already underway across our community.

The work of charities is one aspect. The Green Shed and other local recycling initiatives, such as local Buy Nothing groups on Facebook, repair collectives and free clothing and toy pantries popping up all over town—including five in Ngunnawal, which is a record, I think—are the efforts of local residents doing practical, commonsense things to make a difference. Why can we not expect the same from our government?

Then there is the everyday dumping that is occurring in our suburbs. Vacant blocks in new suburbs such as Moncrieff, Taylor and Throsby are having household rubbish left on a regular basis. Construction rubbish and loose litter are also massive concerns. But established suburbs are not immune to this issue, either with rubbish often left in parks, around bins or at the back of local shops. In my capacity as the shadow sports and recreation minister, I have also been contacted by several local sporting clubs and residents' associations about household rubbish being left at grounds or put in dumpsters. We are not talking about just a trash bag; we are talking about large volumes here—broken furniture, car parts and all sorts. I get reports on a weekly basis from suburbs like Forde and Amaroo, Palmerston and Kaleen. This issue really is everywhere.

Another frequent concern for residents is the issue of abandoned cars. These often litter major roads like Horse Park Drive and Gungahlin Drive and are left there for weeks. These may be burned-out cars with police tape and parts torn off them. This is not the kind of image we want to project for our local neighbourhood.

We know that city rangers and the local police force know about these issues. Illegal dumping on vacant blocks is frequently reported by residents. Parks and roadside spots that are commonly used are also, sadly, becoming notorious. Worse still is the financial cost of illegal dumping to local businesses. They often pay for additional waste disposal through private companies and, despite locking their dumpsters and trash areas, people dump out the back of their shops and in precincts such as Mitchell.

We know where we need to focus our efforts, but this government is so committed to banning and fining that it forgets about patrolling and preventing. The government is so used to trying to tell people how to live, it forgets to try to understand the practical realities facing everyday Canberrans. This brings me to the kerbside pickup service that Canberrans have been wanting for for so long.

In fact, this government only committed to this after my colleague Nicole Lawder announced our policy of twice-yearly collections. Following our announcement, those opposite reluctantly agreed to show a slow rollout which consists of pickups only once a year. That is something, but that is not the end of the requirements. The government announced a service, but you have to book for the collection. You can only have two cubic metres of material per household. It can only be used for a defined list of items and it cannot include mattresses, which still incur a fee for collection and disposal. Also, it will not finish rolling out in Canberra until 2024.

I have to say that some households across Canberra will benefit from this scheme, depending on their ability to book it in and only have the right volume and right type of rubbish, but these are not the ones committing illegal dumping. That is why I am standing here today. I acknowledge that the government has tried to address these issues. Minister Steel introduced legislation in June last year and commenced a pilot program with compliance officers. But rubbish and illegal dumping seems to be growing, despite attempted reforms.

It is typical of the government to stand here and oversell its performance, when we all know the truth about its inability to deliver and its disconnect from the realities of life in Canberran suburbs. Why is that? Because this government and this minister do not understand the needs of our community. Last year, there were over 1,150 reports of illegal dumping, yet only 216 incidents were referred for investigation. How many from that had enforcement action taken? The answer is less than 10 per cent.

Worse still, the clean-up bill for taxpayers is over \$2 million per year. I think more can be done, and probably for a lot less. We need to adopt a commonsense approach, partner with local charities and recycling groups to help them do their job and recycle and upcycle goods, helping those in need across Canberra. We need to think about the placement of charity collection points and rubbish bins. Let us use better lighting, signage and CCTV. We need to review the need for multiple dumpsters at sporting groups. We pay very high rates for private contractors to empty these bins, and often they are full of illegally dumped items.

Let us look at the reporting process and make it easier for residents and more responsive to ACT government employees. Surely in this age of technology and data

we can do better. But, most importantly, we need better resources for our city rangers and to give them the authority to do more to enforce the rules we already have. I commend this motion to the Assembly, and I hope that the concerns of residents will be heard and acknowledged by this government.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for City Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Recycling and Waste Reduction, Minister for Roads and Active Travel and Minister for Transport) (4.31): I thank Mr Milligan for bringing this motion to the Assembly. It gives me an opportunity to emphasise the work that is ongoing by City Services and that staff are undertaking each and every day to keep our suburbs tidy and our environment clean. Littering and illegal dumping is a big problem that occurs in many forms across our city. I certainly acknowledge the specific issue in relation to Yerrabi that Mr Milligan has highlighted. These actions have a significant impact on the wellbeing of people in our community and on our environment.

In November last year the Assembly passed the government's reforms to the Litter Act 2004. These amendments introduced new and robust laws that are designed to address some of the key issues around illegal dumping and making enforcement easier. They deal with abandoned vehicles, road users making the roads unsafe by failing to cover a loaded vehicle appropriately and extreme cases of hoarding. By improving the enforceability and efficiency of this legislation and introducing proportionate and escalating offence provisions, we are continuing to combat littering and illegal dumping to create a safer and cleaner city.

A new escalating system for illegal dumping has been introduced whereby the penalty for an offence increases with the amount of litter dumped or deposited. Penalties, including fines or the option to prosecute, apply if a volume of litter greater than one litre is deposited. Prosecution by a court is available if the amount of litter dumped is more than 200 litres. The maximum penalties available also increase with the volume dumped. This includes dumping litter between 200 litres and 1,000 litres; there are 50 penalty units that can be applied, with an imprisonment term of six months or both. For dumping litter of 1,000 litres or more there is a penalty of 100 penalty units, imprisonment of one year or both.

Dumping and littering offences now apply to both public and private lands. A person dumping litter on another person's open private space—for example, another person's front yard or a vacant block owned by another person—can be issued the same penalties as for dumping on public land. Dumping and abandoning a vehicle attracts the highest fines, with a maximum of \$1,800, made up of a \$1,500 fine for dumping of litter over 200 litres plus a \$300 fine for ignoring a removal notice.

The existing offence for distributing unauthorised advertising material has also been expanded to include placing items on any territory asset such as a light pole or bus shelter, as these items often become litter. And the fine for distributing unwanted advertising material has been increased.

Litter on our roads is often due to the failure of drivers to properly secure their loads. This litter is unsightly, with items often falling off vehicles also being very dangerous.

For this reason, the penalty for not covering a load was increased to \$1,500. We have also made it much easier to issue infringements where illegal dumping occurs in proximity to a vehicle. Those laws that have only been in place for just a few months will enable us to better use mobile CCTV cameras to monitor the dumping of items from a vehicle and then be able to follow up through the vehicle's registration to either issue a warning or issue an infringement notice.

I thank Mr Milligan for again raising the issue of penalties for littering and illegal dumping. It is very clearly an area where the government has passed very significant reform, and it has been in for only a very short period. We are yet to see the absolute outcome of those reforms. However, I have some further updates to provide in relation to that and the compliance targeting team which was piloted in July and has proven its success.

To assist in the enforcement of illegal dumping, we established the compliance targeting team, consisting of six full-time staff, and these staff work cooperatively but are also additional resources to the long-established city rangers team. The compliance targeting team proactively monitors illegal dumping sites on a daily basis. Patrols act on information from the public and other field staff within TCCS to target locations and also regularly identify new locations during patrols. Various methods are used, including vehicle-based patrols, foot-based patrols, the temporary placement of movable cameras, which I have mentioned, letterbox drops, and verbal engagement with members of the community. This is about both education and also other harder forms of compliance as well.

The compliance targeting team undertakes program-targeted activities to support city rangers by actively managing noncompliance before it escalates to become a complaint or a matter requiring further investigation or action. For example, the team proactively engages with developers and builders to ensure that they contain and secure their waste building materials to prevent them being blown onto adjoining areas. And they are utilising CCTV to help deter and capture illegal dumping at known hotspots. I have seen these cameras installed near my place in Kambah, on Sulwood Drive, and I have just released footage of some of the illegal dumping that has been caught on CCTV for the media and the general public to view because it shows that this team is working proactively to address these issues.

The establishment of the team has improved the process for the assignment and resolution of incidents from the city rangers' job queue and has allowed the city rangers to reduce the number of outstanding jobs so that they can concentrate on other city services issues. Both city rangers and rangers from the compliance targeting team are working cooperatively with compliance staff across ACT government to target a range of municipal compliance issues aimed at improving the safety and amenity of the community. They are also supported by a qualified team of investigators who take carriage of the more complex compliance matters as well.

I foreshadow that I will be moving an amendment to Mr Milligan's motion. In it I note that the compliance targeting team has taken a total of 2,149 engagements and, of these, 782 engagements have related to illegal dumping and the unauthorised use of public unleased land; 125 infringements have been issued in relation to the use of

unleased land and litter since 1 July 2019, and that totals \$92,240 worth of fines that have been issued; 172 warning notices have also been issued, and that includes warning notices that have been issued to people who have been doing the wrong thing around charity bins in particular.

Members would be aware that illegal dumping around charity bins is a longstanding problem which is managed by TCCS through a combination of education, deterrence, enforcement and collaboration with charity bin operators. Charities who operate bins on public land must have a permit to do so and are responsible for clearing the bins and keeping the surrounding area tidy. The government's role in charity bin management is to facilitate and authorise charity operations on public land in the interests of supporting charities and reducing waste to landfill.

Recently business decisions by charities have resulted in a reduction in the number of charity bins available in the ACT. We recognise that there will be fewer charity bins around for people to use to try to recycle particularly some of their clothing material but also Manchester, linen and so forth. A new arrangement will be trialled as a result, with the remaining bins being reallocated among the charities involved to make it easier to manage the collection and clean-up while also ensuring that the bins remain accessible for the community.

We are also highlighting to the community that it is their responsibility to do the right thing around charity bins and highlighting the various other options that are available to the community to responsibly recycle and dispose of everyday items that may be donated to charities, such as clothing. The Green Shed, for example, does accept unwanted items, subject to quality and demand, so that they can be resold in their city, Hume and Mitchell stores. The Green Shed accepts a vast variety of items, including clothing, kitchenware, building materials, sporting equipment, toys, books, musical instruments and much more.

GIVIT also collects many of these items so that they can be paired with people that need them and is another option. Many charities will accept items at their storefront rather than at a charity bin if they are taken in during work hours and are acceptable. We are highlighting those options to the community and will continue to work collaboratively with charity bin operators to work on how we can make sure that these facilities are available to the community, but we are also calling on the community to make sure that they act responsibly. Most people do that, which is great.

However, there have been some warnings that have been issued to those who are not putting stuff in the bin and are just leaving it next to the bin. If they cannot put it in the bin then they will need to find another location for that, whether it is with the Green Shed, GIVIT, at a storefront or another form of waste disposal.

We are continuing the education process and face-to-face engagement with the compliance team, supported by public information campaigns. Members here may have seen some of the ads that have been rolled out, videos on social media and the like with the key message "Your actions, your cost" and "If you illegally dump, you will pay the price". That was instituted following the new laws that we passed last year, to send a clear message that illegal dumping is not accepted in the community.

The government will continue to encourage the community to dispose of their litter responsibly, and it is important that they do. I have already outlined the impact that it can have on our environment, but we also realise that we need to provide better ways and incentives for people to dispose of items legally. That is why we have provided, through the budget review, support for a new bulky waste collection service. This was a commitment by ACT Labor on 27 September 2016. We committed to do it in this term of government and we are delivering on our commitment. I am very pleased that the Liberals support the new service, which will be rolled out from the middle of this year and provide Canberrans with an option to legally dispose of bulky waste items.

At the moment we believe that around 65 per cent of materials found illegally dumped would be eligible for a free pickup under that bulky waste collection scheme. We hope that this will minimise the amount of illegally dumped bulky waste by providing Canberrans with a free, legal method for disposing of a range of items, including unwanted furniture, worn-out household appliances and manchester, for example.

