



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION**

(Reference: [Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021-22](#))

Members:

**MR M PETERSSON (Chair)
MR J DAVIS (Deputy Chair)
MR P CAIN**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2021

**Acting secretary to the committee:
Dr C Regan (Ph: 620 50142)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 10.46 am.

Appearances:

Cheyne, Ms Tara