The service will also be supported by a customer education and compliance program to ensure that residents are aware of the service and how to use it, as well as the implications of illegal dumping. The service will include frequent monitoring and management by both the service providers that will be chosen through a procurement process and the ACT government.

Mr Milligan has brought forward a motion on an issue that is important to many Canberrans, and the impact of littering and illegal dumping in our suburbs and environment is a concern. It is an issue that the government acknowledges and is taking steps to tackle, whether it is the recent changes to the Litter Act that we made last year, the increase in staff to enforce compliance, the education campaigns and resources provided to the Canberra community outlining ways that Canberrans can legally dispose of unwanted materials, and through delivering on our election commitment to a bulky waste collection scheme which will be up and running this year.

While I am moving an amendment to paragraph (1) of Mr Milligan's motion, the government is happy to support the substantive calls to action. I propose some changes to the noting section which acknowledge some of the work that has gone on as very factual. I thank Mr Milligan for bringing this motion forward. We look forward to continuing to work with not only charity bin operators but the whole community generally to reduce illegal dumping in our community. I move the amendment to Mr Milligan's motion circulated in my name:

Omit paragraph (1), substitute:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) illegal dumping occurs across the ACT;
- (b) illegal dumping around charity bins in the ACT, including in Yerrabi, is a long-standing issue, as well as roadside litter and illegal dumping on vacant blocks and public spaces;

- (c) in October 2019, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed the *Litter Legislation Amendment Act 2019* to address littering and illegal dumping in our community;
- (d) these new laws gave authorities greater power to deal with individuals and businesses that ruin the environment or put the community at risk through illegal dumping and littering by establishing a new escalating framework for illegal dumping offences, and making it easier to issue infringement notices where illegal dumping involves a vehicle;
- (e) the ACT Government has increased resources available through the introduction of a pilot six member compliance targeting team to inspect and enforce illegal dumping laws, including the use of mobile CCTV;
- (f) the compliance targeting team has been actively targeting illegal dumping and littering offences under the *Litter Act 2004* since 1 July 2019 with 782 engagements, 125 infringements, and 172 warnings issued related to unauthorised use of public unleased land, illegal dumping and littering;
- (g) the ACT Government is undertaking ongoing education campaigns on the consequences of littering and illegal dumping with the message ‘your actions, your cost’;
- (h) a free kerbside bulky waste collection will begin to be rolled out across the ACT, beginning in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin from July 2020, providing an accessible option to dispose of bulky waste for households; and
- (i) ACT residents are able to report litter and illegal dumping through the Fix My Street platform which includes a specific ‘litter and illegal dumping’ category once a place is selected;”.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (4.45): I rise today to speak to the issue of illegal dumping and litter across the ACT that Mr Milligan has raised. The Greens certainly recognise that the issue of roadside litter and illegal dumping is an ongoing concern and it is important to continue to explore options to tackle this issue. It is a difficult issue; however, that does not mean that we should not continue to find better ways to prevent illegal dumping.

Mr Milligan identified that the electorate of Yerrabi has had a number of reports of illegal dumping across building sites and vacant blocks and said that recent news reports demonstrated the overflow of items left at charity bins. Sadly, this issue is not unique to Yerrabi, as one can travel through the city and see that various bulky items are left on the side of the road and perhaps dumped on vacant blocks. Of course, the issue of charity bins has been discussed today.

There is a benign version of this situation, because sometimes it is with good intentions of charity that items are left on the side of the road. The idea is that one person’s trash is another’s treasure and that people will take the free goods. Those systems do exist, but the problem suggests that clear education is needed to raise awareness of the nuisance that this causes to the broader community.

In a similar vein, on any given Sunday you can pass the Salvation Army store near Fyshwick markets, for example, and the front of the store is loaded with items spilling

outside in a disordered fashion. It is the volunteers who arrive on a Monday morning who are required to sort through other people's junk that is piled up outside the store. Add the possibility that the material may have got rained on over the weekend—or some other form of bad weather, possibly an unexpected hailstorm—and volunteers are effectively left to dispose of other people's junk. This is not fair. It imposes a cost on the organisation and there needs to be greater awareness of the impact this behaviour has on charities and volunteers going about their business.

As Mr Steel's amendment notes, the ACT government is undertaking ongoing education campaigns on the consequences of littering and illegal dumping. The Greens believe there is opportunity for an education and behavioural change campaign to also include messaging on the impacts to community and the environment, particularly on the impacts on charities and the costs that it places on them when this sort of littering and dumping take place.

It is clear that we need effective enforcement mechanisms and responses to dumping and litter issues. In that context, it is worth looking back to amendments at the Litter Act considered in the Assembly last year. The amendments made it easier for citizens to report dumping, whereby if an individual has evidence that a person or vehicle is responsible for dumping, it can be reported to authorities and the offender will be subsequently issued with an infringement. Going forward, this will be an efficient and effective way for the public to report offenders and hopefully reduce the incidence of illegal littering and dumping.

We would expect that more time is required in order to assess the full effectiveness of these amendments and subsequent changes to management and processes regarding dumping and littering. However, I believe the government has shown its commitment to tackling the issue by implementing tighter regulations, dedicating a greater number of rangers to patrol littering and dumping and issue infringements, the rollout of a free kerbside bulky waste collection, easier reporting mechanisms and a dedicated compliance team to enforce dumping laws, using mobile CCTV. As with any technology, online reporting mechanisms will evolve, and we support the government to continue to explore ways to make reporting easier for individuals.

The Greens believe that part of this discussion also needs to be about how we engage with all of this stuff and the things we seem to be obsessed with as a society. Our consumer culture leads to an excess of items, and the amount of waste this leads to is simply staggering. We need to start thinking about buying our items to last and not disposing of them as soon as they break, or perhaps as soon as we think we do not need them anymore. Certainly, in terms of breaking, they are then deemed immediately useless.

As individuals, we need to think a little more deeply about the items we are purchasing and acknowledge that when we simply dispose of our bulky items that could be repaired, or replace our old stuff with new stuff before it has reached the end of its life, these are contributions to waste and landfill and this has significant consequences for the environment. The production of new items to replace old or unwanted items obviously results in greenhouse gas emissions, therefore exacerbating issues of climate change. Ultimately, and this is the bottom line, our pattern of

consumption does need to change. We need to be less of a throwaway society and place greater value on the goods that we have.

Last year, as minister for consumer affairs, I was proud to secure commonwealth, state and territory support to progress work on a right to repair. This gives consumers the ability to have faulty goods repaired at a competitive price by a manufacturer, a third party or, in some instances, self-repair, using available replacement parts and having access to information. Consumers are being increasingly locked out of repairing their products because manufacturers do not allow third parties to repair them or products are built to become obsolete when they are damaged.

Globally there is a groundswell of consumers who want the right to be able to repair their goods through third-party providers. A right to repair is also good for sustainability and it stops products and resources being wasted. This, of course, is just a piece of the puzzle to solve the large number of bulky and other items that end up as waste. It gives agency to individuals to explore options to repair their items before disposal.

Of course, we understand that items necessary to everyday living do break and some will become irreparable. But we believe there are a number of other mechanisms that need to exist in order to divert items from simply going to waste. That speaks to some of the bigger picture issues, but we do understand that the community are frustrated when they see dumping and littering. It is unsightly and it involves not insignificant clean-up costs, whether for the government or the charities. That, particularly for the charities, detracts from what they really should be doing, which is helping the less fortunate members of our community.

We are pleased to have had the opportunity to discuss this matter today. I will be supporting Mr Steel's amendment. Somewhat unusually, his amendment actually retains the whole core section, which is not how it usually goes on a Wednesday. I think that is a positive sign that there is a sense across the chamber of frustration about this issue. If only we could find a way to get those in our community who undertake this sort of illegal dumping to understand the consequences of what they do. It will be good to keep exploring the sorts of areas that Mr Milligan has suggested in his motion.

MR GUPTA (Yerrabi) (4.53): I rise to speak to the motion regarding littering and illegal dumping in the ACT. Waste and cleanliness are important issues to Canberrans and for the ACT government. I would also like to thank Mr Milligan for bringing this motion to the Assembly. Part of living in the bush capital is that we have a beautiful natural environment. Canberra is surrounded by hills and has beautiful local parks, wetlands and open green spaces. We should all be able to enjoy our natural environment and our public places should be clean, tidy and beautiful.

The ACT is expanding. More people want to live in our fantastic city and our city is becoming more compact. As our population increases, so does our waste. The ACT government acknowledges that illegal dumping and littering occur in the ACT and we are acting. The ACT government is introducing robust laws to address problems dealing with the issues of littering and illegal dumping. The new laws improve the

enforceability and efficiency of how the government deals with a range of issues, such as abandoned vehicles, cigarette litter, littering on building sites, how we deliver penalties and how the ACT government can provide services for household collection.

As one of the members for Yerrabi, I regularly speak to constituents who have raised the issue of littering and illegal dumping in Gungahlin. I also hold regular clean-ups in Gungahlin with members of the community, because we love living in Canberra and we want it to be a place we can all be proud of.

The ACT government acknowledges that cleaning up after illegal dumpers is a financial burden on ratepayers. The better suburbs statement identified that household waste and recycling, including bulky waste, are often dumped illegally. In the 2016 election, ACT Labor committed to introducing a bulky waste collection service in Canberra, and we are now delivering on this commitment. I am incredibly pleased that Gungahlin will be the first suburb to receive the rollout of bulky waste bins in the ACT. I regularly talk to constituents who are incredibly pleased to hear about the new bulky waste collection services and are greatly looking forward to this new service in Gungahlin.

The bulky waste collection will allow residents to dispose of household items in a sustainable and accessible way and reduce illegal dumping. What it will allow is for Canberrans who may not have a trailer to dispose of items in a legal and environmentally friendly way. Residents can store some items in their garage and during the collection time can use the service. As the government looks to enforce greater compliance with illegal dumping activities, providing bulky waste collection ensures that Canberrans have a free, legal method for disposing of bulky waste.

The ACT government's amendments to the Litter Act 2004 introduce an escalating framework where penalties increase with the volume of litter deposited. It will increase some fines for littering, which will send a strong message to residents in Canberra. For example, fines will escalate if you are caught dropping items like a cigarette or a syringe, with the introduction of a \$500 fine. The new laws will also see an increase to the fine for dropping small items like a bus ticket, a light rail ticket or a coffee cup.

Offenders will now face a \$150 fine, instead of \$65, if caught doing the wrong thing. The increase in these fines sends a clear community message from the government that littering will not be tolerated and a signal that we value well-kept and tidy public spaces. The government's amendments also made it easier to enforce littering and dumping, with infringement notices able to be issued to the owners of vehicles involved in illegal dumping, similar to speeding fines.

New provisions allow rangers to link an offence to the operator of a vehicle, where the offence is committed after exiting or before entering a vehicle. That is why, where someone drops a cigarette butt and refuses to give their name and address or becomes aggressive to a ranger before getting into a vehicle and driving away, the offence may be directed to the owner of the vehicle. As a result, our rangers can now target littering and illegal dumping offences in greater confidence, knowing that they have added protections when issuing infringements.

The ACT government is also thinking about vehicles and loads of rubbish that may be littered from vehicles. Items falling from moving vehicles are extremely dangerous for other roads users. An education and awareness campaign, coupled with increased fines for not adequately securing loads, will be a significant deterrent and encourage more thought and effort to ensure that items on vehicles are secure. The ACT government is introducing a further deterrent to people who do not secure loads appropriately by making this a vehicle-related offence.

The amended laws also contain protection for vulnerable people. Safeguards have been built into provisions to prevent people who are doing the right thing from being penalised. For example, littering is now an offence on private land; however, this does not apply if the littering occurs with the consent of the occupier. The ACT government also acknowledges the complex and sensitive nature of hoarding and the underlying mental health implications. This will be taken into consideration in our laws to ensure that we are handling these matters in a sensitive and sympathetic way.

In conclusion, I am incredibly proud to live in Canberra. Waste management and cleanliness are important issues to Canberrans and for the ACT government, and we are working to ensure the amenity of our beautiful city. I am pleased to talk to this important issue about the amenity of the city. I commend the ACT government's action to reduce littering and illegal dumping in the ACT.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.59): It is great that we stand here today in pretty general agreement about the importance of this issue. I would like to thank Mr Milligan for bringing forward this important topic today. I think everyone here believes that littering is terrible and we do not understand why anyone does it. It makes our beautiful city look untidy, it can be dangerous and it takes government resources to clean it up. We know that the government receives thousands and thousands of complaints each year regarding littering. I know I receive a lot of complaints about littering, and I am sure most of my colleagues do as well. That is, I imagine, partly what prompted Mr Milligan to bring this topic to us today by way of his motion.

We have spoken many times in this place about the abuse of charity bins, and that the resources of the charities are used to clean them up. It is true that one man's rubbish is another's treasure, and there are many ways that you can re-use and recycle goods. There are Buy Nothing groups in many suburbs. Some people, on bulky waste pickup days, leave stuff out and other people pick it up. This is good, but we need to stop actual littering in the first place.

We have spoken about this in this place a number of times. More recently, in response to questions, we talked about the fix my street app. Some changes have been made to it recently, and I do not know that they were necessarily for the best. The example that I was given was of a number of neighbours in one street where there are houses on one side of the street and a reserve on the other side of the street. It is not a park; it is a nature park. At some point last year a whole muffler and exhaust system was dumped in the reserve. It was raised with me that people did not know how to lodge this complaint on fix my street because the recent changes to fix my street made it more complex for them. They felt that when they were reporting it they would have to

deliberately put it under the wrong heading in order to get a complaint lodged because there was no suitable heading.

When you go onto fix my street to say what you want to report, if you type in “littering” it brings up a whole series of options. Cycle and footpaths? No, the dumping of this muffler and exhaust on this reserve was not about cycling and footpaths. Parks and public spaces? Possibly, but the next options on the drop-down list include “parks and public spaces: barbecues and picnic areas”. No, it was not a barbecue and picnic area. “Parks and public spaces: fencing and bollards”: no, that was not the issue. “Parks and public spaces: playgrounds”: no, that was not the issue either.

In working through this list it seemed impossible for a number of residents to find the correct place to report this littering, whereas under the previous system you could just go to your topic, which was “littering”, rather than having a place-based approach. Several residents reported to me over a period of about a month that they gave up and thought, “Someone else can work it out and deal with it.” Eventually, someone else did work it out, wrote to the minister and it was picked up. We have made this unnecessarily difficult. People did not want to deliberately put it under the wrong heading, so they chose to leave it and for it to be someone else’s problem. This is not an attitude that we want to encourage.

The other problem that is often reported to me relates to the amount of time it can take for reports of litter to be picked up. In fact, we know from a number of places, including the 2018-19 estimates hearings, that littering and illegal dumping was the single largest topic of request through the fix my street form, closely followed by abandoned vehicles, which is quite a similar topic.

The issue for most Canberra residents is that it can take, on average, 6¼ days for a response to take place in regard to littering and illegal dumping and, in the worst case, the maximum is 163.89 days. Residents simply do not want to wait for that long. We have spoken in this place before of the fact that people feel they are paying more in their rates, taxes, fees and charges and that they are getting less. When they drive around our otherwise beautiful city, they do not expect to see rubbish.

Another of my constituents, Richard, who complains frequently to me about dumping and littering, gets incensed when he drives to work each day down Long Gully Road. From the top of the hill between Tuggeranong and Woden and before you get down towards the turn-off to the tip, seems to be a really popular place to dump large items. People obviously are not taking them to the tip. There were lots of tyres, chairs and quite large pieces of rubbish dumped into a gully just off the road there. It is not visible from the road as such, but the fact that people are doing this and that when it is reported it can take such a long time to be cleaned up is of concern to most Canberrans.

We should make the reporting of littering easier for residents—that is, the current reporting process for residents, as is referred to in (2)(c) of Mr Milligan’s motion—and we should make sure that city rangers have enough resources to fix up littering in our city. We will look forward to the minister’s response on that.

I also acknowledge, having regard to some of the answers I have received, that it is not a simple matter of someone just driving along and picking it up. Sometimes it will take more than one person. It may be a heavy item or a dangerous item, for example. It is not always simple, but we all have that shared desire for a clean and beautiful Canberra. We should do whatever we can do to make sure that that happens—to make sure that it is beautiful, that it is safe, and that we have not just visual amenity but physical amenity in our surroundings. We should reassure Canberrans, reassure our residents, that they are getting value for the money they are spending in their taxes, rates, fees and charges. I think that would go a long way towards people feeling that the government is listening to their concerns and dealing with littering and illegal dumping in a more timely manner.

Once again I would like to thank Mr Milligan for bringing this motion forward. It has a whole number of different elements to it, all of which are very important. I thank members for the general agreement on the topic. I hope that we can move forward and get a good result for Canberrans in terms of reporting issues and the actual fixing of the problem of littering and illegal dumping.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (5.08): When we walk around our suburbs, we expect to be able to enjoy our public spaces without having to encounter plastic bags in lakes, old furniture on kerbs and household appliances piled next to charity bins. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Sometimes these things do occur. Household rubbish is often seen piled next to charity bins near shops, while abandoned cars are sometimes left on the side of the road. Occurrences such as these are not only an eyesore but potentially harmful to small children and wildlife.

The issues of illegal dumping and litter that this motion seeks to highlight are not, however, new. When I speak to constituents in Yerrabi, people raise with me the issue of litter. They view it as a cause for concern in the community, and I agree. They particularly raise the issue around charity bins. It is quite a talking point around Gungahlin.

In October last year this government passed the Litter Legislation Amendment Bill, which sought to address the complex issue of littering, illegal dumping and hoarding in a nuanced manner. The new framework for dealing with litter and illegal dumping tackles the issue in a holistic way. It recognises the numerous ways that littering can impact on public safety by improving the process for removing and disposing of abandoned vehicles and household goods, whilst also introducing new powers for officials to identify the owners of vehicles so as to sort out the situation in a more timely manner. The framework proactively discourages littering from occurring in our communities.

This government recognises, importantly, that litter and illegal dumping are a threat to the wellbeing of all Canberrans. Quite simply, it is an eyesore, and we have responded to this hazard by seeking to implement new and increased penalties for such offences. Fines and other low-level punishments work to deter potential offenders, ensuring that anyone littering or dumping large amounts of waste is appropriately penalised for the ongoing harm they cause to the community. But we also need to be honest and admit

that not everyone that is dumping their goods next to a charity bin necessarily has bad intentions at heart. Often these people are trying to do a good thing—they are seeking to donate their goods to charity. Unfortunately, however, if they were more informed they might make a better decision about what to do with those goods. Put simply, those goods often just end up in the tip. I do not want to entirely castigate those that have been leaving their goods next to bins, but I would encourage them to change their behaviour.

In reading through the motion, and as I listened to Ms Lawder, there was one point in particular that stood out to me, and that was (1)(f). Access Canberra does provide a user-friendly and accessible interface for people to make complaints about issues in their local area. To be frank—and I use fix my street frequently, as I think most members in this place do—I find the interface helpful. I find it easy to use and I have not yet failed to log something on the website.

There should also be an onus on residents to take personal ownership in dealing with household waste and to make sure that they deal with it in a responsible manner. A RiotACT article published in December last year highlighted illegal dumping next to charity bins in Gungahlin. The residents interviewed pointed out that the items that had been dumped were rarely things that were broken or beyond repair. On the contrary, items such as clothes and kids' toys were often in good condition and could be easily repurposed.

I would like to put on the record my thanks to Cecilia and Greg Marshall, both quoted in the article, for their community advocacy on this issue. Having spoken to them, I know just how passionate they are about Gungahlin. They called for residents to take more pride in their local area and for local residents to stop being “lazy”. On that I wholeheartedly agree. In this way, initiatives such as Buy Nothing groups on Facebook have been set up by concerned residents with the intent of turning potential litter into a way to reduce rapid consumerism, by allowing community members to donate goods they no longer want to others within their suburb.

The current systems of waste management are robust and holistic. They represent best practice measures and they are broadly in line with community expectations. That is not to say that we can never do better and that we cannot possibly find new ways to better address this problem. We should always be open to new ideas; it is just that we are doing a pretty good job.

Our current policies work to create a culture where residents understand that it is their responsibility to deal with their household waste in a sensible manner. The ACT government's key proactive improvements to our system of waste and litter management assist in both deterring littering in the first place and streamlining the clean-up of littering where it does occur. The current balanced and proportionate enforcement framework is well on its way to improving the overall appearance and safety of our open spaces, allowing Canberrans to manage their own household waste in a proactive and environmentally friendly way.

MS ORR (Yerrabi—Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Disability, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety and Minister for

Government Services and Procurement) (5.13): As a member for Yerrabi, I am pleased to speak today about how this government is protecting our environment and public spaces from litter and waste. The illegal dumping of waste near charity bins on roadsides, near ponds and waterways and on vacant blocks is unacceptable. We know this waste has the potential to cause financial impacts to local charity providers as well as cause harm to our environment and public spaces.

The government understands the need to respond to this illegal activity, which is why last year Minister Steel introduced the Litter Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 in the Assembly. As a result of the bill passing through this place, the government has been able to strengthen powers for authorities to hold individuals and businesses accountable if they illegally dump waste or litter.

WorkSafe ACT also has powers to respond to the illegal dumping of building waste that contains dangerous substances such as asbestos. Maximum penalties for illegally disposing of asbestos-containing material as outlined by the Dangerous Substances Act 2004 and the WHS regulations are \$6,000 for an individual and \$30,000 for a corporation. These penalties send a strong signal to those on building sites that dangerous substances cannot be left lying around, and these penalties protect our community from the harm of this kind of waste.

It is important to address the issue of litter and waste in our community. I would like to acknowledge that some residents in Gungahlin's newer suburbs have expressed their concerns to me regarding waste from residential construction sites. Residents in Moncrieff raised concerns with me in 2008. As a result of this, I wrote to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development to request that more be done to ensure that residential construction sites are held responsible.

The government responded to my request, and I understand that rangers and staff from TCCS monitored the issues within Moncrieff and took action to remove this waste. The minister also wrote to the MBA and the HIA to request that they remind their members of their obligations. This action from the government was not just a one-off; our city rangers do an incredible job of keeping our city clean and ensuring that our public spaces are useable and accessible.

As Minister Steel highlighted, this government has increased the resources for inspection and enforcement action to prevent illegal dumping across Canberra. This investment will go a long way in keeping our city clean and reducing the risks that dumped waste can have on people in our community and the environment.

It is important to acknowledge that illegal dumping sometimes occurs because people find it a much easier option than disposing of the waste properly. That is why this government has developed several new initiatives to reduce this behaviour, as well as improving waste collection services for all Canberrans.

The green waste collection service, which I know has been very well received by Belconnen and Gungahlin residents, assists people in disposing of garden waste and clippings and has significantly reduced the amount of green waste sent to landfill as well as illegal dumping in nature reserves and roadsides. In addition to the green

waste service, the government's new free kerbside bulky waste collection service for Gungahlin and Tuggeranong will provide residents with another convenient way of disposing of bulky waste like old furniture and appliances. These initiatives deliver on our government's commitments to reduce the environmental impacts of waste, and we will continue to make it easier for Canberrans to be environmentally responsible.

While the government has dedicated resources and powers to reduce the amount of waste and litter across the city, it is important that all of us take care of our environment. During my time as a representative of Yerrabi in this place, I have partnered with the community in hosting clean-up events across our electorate. With the help of local residents and community groups, including Friends of Grasslands, Giralang Pond Landcare Group and Trash Mob, we help take care of the waterways and natural areas in Bonner, Franklin, Kaleen, Giralang, Harrison and Moncrieff. By taking this local action and caring for our environment, we have done our bit for our local areas. All members in this place have the capacity to partner with their communities and hold clean-ups if areas within their electorates need a bit of attention. Members and our constituents can also report suspected illegal dumping or areas that are polluted to the government through fix my street or the Access Canberra call centre.

As both Minister Steel and I have outlined, there are a range of ways that we can all do our bit to prevent illegal dumping and litter in our community. Our government will continue to monitor the issue of illegal dumping across the ACT. I commend Mr Steel's amendment to the Assembly.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (5.18): I would like to thank all members for their contribution today. I know this is an important issue that everyone is passionate about. We may have mixed views, but in many ways it just comes down to our approach. Our approach as Liberals is to encourage personal responsibility: not to look to overregulate the daily lives of Canberrans but to look to real, sensible solutions. We want to use commonsense strategies to deter people from doing the wrong thing, and then to give rangers the resourcing and authority they need to enforce the existing legal framework. The rules are there; the fines are there. What is lacking is the follow-through.

I would like to thank my colleague Ms Lawder for her contribution. Ms Lawder understands these issues better than most, having campaigned hard on compliance issues and urban services for years. Her policy of twice-yearly kerbside collection was well considered and aimed at providing a flexible solution. I hope that together we will get to implement that solution for the benefit of Canberrans. And that is not to mention her tireless work on dangerous dogs and trying to resource our city rangers to tackle that problem head on.

I would like to thank Mr Rattenbury for his contribution today. I know the issue is one that he would like to see the government do more on. I would like to acknowledge and reiterate that he sees that there is real importance in providing an education program and a simpler reporting process for reporting illegal dumping, and also the need to support local businesses focused on recycling unwanted items.

I would also like to thank Labor members Mr Gupta, Mr Pettersson and Ms Orr for their contribution today. Whilst not shining a huge light on the issue, they are reinforcing to the electorate that there is a clear choice coming for local representation this year. Alistair Coe and I are genuinely engaged in what matters to residents of the Gungahlin region.

Surprisingly, I even want to thank Mr Steel. His response to this motion has been more positive than I first expected, though his amendments try to overplay the impact of the reforms the government made last year. Yes, there were some changes made, but have they been effective? Have enforcement actions increased? Has the cost of removing illegal dumping and litter reduced? Do our schools look cleaner and better maintained? The answer to all of this, I believe, is no. Those opposite would say that they need more time to see the results of the changes that they made earlier this year, to see if there has been a real change. We will wait to see what comes out of that.

I am really pleased that the government is agreeing to a review of the resourcing and authority given to our city rangers. Maybe then we can start to employ proactive and preventative strategies as well as commonsense measures to help reduce this problem. Such strategies include reviewing the reporting process to make it simpler. Even an icon in the home page for reports would be helpful, rather than it being buried deep within a form or as part of a separate document you need to complete. Using mobile technology to our advantage should be front of mind: take a photo, submit the address, an alert goes out to city rangers then they attend the site. There are already apps on the market for this service. Taking that a step further, can't we take the data collected as part of reporting processes and use that to form predictive enforcement and trend analysis? Surely what I am proposing is not out of this world. I suppose we shall wait and see.

Again, I would like to thank everyone for their contribution today, but what I really hope is that there is more action, more enforcement and more support for residents and local businesses.

Before I conclude, I would like to share remarks from Paulina, a resident in Forde who has reported the state of one particular block for years. She said:

It's has been like this for years and more just keeps getting dumped and nobody does anything—it makes me furious.

It has beds, mattresses, office furniture and all sorts.

I get so mad every time I look at it.

It's right near Mulligans Flat and with all that dry grass and abandoned furniture, I wonder whether it could be a fire hazard.

The last time I spoke with Access Canberra they said they went and did an inspection, and it's not an issue.

How is that possible—it's an eyesore and it's dangerous.

I just don't understand how this is acceptable.

I'm so happy someone has the guts to stand up about this and I hope something is finally done.

Well, Paulina, the Canberra Liberals are doing their best. Now we will wait to see what action the Labor-Greens government takes to respond to this issue.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Magistrates Court (Infringement Notices) Amendment Bill 2019

Debate resumed from 27 November 2019, on motion by **Ms Le Couteur**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Mrs Dunne: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes.

Mrs Dunne: Could I seek your guidance, please, in relation to this bill. My understanding is that this bill creates a system whereby fines can be abolished and done away with, and be substituted by a range of other options. I seek your guidance please, Madam Speaker, on whether this is a money bill and therefore more correctly in the purview of the executive.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs Dunne. This matter was raised as a potential question. My advice to the Assembly is that we have had a long history of bills dealing with penalties being debated in the Assembly. For example, Mr Stefaniak presented an Animal Legislation (Penalties) Amendment Bill in 2005, which also related to other matters. It sought to increase penalties, including financial penalties. In 2013 an opposition member introduced the Payroll Tax Amendment Bill, which would affect the collection of payroll tax.

So the matter of the bills that were affected by the standing orders which you have referenced, Mrs Dunne, is under active consideration by the administration and procedure committee. My advice is that, until that committee, and therefore the Assembly, has a settled position on elements of section 65 and what constitutes a money bill and what therefore applies to the standing orders, I will allow this bill to proceed to be debated by the Assembly.

Mrs Dunne: I acknowledge your ruling, Madam Speaker. This is not to debate that ruling or to question it, but if that is the case—I acknowledge that this is under active consideration—could the Assembly have your guarantee that all of the issues that have been pursued in this area, particularly the ruling that you made last year that Mr Parton's bill would out of order, will be taken into consideration?

MADAM SPEAKER: All matters are being considered by the administration and procedure committee. There were two components. The first was that a bill was ruled out of order because I considered it to be, to use layman's language, a straight-out money bill, whereas precedents for penalties and notices and fines have been debated in this place before. What happens is now up to the Assembly, but I have allowed it to be debated. All matters are being actively considered by the administration and procedure committee. The question is that the bill be agreed to in principle.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts, Creative Industries and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (5.27): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I note your ruling and the ongoing consideration of that matter by the Assembly, and that the matter is therefore available for debate today. On that basis, the government will be supporting the bill, with an important proposed amendment that has been circulated by Ms Le Couteur. The government agrees that we need to continue to put into place practical measure to support vulnerable Canberrans. The amendments to the Magistrates Court Act will allow all infringement notices that are issued in the ACT to take into account the circumstances of people on low incomes or who are otherwise disadvantaged. That measure will support those in need.

The government supports the intent of this bill and it is ready to support the bill provided an amendment is made to the commencement date so that adequate time is permitted to implement the reforms. Therefore, we will support the amendment circulated by Ms Le Couteur that the bill commences by notice, or two years after its notification date if it is not commenced at that time. That time amendment is crucial, due to the complex nature of ACT fines systems at the moment.

In the ACT the schemes for infringement notices are established under the Magistrates Court Act 1930 and the Road Transport (General) Act 1999. This bill proposes to amend the Magistrates Court Act to reflect the infringement notice scheme in the Road Transport Act, which includes flexible payment options. Infringement notices in the ACT are issued by a number of authorised officers and agencies. They include Access Canberra, Transport Canberra and City Services, and ACT Policing. Unlike traffic and parking infringements, which are managed through Access Canberra's rego.act IT system and the infringement notice management plan office, there is no centralised IT system or administration established for the other types of infringement notices under the Magistrates Court Act scheme.

Offences for which infringement notices can be issued under other legislation are identified in 39 regulations under the Magistrates Court Act, with a separate regulation for each act that has infringement notice penalties. The regulations include criminal infringement notices, CINs; multiple infringement notices, such as the litter infringement notices and animal welfare infringement notices; and building infringement notices, as well as a range of other infringement notices.

The way that these infringement notices are regulated and enforced across government is diverse and complex. Transport Canberra and City Services, Access

Canberra and ACT Policing issue, regulate and enforce these fines independently of each other for the most part, and within these agencies there are often complex delegation processes and policies. The bill will require a flexible payment management scheme to be available for all infringement notices regulated by the Magistrates Court Act, and, as such, it will involve a substantial change to our current IT systems, and in the operation of a number of directorates. That will require a significant degree of planning and coordination.

As Ms Cheyne rightly pointed out this morning, legislation is complex, and time and care must be taken to ensure that all relevant matters are considered and acted upon. Administrating authorities under the Magistrates Court Act infringement notice scheme will adopt either the same or similar infrastructure and processes as are currently used by Access Canberra in relation to road transport infringement notices, or alternatively will involve the creation of a unified system for management for all ACT infringement notices, which would be established and administered through a single agency by creating an integrated fines management system.

Determining the most appropriate and effective way to move forward with these reforms will require thorough consideration due to those complexities and the associated resourcing implications. However, as I have said, the ACT government is supportive of the intent of the bill and is very committed to supporting low income Canberrans. This government has prioritised spending on early intervention programs and support services which help low income and disadvantaged Canberrans access better services and a better quality of life. This has been implemented through a range of support programs, initiatives and funding, which are highlighted in the 2019-20 budget.

The government acknowledges the importance of ensuring that people from vulnerable groups are supported in a way that enables them to meet financial obligations that are incurred when they have been issued with an infringement notice—including by offering alternative methods of meeting those obligations where it is appropriate. Vulnerable people in society may often not be in a position to meet obligations by the outright payment, in full or even in part, of an infringement notice penalty. Their vulnerability may stem from a range of disadvantages, such as poverty, homelessness, living with a disability or living with mental illness. A fair and inclusive society, where no-one is left behind, is a cornerstone policy of this government, and that includes making sure that vulnerable people are assisted in a way that allows them to meet their obligations, as opposed to being further penalised because of their circumstances.

Regulatory schemes play an important part in the territory's legal framework, and rules are used to set clear standards of conduct or how services are delivered. Good regulation balances the need to enforce those standards for the benefit of society as a whole, with flexibility as to how that enforcement occurs. To make regulation effective, it needs to be implemented in a way that encourages positive conduct and the delivery of quality services by being responsive to the needs of the community. This includes ensuring that schemes include an appropriate range of options in terms of penalty enforcement.

I was pleased, before being a member of this Assembly, to lead the targeted assistance strategy panel in 2011 and 2012. It explained a broad range of ways of supporting people who run the risk of falling into financial disadvantage. The targeted assistance strategy was released in 2012 and, as one of the related reforms, the government subsequently enacted legislation providing flexible options for the payment of penalties under the road transport infringement notice scheme. These reforms were able to be implemented only with necessary IT system changes, leveraging the existing rego.act system, new staff resources to set up the infringement notice management plan office and liaison with a range of community based organisations to set up the community work and development option as an alternative way of satisfying an infringement notice penalty.

Legislation takes time, but implementation takes time and planning too. We know that road transport infringement notices for traffic and parking offences make up the vast majority of all infringement notices in the ACT and that the flexible payment options work well in relation to those. We agree that change is also needed to extend flexible payment options to other infringement notices issued in the ACT. This can be done effectively only after a thorough analysis of the implementation requirements to make sure that the policy intent of the bill can be delivered in practice.

The government therefore supports this bill, with the flagged amendment for the delayed commencement. We also note the minor and technical amendments that were circulated yesterday by Ms Le Couteur, based on representations from the community legal centre and Care Financial Counselling Services. We will be supporting those amendments when they are moved later in the debate. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (5.35): The Canberra Liberals similarly will not be opposing this bill because, equally, we support the principle. But we do so in anticipation that we may need to revisit what is poorly constructed legislation. The principle of this bill of flexible processes for paying fines is one that all parties seem to support—and that is a good thing—but this bill is legally and administratively convoluted and clearly has not been fully thought out.

As the Attorney-General indicated, there will be an amendment moved by the Greens that delays the implementation of this bill by two years. The fact that the Greens are moving that amendment, I think, is clear acknowledgement that this is problematic legislation that is being debated today. There are also eight pages of other amendments that the Greens will be moving to their own bill in an attempt to fix up a number of other issues that have been raised with them.

When this topic was raised back in 2018 via a motion in this place, Mr Coe warned that there would be problems with this sort of legislation. He said:

The ability for this to be put out into practice is somewhat difficult ... There would be many unintended consequences that would have to be worked through before any such scheme is rolled out.

And that is exactly the case here. The Greens have not fully considered those unintended consequences. They have not thought this through and considered the detail, which is why we have a situation today, which is unprecedented certainly in my recollection from my time in the Assembly, where a bill is not going to be enacted for two years after debate in this place.

We support the concept, as I said, of what is trying to be achieved but, as I mentioned, I think it is quite likely that whoever wins government in October is going to have to come back with something in this place, a legislative instrument of one sort or another, to fix this mess up. It is not a good way to do legislation if you have got to delay something by two years. It is hard to argue any differently. Other than our accepting the principle, the fact is that this will be delayed here. I see that little has been achieved other than grandstanding by the Greens.

Notwithstanding that, we support the principle and we will support the amendments that certainly enact that very necessary delay and go some way towards sorting this mess out. But I think that it is disappointing that we find ourselves in a situation where we will be passing legislation with so many unthought through consequences that are going to create a range of work which is likely to anticipate our coming back into this place to sort this Greens mess out at a later date.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (5.39), in reply: I thank the two previous speakers for their support, even if it was measured support. The bill I have presented provides a clear and transparent process for dealing with infringement notices. It will ensure that the payment system for infringement notice offences can take into account the circumstances of people who have been issued with infringement notices and who are on low incomes or otherwise disadvantaged. It simply allows for more flexible fine payment options for people who are struggling financially.

While I recognise that infringement notices exist for a reason, alternative payment options can make a big difference to people who are struggling. Indeed, for some people the impact of an infringement notice penalty can be catastrophic. For most of us, certainly for all of us in this chamber, paying a fine on time is annoying but achievable and a fairly straightforward chore.

The scheme I am proposing recognises what every member of this Assembly already knows: there are a proportion of people in Canberra who are genuinely struggling. They may be living in poverty, with illness, with disability or have other issues. They may have just lost their job. This bill provides a legislative response for situations where such people are issued with an infringement notice. By implementing a fairer fine system we can avoid entrenching poverty in our city while enforcing our laws and still changing behaviour.

If this bill is enacted, Canberrans who receive simple offence notices could apply to pay their fines in instalments rather than all at once, participate in approved community work or a social development plan in lieu of a fine or have an infringement penalty waived if the nature of the offence and circumstances justifies such a waiver—for example, if someone forgot to tap on when boarding light rail and

this was their first offence. Infringement notices are strict liability offences and they are simple offences where a fine can be issued and paid in lieu of going to court. I mentioned riding in public transport without paying. There is also not picking up after your dog or littering.

The Greens are not arguing in any way against the concept of infringement notices and fines. We are just arguing that there are better ways of administering them. As both sides have agreed, I do not think this is a hugely controversial idea. I am very pleased that it is likely that this will be passed because it is not a very controversial idea. We know that in the ACT there is a system along these lines that works. It is the system for dealing with traffic and parking infringements, which was actually not a government bill, I am sorry, Minister Ramsay; it was actually my former colleague Amanda Bresnan in the Seventh Assembly who introduced this legislation. That covers the majority of infringement notices and it works very well without any problems. We know that this can work and we have modelled our legislation on that successful legislation.

In response to requests from Minister Ramsay's office I have prepared an amendment that provides for the bill to commence in two years time. This, I understand, is required for IT systems to be prepared in the various agencies that administer different infringement notices. In fact, I strongly suspect that what is going to happen is that, regardless of this, there is probably going to be an upgrade of this software, and this will be rolled into it, which is a very cost-effective way of doing this.

When I tabled this bill I quoted from a report that was authored by Minister Ramsay prior to his election to the Assembly. That report recommended instalment options for infringement payments and was supportive of other payment options such as volunteer work. I also quoted former Attorney-General Simon Corbell and Chief Minister Andrew Barr, who both have been effusive in their praise of the current system of dealing with infringement notices for traffic and parking offences introduced, as I said, by my former Greens colleague Amanda Bresnan. I am not repeating those, in the interest of not boring anybody, but I can add a quote from Mr Pettersson's private member's motion last week:

... receiving an infringement can have a significant impact on a person's budget and ability to cover their everyday expenses ...

I could not agree more, and I am very pleased to find that both sides of the Assembly also agree with me. I look forward to this bill passing very soon.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Clause 1 agreed.

Clause 2.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (5.45): Pursuant to standing order 182A(b), I seek leave to move an amendment to this clause that is minor and technical in nature.

Leave granted.

MS LE COUTEUR: I move amendment No 1 circulated in my name on the green paper. This is a very straightforward amendment that I have already spoken about, for the bill to commence in two years. I am very confident that both sides of the Assembly agree with it [*see schedule 1 at page 563*].

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (5.46): I seek leave to move amendments Nos 2 to 8 circulated in my name together.

Leave granted.

MS LE COUTEUR: I move amendments Nos 2 to 8 circulated in my name together [*see schedule 2 at page 563*]. These amendments are very minor and technical and are as a result of feedback from a number of people, principally the Community Law Centre. The amendment to clause 7 specifies that an application under this section must be made within 28 days of service under the notice. Clause 7 also has a change of an “or” for an “and”. Amendment No 4 introduces the option to waive the infringement notice penalty.

Amendment No 5 introduces new clauses 7A to 7D, which together establish the processes for a waiver of infringement notice penalty, and they are consequential to amendment No 4. Amendment No 6, which is to clause 8, proposes new section 123F. This clause amends the existing section 123 to include information about the time frame to pay an infringement notice if a person’s application for a waiver is refused—that is, the penalty is payable within seven days after the day the person was told of the refusal or 28 days from the day the original notice was served, whichever is the later.

Amendment No 7 proposes new clauses 10A and 10B, with 10A setting out options and processes for penalty payment, payment plan or waiver and 10B being a technical amendment to include reference to section 127 regarding the effects of a waiver of an infringement notice penalty and to be consistent with the Road Transport General Act 1999, section 39. Amendment No 8 is for proposed new clauses 11A to 11F, reminder notices. These clauses provide for additional information about waivers to be added and reminder notices to ensure consistency and clarity of information. They specify what information must be included in reminder notices, including with regard to options available to a person who has received an infringement penalty.

New clause 11F inserts a new section 131(3), which provides information regarding time frames for responding to reminder notice or paying a penalty if additional time for payment is requested but additional time to pay a penalty is refused. I commend my amendments to the Assembly.

Amendments agreed to.

Remainder of bill, as a whole, as amended, agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Mobility parking arrangements in the ACT

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (5.50): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) parking across the Territory, particularly in the city, is becoming more difficult to access;
- (b) parking across the Territory is increasingly becoming more expensive;
- (c) the Territory Plan's Parking and Vehicular Access Code of 2014 has a requirement that the ACT provide three percent minimum disability parking spaces;
- (d) disability parking spaces are available in a range of locations in both government and private car parks;
- (e) currently different rules apply to disability car spaces across both government and private car parks, with varying time limits the most common complaint of car space users; and
- (f) significant changes to the bus network have disproportionately negatively impacted people with a disability; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) liaise with disability advocacy groups to understand their needs in the supply and use of disability car spaces in the ACT;
- (b) consult with private carpark operators on the issue;
- (c) prepare and update public information for mobility parking permit holders, their carers and the community on the use of accessible spaces;
- (d) continue to monitor closely the inappropriate use of disability car spaces and issue fines when required; and
- (e) table a response to the outcomes of parts (2)(a) to (d) by the last sitting day in June 2020.

Parking anywhere in Canberra is becoming a bit of a nightmare. It is a nightmare for our older Canberrans, our younger Canberrans, our professionals and businesspeople, our parents with babies and strollers, and Canberrans with limited mobility. Not only

is it difficult to find a space but it is difficult to know whether the space, if you are lucky enough to have found one, is time limited, whether it is free, and whether the parking meter works or not.

One can only assume that this is government strategy, although not a particularly clever one, to make parking so difficult, and so unreliable, stressful and costly, that it forces people to catch public transport instead. This might have worked for some Canberrans if the government had not monumentally stuffed up the bus network, having finally been forced to admit defeat by overhauling it a few weeks ago. As we all know from the hundreds of complaints all our offices have received, finding a bus that can actually take you where you need to go, when you need to go, is becoming as scarce as finding a car space.

With all those difficulties, let us add just one more: finding an available disability car space that can accommodate unloading a wheelchair safely. In Canberra it is estimated that 65,000 people have some form of disability. Not all of them drive, of course, and not all of them require a disability space, but a good proportion of them have a need to be driven, and they require close access and need the extra space. The Territory Plan's parking and vehicular access code of 2014 has a requirement that the ACT provide for a minimum of three per cent of total parking spaces to be disability parking spaces. The Australian standard is set at four spaces per 100, so the ACT is not even at best practice.

When you consider recent developments, at least in Civic, it is obvious that the actual number of car spaces is also reducing. A report in the *Canberra Times* in May last year suggested that there were now 180 fewer car spaces owned by the government, compared to 2014, from 2,915 down to 2,735. Couple that with our growing population and the reduction in car spaces is even more acute. That would also suggest that there are proportionately fewer disability car spaces. If that is the case, we are not providing the services our disability community need and deserve. The sad truth is that it is an issue that appears to have not gotten much better in the last several years; perhaps it may even have gotten worse.

In 2012 Ms Le Couteur raised the issue of the shortage of disability spaces. I know she will be speaking on this motion later. With indulgence, I will quote her, mostly because she is, on the whole, supporting my motion. In that speech she said:

... all Green MLAs ... have consulted with a number of Canberra's disability organisations about this issue ... Robert Altamore—

who was then the executive officer of People with Disabilities—

pointed out the bleedingly obvious, that if disabled people cannot park their car, they cannot do their shopping, they cannot get their prescriptions, they cannot meet up with friends for coffee.

This captures why this issue is so important for the Canberrans who live with a disability. Having appropriate and genuine access to parking, with consistent and clear rules, goes beyond the convenience of being able to drive and park close to where you want to go. For Canberrans requiring the use of a disability parking permit, it means

the freedom to do what many of us take for granted: shopping, picking up prescriptions, catching up with friends for coffee.

That quote from Ms Le Couteur, from Robert Altamore, dates back to 2012. We are now in 2020, and People with Disabilities ACT is still raising concerns about the lack of parking and the confusion about parking options for their members. It is true that accessible parking on an individual basis has become more accessible. The spaces are now wider than before, and there are additional spaces to allow the unloading of wheelchairs and other equipment. What has not changed is availability, fair use and consistency in the application of rules.

Within the ACT a mobility parking permit allows a person to park in the special wide bays reserved for mobility parking permit holders. Each parking bay consists of a dedicated non-shared space, with a shared area on one side of the dedicated space. Some of the mobility parking permit spaces have time limits; others do not. Mobility parking permit holders can park free of charge in ticketed ACT government operated car parks and in on-street parking spaces that are free but time restricted, but even that is confusing.

For example, disability permit holders can park for free for up to two hours if the time limit on the parking sign is 30 minutes or less, and for an unlimited time if the time limit on the parking sign is more than 30 minutes. But for parking restrictions of less than 30 minutes—for example, 15, five and so on—mobility parking scheme permit holders can park for up to 30 minutes. In privately operated car parks, these may or may not apply.

It is this inconsistency, this lack of certainty, that has been a focus of People with Disabilities ACT and has been brought to my attention. That is why I bring this motion on for debate today. In a transport position statement People with Disabilities ACT released in March 2019, they said *inter alia*:

1. PWDACT advocates for inclusive transport in accordance with Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability.
2. We advocate that the Government take appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities can access all aspects of transport and the built environment in Canberra.
3. Disabled carparks across Canberra should have the same time limits set, whether private or publicly operated. We call upon the ACT Government to standardise the time limit, regardless of whether publicly or privately managed.

Their transport paper also seeks to extend the general ACT entitlement for mobility permit holders to park free of charge in non-disability spots in both public car parks and privately managed car parks, particularly in public spaces like hospitals. These requests have arisen from frustration at the lack of availability and accessibility, not knowing where or how many car spaces there might be in any location.

In conversations with the minister's office about my motion, it would seem there is a review of current regulations happening. That review is important and certainly not before time. I hope that it addresses the myriad of differences in fees, times and rules. In preparing for this motion, my office had numerous discussions with Minister Gentleman's office. We were assured that the government would be updating public information for mobility parking permit holders, their carers and the community on the use of accessible spaces. It is important to address the frustration and uncertainty surrounding disability parking in the territory, and I look forward to seeing this roll out soon.

One issue that has been a consistent irritant for both government and the disability community is the illegal use of mobility permits. I am sure that all members have complaints made to them from constituents who believe people are abusing disability parking arrangements. A replacement permit is relatively easy to apply for if you have lost yours, and there is evidence that there are more mobility parking permits in circulation than would appear to be appropriate. But, of course, catching those people who are breaking the rules requires constant surveillance.

The ACT government has raised this as an issue and also recognises the difficulty in ensuring that disability spaces are only used by those who are eligible to use them. In the 2017-18 budget, money was allocated to increase the inspection of such car spaces, and it had some effect. In June 2019 it was reported that 272 infringements were issued to drivers in just one month—15 February to 15 March 2019 inclusive—for using lost, stolen or invalid disability parking permits, with an additional 307 infringements issued up to 15 June 2019.

Access Canberra's director of parking operations and traffic camera compliance, Chris Seddon, said at the time that technology now allowed parking inspectors to interrogate data while on patrol and check for the use of invalid disability permits or those that have been reported lost or stolen. I acknowledge that scrutiny, and my motion calls for that work to continue.

On this point, I acknowledge, of course, that there needs to be more public awareness about the appropriate and genuine use of disability parking permits. Just because someone may not look as though they need a disability parking permit does not mean that they do not have a genuine need for it. Whilst it is good that members of our community are on alert to make sure that people are not using these permits illegally, it is also important to be aware that, in the case of disability permit use, there is more than meets the eye.

I am advised that the government is undertaking this review at the present time and intends to report to the Assembly by the end of June on the various actions that we have called for in my motion. On such an important issue, which has an enormous impact on many in our disability community, it is appropriate that we have support from across the entire chamber. Until about an hour ago, that is what we had.

Unfortunately, I have only just been informed that the government will be moving an amendment to remove paragraph 1(f) of my motion and that, not surprisingly, the

Greens will support that amendment. For the record, that paragraph moves that the Assembly note that “significant changes to the bus network have disproportionately negatively impacted people with a disability”. Whilst Labor and the Greens may pat themselves on the back for a win, the removal of this paragraph from this motion means very little to those who are living these negative impacts. They know what impacts these shambolic changes to the bus network have had on them, and it is them that I represent.

The fact remains that my motion has been able to at least secure a commitment from the government to table a response to the action items outlined in paragraph 2 of my motion by the last sitting day in June. As they say, the devil is in the detail, and we look forward to reading the response. I commend my motion to the Assembly.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (6.01): I want to thank Ms Lee for her motion today in relation to the provision of parking across the territory, and in particular the provision of parking for people with disabilities or mobility issues. Every person has the right to be as independent as they can be. The ACT government’s disability parking scheme helps to facilitate a level of access and independence for Canberrans with disabilities that they could not otherwise enjoy.

Take-up of the disability parking scheme is increasing at a much faster rate than the population growth, with the number of permits in the ACT having increased by approximately 27 per cent since 2016. Over this time the number of permits on issue has increased from 18,000 to almost 25,000, or almost six per cent of the ACT population. The government is monitoring growing demand for the scheme and is considering how to keep the scheme operating in line with its intended aims to preserve disability parking bays for those that need them most. We know now that approximately 2.3 per cent of Canberrans rely on some form of a mobility aid.

Managing disability parking space availability is a growing challenge in all Australian cities, particularly in CBDs and in other locations with high parking demand. Where possible, disability parking spaces are provided close to shops and offices to help disability parking permit holders to get a park close to their destination. However, we are seeing growing demand for these spaces.

The ACT mobility parking scheme operates in accordance with the Australian disability parking scheme framework. The national framework requires the provision of disability spaces and minimum standards for their design and size. However, it does not require the provision of free parking for mobility parking permit holders. Some governments, including the ACT government, choose to go over and above the minimum requirements in the national scheme. They provide free parking and additional time concessions for mobility parking permit holders within government parking to further support permit holders.

The ACT currently has one of the most generous disability permit schemes in Australia, as those with a valid permit can park free of charge in any government-operated parking area. Permit holders are also allowed extra time in

timed parking spaces. In addition, the ACT has some of the most generous provisions for obtaining a permit compared with other jurisdictions, some of which limit the issue of permits to those with a physical inability to walk at all.

Unfortunately, there are indications that some misuse of the scheme may be occurring in the ACT and may be incentivised by the generous provision of free parking in government car parks. Additional permit validity enforcement crosschecks were introduced in February 2019 to help to address this. Since then Access Canberra parking operations has issued 747 infringements for people using expired or cancelled mobility permits and 43 infringements for people using fake permits. Additionally, in December 2019 the ACT government introduced a new offence for the display of a duplicate, defaced, altered or damaged mobility parking permit within the ACT, which carries a fine of \$615.

I acknowledge that through our endeavours to exceed the minimum requirements for disability parking in government car parks there is a noticeable inconsistency between the concessions and conditions of use in private and government-owned car parks. Other jurisdictions, such as Parramatta, have reduced this inconsistency by allowing free parking and extra time for on-street parking but not providing these concessions in off-street car parks.

The government has previously considered options to better support mobility parking permit holders in private car parks. However, governments cannot legally require commercial car park operators to provide free parking to disability permit holders. The primary lever government has to influence disability parking in private car parks is through the development assessment process, which specifies disability parking provision rates. However, disability parking permit holders are still required to comply with the conditions of use of those car parks, which may include the payment of fees. Another difficulty with requiring private car park operators to provide free disability parking is enforcement. For privacy reasons, private car parks do not have full access to details about the validity of disability parking permits.

As minister, I am committed to making sure that the government's vision for Canberra as an inclusive city that is welcoming for all is reflected in the provision of a range of appropriate support for transport and parking options. We recognise that public transport cannot always meet the mobility needs of every Canberran, and as such the disability parking scheme serves to provide priority access for those that need it most. I am pleased to advise that a review of the scheme is currently underway to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of disability permit holders. The feedback you have provided about the challenges permit holders are facing when seeking to use disabled parking spaces in private car parks will be a valuable input to the process.

As indicated, I have circulated an amendment in my name, primarily to remove paragraph (1)(f) of the motion, simply because the government does not believe that there is any evidence to support that part of the motion. I thank Ms Lee for raising this matter. We will table a response to the matters raised by her motion by 30 June 2020. I move:

Omit paragraph (1)(f).

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (6.08): I thank Ms Lee for her motion. As she does not find surprising, the Greens will be supporting it, particularly given that, as she alluded to, these issues have been going on for some time and I had a related motion in 2012. I tabled a motion that called for an increase in the minimum disabled car park provisions in the parking and vehicular access code for town, group and local centre parking, as well as for parking at hospitals and other public facilities which the government is responsible for, to be four to five per cent disability parking. Currently the figure is three per cent, although I am informed that in some locations it is higher.

Needless to say, neither Labor nor the Liberals supported the motion. At that time the government reassured the Assembly and the community that the then figure of three per cent was enough and that parking for people with disabilities would be improved to ensure that people with mobility restrictions were able to park easily and that priority parking and drop-off points were safe, sufficient and conveniently located.

But any improvements to the code and any increase in the number of mobility parking spaces already do not seem to be enough to satisfy demand. Most town and group centres in Canberra had two to three per cent disabled parking spaces available in 2008, which was when the last substantial review was undertaken. It was clear when the review was undertaken that it was already inadequate. It is interesting that it was inadequate in 2008. The population of Canberra has been ageing since then, and we all know that as the population ages the number of disabled people increases. This is an issue which is going to become more and more of a problem as we age and as transport and parking pressures increase throughout Canberra.

Back in 2012 the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicated that 16.4 per cent of people in the ACT had a disability. In 2018 this had risen to 19.4 per cent. Back in 2012 there were 19,300 people in the ACT with profound or severe core activity limitation. In 2018 there were 25,800. This is an approximately 32 per cent increase. These figures reflect the increase in the number of people with a disability, and we all know that our aged population is also increasing. In 2018 more than 42 per cent of people over 65 experienced specific limitations or restrictions. I speak personally to say that over 65s are our fastest growing demographic.

Back in 2012 the government also indicated that they would respond to requests for additional mobility spaces on a case-by-case basis. The flaw with this, of course, is that it requires people to raise the issue of a lack of available mobility parking and then wait for the government to assess it before responding. I think that it should be possible for the government to plan according to population growth, demographics and the likely use of the facility that the parking is designed for.

It is pretty obvious that a flat rate across all parking in the ACT is probably not the best option. That is why I refrain from again tabling a request to increase the average disabled car park provisions in the parking and vehicular access code to between four and five per cent as an amendment to the motion currently before us. It was part of my 2012 motion.

Using averages can sometimes be problematic. Town and group centres provide three per cent parking for disabled parking, but part of the problem is that the requirements are not homogenous. We all know that there are particular areas in the ACT where the population is ageing and the growth in demand for mobility parking is outstripping the provision. The ACT government's official population projections need to inform where to increase mobility parking spaces, commensurate with demand. The unfortunate reality of living in Canberra is that we are a very car dependent city because of our design.

As you are all aware, the Greens have always supported and promoted greater use of public transport. We had this debate again this morning, and I am very pleased that all members, all sides of this Assembly, now seem to be signing on with much more enthusiasm to the concept that public transport is really important and if we had a better public transport system then we would not need as many mobility parking spaces. But we do not.

I acknowledge that the ACT government has been investing in more accessible buses. The 40 new blue buses, I believe, are only replacement buses; they are not expanding their fleet. They are there because our existing orange buses are not disability compliant. It is a good thing that we are having disability-compliant buses. It is also really good for those people who are trying to push a pram onto a bus. We are also doing some work in terms of more accessible bus stops but not nearly as much work in terms of useable foot paths so that people can actually get to the bus stop or the light rail stop and then on to the vehicle.

Public transport is not always going to be the most appropriate form of transport for those who have mobility issues. That is why the ACT Greens ensured that the eighth parliamentary agreement included implementation of a centralised, standalone booking service for the wheelchair accessible taxi service, in addition to extra taxis, wheelchair accessible community transport, increased subsidy and the introduction of a smartcard system. I acknowledge that there has been some work in this space and that the reach of the flexible bus system has been expanded. This has been in accordance with the current ninth parliamentary agreement, which expanded it to the inner north.

But there are considerable drawbacks to the flexible bus system, and members of the community tell me it is inadequate, firstly, because of the time restrictions. It has to be outside school hours because they are using buses which would otherwise be used for taking disabled kids to their schools. And there is the need to book well in advance. The other problem is that there is a huge amount of unmet demand, such that people do not even bother trying to book it because they know they will not be able to get onto it.

The other problem is that the buses normally will only go to your nearest bus interchange, which does not always work. It does not address what is known as the last mile problem. In particular, as we age we need to access more medical care. Even though there are doctors in most local centres, you find you have more need to travel to specialists, and these specialists are not situated in each local centre. People

sometimes have to go from one side of Canberra to another, and the flexible bus service is not adequate for that use.

That is the reason why hospitals in particular need to ensure that they have greater than the average three per cent of availability for mobility parking, in particular at the University of Canberra Hospital, because, as a rehab hospital it is more likely to have older patients, which means that its visitors are likely to be mobility impaired. We should make sure that all our hospitals are located on good bus routes for this reason. Another issue aside from car parking spots is ensuring that there are sufficient and appropriate drop-off and pick-up sites adjacent to buildings such as hospitals, clinics, aged-care facilities, nursing homes, schools and so forth.

As always, the Greens support the call of disability advocacy groups to understand their needs in the supply and use of disability car spaces because they are best placed and informed to provide such advice. Equally, we agree that consultation needs to occur with private car park operators to ensure that they are meeting the three per cent minimum of mobility spaces and to ensure that the way the permits are used and monitored is consistent. Updated public information for permit holders, their carers and the community on the use of accessible spaces is also welcome.

Of course we also support close monitoring of inappropriate use of disability care spaces and the issuing of fines because it is very important that we do our best to ensure that the right people are given an opportunity to use these spots. It is also important that members of the public who regularly use these spots illegally understand that there are consequences. There are consequences, both for the people who should be using them and potentially a fine for the person who should not be.

One of the suggestions I would make, which I have made before, is for what you might call a second tier of accessible parking. This would be not unlike the current provisions in some private car parks for parents with prams. This would be for people who are still mobile but really have limitations on the distance they are able to traverse or who may have a disability which is not obviously seen but nonetheless exists, such as a psychosocial disability or even just because they are older and frailer and less agile, and pushing a trolley from the supermarket up and down a couple of pram ramps and things is actually just getting in the too-hard basket, literally.

In closing, I again thank Ms Lee for highlighting the issue of insufficient provision and regulation of mobility parking spaces because it is an issue that the Greens have long focused on and will continue to advocate for. On this issue we are united, and I think that the whole of the Assembly is united on this. I support Ms Lee's motion.

MS ORR (Yerrabi—Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Disability, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety and Minister for Government Services and Procurement) (6.19): I thank Ms Lee for raising this important topic for discussion today. In my capacity as Minister for Disability I always advocate for improvements to the supports and services for people with disability. That includes improving transport access and mobility parking arrangements in the ACT. Parking can become a daunting task if you are a disability parking permit holder, also known as a mobility parking permit holder. Difficulties in

getting to or into a place can limit a person with disability from participating in everyday life and common daily activities.

In the ACT, the mobility parking scheme operates in accordance with the Australian disability parking scheme framework. While this national framework does not require the provision of free parking for mobility parking permit holders, the ACT government opted to provide free parking for mobility permit holders within the car parks we manage.

Some of the mobility parking permit spaces have a time limit which must be observed by the permit holder. Mobility parking permit holders can also park free of charge in ticketed parking areas, ACT government-operated car parks and on-street parking spaces that are free but time restricted for up to two hours if the time limit on the parking sign is 30 minutes or less and for an unlimited time if the time limit on the parking sign is more than 30 minutes.

It is true that publicly accessible, privately managed car parks set their own terms and conditions of use, including whether timed or free concessions are available to any user group, such as mobility parking permit holders. Ultimately motorists are responsible for checking time and fee conditions wherever they park their vehicle. Much confusion is caused when parking fee arrangements are not the same in private and government-operated car parks. The benefit of requiring private car park operators to operate consistently with the ACT government in their treatment of mobility parking permits is immeasurable.

This issue was discussed at a cross-government parking working group meeting in November 2019. During discussions it was noted that there is no precedent in other Australian jurisdictions to require private parking operators to offer free parking to certain user groups. As mentioned, private car park operators set their own terms and conditions of use for their facilities. However, they must continue to offer mobility parking spaces at the provision rates required by ACT planning regulations.

I support Ms Lee's proposition for government to consult with private car park operators to discuss consistent mobility parking time limits and arrangements. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate is responsible for parking policy in the ACT, and I understand the directorate, as part of its ongoing work regarding mobility parking, considered recent feedback from People with Disabilities ACT. In May 2019 the directorate undertook a mobility parking review into the inappropriate use of mobility car spaces and announced a range of tougher penalties for drivers who illegally use mobility car spaces and permits.

The ACT government continues to monitor the misuse of mobility car spaces. For example, technology now allows parking inspectors, while on patrol, to check for the use of invalid, lost or stolen mobility permits. This is good news for those genuinely seeking a mobility car park who often find car spaces occupied by illegally parked vehicles.

The Community Services Directorate, through the Office for Disability, works with Canberra's disability advocacy groups and the ACT disability reference group

regarding the need for a range of access and inclusion improvements throughout Canberra and is aware of recent advocacy for improved mobility parking arrangements. The Office for Disability also made significant contributions to the ACT government's 2019 mobility parking review.

Canberra is better connected than ever before as a result of our investment in a better public transport network, with the introduction of light rail and improvements to the bus network. The recently announced improvements to our public transport services, which are expected to commence from 28 April 2020, have been identified based on analysis and patronage data showing how Canberrans use public transport and feedback Transport Canberra has received from the community.

The ACT government listened, and these improvements will see more direct routes between regions and an increase in light rail and bus services during peak and off-peak times. I look forward to the announcement in mid-March of a new bus timetable, the extension of peak travel times along Canberra's light rail network and the addition of more services to meet rising demand for the public transport system. I wish to assure our community that we will continue to work on improving transport, access and mobility parking arrangements in the ACT in order to remove the barriers that impact people with disability to have every opportunity to fully participate in the social, cultural and economic life of our city.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Belconnen Community Men's Shed

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (6.25): Whilst many workers look forward to retirement, research shows that many older Australians who leave the workforce experience significant loneliness as a consequence of leaving behind established social connections and familiar tasks. This social isolation, mixed with the financial limitations that often accompany living on a fixed income, can result in a decline in both physical and emotional wellbeing, increasing the risk of anxiety and depression. I rise today to publicly honour and praise the Belconnen Community Men's Shed and the huge role it plays in making sure that men in its suburb of Page and other parts of Belconnen have access to essential social connections and meaningful activities.

The shed bills itself and its exciting array of power tools as the "excuse" men need to get out of the house and talk with one another. These tools include wood and metal lathes, a circular saw, welding equipment and a sheetmetal guillotine and folder, as well as handheld tools for leatherwork and projects involving plastics. Small hobby electronics projects are also catered for, and Tuesday afternoons are reserved for cards

and other games. This is all available in a shed that is fully insulated and has heating, cooling and, of course, a kitchen to allow for the preparation of morning tea. And rule No 1 at the Belconnen Community Men's Shed is always to stop for morning tea.

Collectively, these "excuses" appear to be accomplishing their purpose. I have very much enjoyed visiting the shed and seeing the hum of activity and the warm friendship that takes place there. This well-run men's shed provides a safe and busy environment where men can feel good about themselves, be productive, contribute to their community, forge new connections and maintain active bodies and minds. I absolutely love it.

I thank Gordon Cooper, president of the Belconnen Community Men's Shed, and the rest of his team for their fantastic leadership. But there are so many others who deserve thanks too. They include the men's shed members themselves and the good work they perform in warmly welcoming new members and visitors and sharing their knowledge and their skills.

I also thank the Mosaic Baptist Church, which facilitated the building of the shed. Forty-eight generous Canberra businesses and community organisations sponsor the Belconnen Community Men's Shed, donating labour, equipment and money. I express my sincere thanks to each one of them. This is truly a community endeavour, one that clearly demonstrates how much good can be done when good people come together with a determination to make a difference. Successful small business owners and members of local clubs are so often the backbone that supports essential community efforts like the men's shed. I enthusiastically wish the Belconnen Community Men's Shed, its members and its sponsors the very best for 2020 and beyond. Thank you for making life better for so many men in Canberra.

State of the environment report

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (6.28): I rise tonight to talk about the *State of the environment* report which was tabled in the Assembly by my colleague Minister Rattenbury last week. It is nearly 400 pages long. Because of that, I have not read it all, so I will concentrate on the ecological footprint section, and I hope that I will have time to come back to other issues in the future.

An ecological footprint measures the area in hectares that is required to support a population. This means it can be used as an overall measure of the effect that our daily activities and resource consumption have on the environment and, importantly, it can be used to compare different communities' environmental impact.

The commissioner for the environment calculated that, in 2017-18, the total ecological footprint for the ACT was around 2.19 million hectares. This is over nine times the size of the ACT, so at current consumption levels we need an area nine times the size of the ACT to provide the resources, goods and services that we use, and to absorb and regulate the pollution that we create. As the commissioner writes:

It is clear that our current resource use is unsustainable, placing enormous stress on the earth's natural ecosystems.

Interestingly, our total footprint peaked in 2009-10. It has in fact decreased by nearly 11 per cent, despite population growth of over 16 per cent to 2017-18. That is really good. It is because the ACT's per capita footprint has fallen by nearly a quarter from 2003-04 to 2017-18. The decrease means that, instead of the ACT having the highest per capita footprint in Australia, we now have one that is the same as the average for Australia, which is very much a step forward.

The decline in our per capita footprint is very positive. Of course, having looked at it, I assumed it would be due to our use of renewable energy. That is partially the case. This has led to the impact of energy use declining from six per cent to four per cent of our total footprint. Interestingly, food dominates most ecological footprints, including our ecological footprint, due to the large amount of land required for the average diet. In the ACT food accounts for a whopping 50 per cent of our total footprint. This huge environmental impact of food is one of the reasons that I moved my motion about plant-based food last year. I was disappointed that other parties did not support it.

Some of the other reasons that our footprint has gone down include more consumption of services such as education and health, and cost of living pressures, which have led to some decrease in consumption.

Looking at it more globally, according to the Global Footprint Network, an ecological footprint of 1.7 hectares per capita is the limit for a sustainable earth if you distribute the world's space equally, given the current population. But the ACT's ecological footprint per capita is 5.24 hectares, and the per capita footprint of the ACT is 3.8 times higher than 1.7 hectares. For all of the world to have the ACT's ecological footprint we would need to have 3.8 earths, but we only have one.

The ACT often claims to be leading the nation as a clean and green jurisdiction, but we have only just reduced our ecological footprint to the Australian average and we are in the order of three times the global sustainable footprint. It is clear that more has to be done from the point of view of environmental sustainability as well as equity between Australia and other nations.

I commend the *State of the environment* report to the Assembly. I hope that we can use it and the considerable work behind it to learn from it, to lead the ACT to a more sustainable future and hopefully influence the rest of Australia in this regard.

Death cafes

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (6.33): "Death" and "cafe" are two common words, but two words you might not often see side by side. But a death cafe is exactly what I attended this past Sunday. For the last little while Vickie Hingston-Jones has been hosting death cafes in Canberra. There are no rules. There is no agenda. It is simply a group of people gathered at a cafe, letting the conversation wander in a direction that they choose but all around the theme of death.

Why death? It is because we simply do not talk about it enough. This was, indeed, a finding in last year's report of the end of life choices committee, which recommended

that the government explore ways to encourage broader conversations about death and dying and improved death literacy, including through death cafes. We were pleased to see that the government agreed to a broader education and engagement campaign to encourage discussion on death and dying in safe and accessible environments.

A few things Vickie said have really struck a chord with me. The first is that talking about dying will not kill you. It is as true and as simple as that. The second is that we plan for weddings, we plan for holidays and, in fact, some of us spend a lot of time thinking about these things, imagining what would be best and what we would like, how we imagine it could be. But the thing is, there is no guarantee that a wedding might happen for some of us. There is no guarantee that a holiday might happen for some of us. Yet many of us do not take the time to think about what we want at the end of our lives. We do not take the time to plan for it, despite it being guaranteed to happen.

That is where a lot of our conversation wandered on Sunday. A small group of us gathered at the Oaks Brasserie in Yarralumla. We talked about what to do in the event of death, including sudden death of loved ones. We talked about our own experiences with death, and some of us spoke about how these experiences have shaped what we want for ourselves and for our families when we die. Of course, one of the important aspects of a death cafe is that it is confidential, which is why I am being deliberately vague on the details. But I can confirm that the discussion was constructive, was casual and, while being necessarily about death, was also very much life affirming.

Madam Speaker, death can be hard to talk about and it can be hard to consider, but the more we talk about it and the more we hear other people talking about it the more we can consider it a natural and, equally, important part of our lives, because it is. I look forward to attending more death cafes, and I thank Vickie for her advocacy and for her leadership in this space, and for creating such a warm environment for the attendees to be so open.

Accessible car parking Woolworths Landcare grants

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (6.37): Before I give my adjournment speech, I had not planned on doing a sum-up speech for my earlier motion, but there are two points that I do have to put on the record. The first is that, during the debate, Ms Le Couteur confirmed to me that she was not supporting Mr Gentleman's amendment. I thank her for the support. I have to correct the record, because I think at the beginning of my speech, I was under the misunderstanding that she was supporting that amendment.

The second is that, whilst I acknowledge some of the issues that Mr Gentleman outlined and the difficulties especially in getting private car park operators to fall into line with similar rules—and that is why my motion was drafted in such a way, especially in the “calls upon” paragraphs—I received a tweet this afternoon from Robert McMahon, the vice-president of People With Disabilities ACT, and I think it sums up really well why this is such an important issue for that community. He said that disability does not differ between parking sites. That is a very powerful statement indeed and why I brought that motion forward today.

I turn now to my adjournment contribution. Good habits that are formed early last a lifetime, and it is never too early to learn. Telopea Park School and the Wattle Early Childhood Centre, both schools in my electorate of Kurrajong, are embarking on some fantastic initiatives and have been rewarded with a Woolworths junior Landcare grant. Telopea school has been awarded a grant of \$992.42 to establish a healthy community garden, while the Wattle Early Childhood Centre was awarded a grant of \$914.14 to help the school fight food waste.

Woolworths partnered with Landcare Australia in 2018 to launch the Woolworths junior Landcare grants program. This program provides primary schools, early learning centres and eligible community organisations with grants of up to \$1,000 for environmental projects. The purpose of the program is to:

Inspire children to learn in a practical manner about sustainable food production, waste management and ways of enhancing biodiversity and habitats.

I have had the opportunity to visit schools in the territory. On more than one occasion I have been impressed with the commitment to foster good attitudes and habits on sustainable practices in our future generation. More than one school has a community garden where students can grow their own vegetables and herbs, which are used in cooking classes, with the excess fed to resident animals or made into mulch. More than one school has a program of no waste when it comes to school lunches to raise awareness about food waste.

The Canberra Liberals value the importance of grassroots programs and initiatives that promote and foster our responsibility in looking after our environment, and that is why we announced a \$1.52 million funding guarantee for our Landcare ACT catchment groups to support them to do what they do best. When big corporations like Woolworths get on board with programs like this, their involvement does bring some serious dollars and backing. It is clearly an issue that is of great importance to our entire community.

I commend Woolworths on this initiative. I applaud the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers and school communities at both Telopea and Wattle Early Childhood Centre in applying for these grants, and I congratulate them for their dedication to looking after our environment.

Mr Dennis Deane—tribute

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (6.40): I rise to pay tribute to the late Dennis Deane, who passed away on 12 February at the Gold Coast. He lost his battle with cancer. Dennis ran a very successful bus and coach company, Deane's Transit Group, including Deane's Bus Lines and Transborder Express.

Through his business he made an enormous contribution to Queanbeyan, Canberra and the region. The Deane's brand was a household name throughout this city. So many of us have memories of catching a Deane's bus on a school excursion to or from Canberra stadium, travelling to Queanbeyan, a daytrip to the snow or on a charter. Today, under the brands Qcity Transit and Transborder, the business continues.

In 2012 the Deane family sold the business to the ComfortDelGro Corporation. In the 22 years prior to the sale, the fleet grew by 100 buses and Dennis Deane was one of the most significant employers in Queanbeyan. In addition to many school services, route buses and charters, Dennis was instrumental in bringing about significant reforms and innovations in bus operations and transport policy. In later years he successfully lobbied for bus lanes on Canberra Avenue, installed wi-fi on buses, ran airport services and much more.

I had the privilege of spending time with Dennis on numerous occasions, particularly between 2008 and 2012. He was a happy person with a big personality and a strong presence. He was a great businessman and he and his family contributed greatly to our region. He loved his boats, cars, fishing, golf, fine food and, of course, his family. My thoughts are with his wife, Susan; kids, Jamie and Luke; son-in-law, Anton; and grandchildren, Taylor, Harrison and Georgia.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 6.43 pm.

Schedules of amendments

Schedule 1

Magistrates Court (Infringement Notices) Amendment Bill 2019

Amendment moved by Ms Le Couteur

1

Clause 2

Page 2, line 5—

omit clause 2, substitute

2 Commencement

- (1) This Act commences on a day fixed by the Minister by written notice.
- Note 1* The naming and commencement provisions automatically commence on the notification day (see Legislation Act, s 75 (1)).
- Note 2* A single day or time may be fixed, or different days or times may be fixed, for the commencement of different provisions (see Legislation Act, s 77 (1)).
- (2) If this Act has not commenced within 2 years beginning on its notification day, it automatically commences on the first day after that period.
- (3) The Legislation Act, section 79 (Automatic commencement of postponed law) does not apply to this Act.

Schedule 2

Magistrates Court (Infringement Notices) Amendment Bill 2019

Amendments moved by Ms Le Couteur

1

Clause 2

Page 2, line 5—

omit clause 2, substitute

2 Commencement

This Act commences on day fixed by the Minister by written notice.

Note 1 The naming and commencement provisions automatically commence on the notification day (see Legislation Act, s 75 (1)).

Note 2 A single day or time may be fixed, or different days or times may be fixed, for the commencement of different provisions (see Legislation Act, s 77 (1)).

Note 3 If a provision has not commenced within 6 months beginning on the notification day, it automatically commences on the first day after that period (see Legislation Act, s 79).

2

Clause 7

Proposed new section 122 (1) (ba)

Page 4, line 17—

after

the person may

insert

, within 28 days after the date of service of the notice,

3

Clause 7

Proposed new section 122 (1) (ba) (ii)

Page 4, line 21—

omit

and

substitute

or

4

Clause 7

Proposed new section 122 (1) (ba) (iii)

Page 4, line 21—

insert

(iii) waive the infringement notice penalty; and

5

Proposed new clauses 7A to 7D

Page 4, line 21—

insert

7A New section 122 (1) (bb)

insert

(bb) the person may apply to the administering authority, in writing, for additional time to do a thing mentioned in paragraph (ba); and

7B Section 122 (1) (d)

omit everything before subparagraph (i), substitute

(d) if the person pays the penalty within the 28 days (or any additional time allowed by the administering authority) or the penalty is waived, then, unless the infringement notice is withdrawn and any penalty refunded—

7C Section 122 (1) (g)

omit

or disputes liability

substitute

apply to have the penalty waived or dispute liability

7D Section 122 (2) (b)

substitute

(b) explain how the person may apply for—

(i) an infringement notice management plan or, if the person has an infringement notice management plan, the addition of the infringement notice penalty to the plan; or

(ii) waiver of the infringement notice penalty; and

(c) explain how the person may apply for additional time to do any of the following:

- (i) pay the infringement notice penalty;
- (ii) dispute liability for the offence;
- (iii) apply for an infringement notice management plan or, if the person has an infringement notice management plan, the addition of the infringement notice penalty to the plan;
- (iv) apply for waiver of the infringement notice penalty.

6

Clause 8**Proposed new section 123 (f)**

Page 5, line 24—

insert

- (f) if the person applies to the administering authority within the 28 days for waiver of the infringement notice penalty for the offence and the application is refused—is payable within 7 days after the day the person is told of the refusal or 28 days after the day the notice was served, whichever is later.

7

Proposed new clauses 10A and 10B

Page 7, line 3—

insert

10A	Effect of payment of infringement notice penalty Section 125 (1), except note
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substitute

- (1) This section applies—
 - (a) if—
 - (i) a person has been served with an infringement notice for an offence; and
 - (ii) one of the following things happens:
 - (A) the person pays the infringement notice penalty for the offence in accordance with this part;
 - (B) the person enters into an infringement notice management plan for the infringement notice penalty for the offence or the penalty is added to the person's infringement notice management plan;
 - (C) the administering authority waives the infringement notice penalty for the offence; and
 - (iii) when the thing happened—
 - (A) the infringement notice had not been withdrawn; and
 - (B) a proceeding had not been brought against the person for the offence; or
 - (b) if—
 - (i) more than 1 infringement notice for the same infringement notice offence has been served on a person and none of the infringement notices has been withdrawn; and
 - (ii) one of the following things happens:

- (A) the person pays the infringement notice penalty for the offence in accordance with this part, in relation to 1 of the notices;
- (B) the person enters into an infringement notice management plan for the infringement notice penalty for the offence, or the penalty is added to the person's infringement notice management plan, in relation to 1 of the notices;
- (C) the administering authority waives the infringement notice penalty for the offence in relation to 1 of the notices.

10B Section 125 (3)*substitute*

- (3) This section is subject to section 127 (Withdrawal of infringement notice).

8**Proposed new clauses 11A to 11F****Page 7, line 10—***insert***11A Reminder notices
New section 129 (da)***insert*

- (da) the person has not applied to the administering authority for waiver of the infringement notice penalty; and

**11B Additional information in reminder notices
Section 131 (1) (e) and (f)***substitute*

- (e) within the required time after the reminder notice is served on the person, the person may do 1 or more of the following things:
 - (i) pay the infringement notice penalty now payable for the offence;
 - (ii) apply to the administering authority for—
 - (A) an infringement notice management plan; or
 - (B) if the person has an infringement notice management plan—the addition of the infringement notice penalty to the plan; or
 - (C) waiver of the infringement notice penalty;
 - (iii) dispute liability for the offence;
 - (iv) apply to the administering authority for additional time to do the thing; and

11C Section 131 (1) (h)*omit everything before subparagraph (i), substitute*

- (h) if the person pays the penalty within the required time or the penalty is waived, then, unless the infringement notice is withdrawn and any penalty refunded—

11D Section 131 (1) (k)*substitute*

- (k) if the person does not pay the infringement notice penalty, apply to have the penalty waived or dispute liability for the offence within the required time, the person may be prosecuted for the offence.

11E Section 131 (2) (b)

substitute

- (b) explain how the person may apply for—
 - (i) an infringement notice management plan; or
 - (ii) if the person has an infringement notice management plan—the addition of the infringement notice penalty to the plan; or
 - (iii) waiver of the infringement notice penalty; and
- (c) explain how the person may apply for additional time to—
 - (i) pay the infringement notice penalty; or
 - (ii) apply for 1 of the following:
 - (A) an infringement notice management plan;
 - (B) if the person has an infringement notice management plan—the addition of the infringement notice penalty to the plan;
 - (C) waiver of the infringement notice penalty; or
 - (iii) dispute liability for the offence.

11F New section 131 (3)

insert

- (3) In this section:
the required time, for a person to do something mentioned in this section, means—
 - (a) 28 days after the day the reminder notice for the offence was served; or
 - (b) any additional time allowed to do the thing; or
 - (c) if an application for additional time was refused, the later of the following:
 - (i) 7 days after the day the person is given notice of the refusal;
 - (ii) 28 days after the date of issue of the reminder notice.
-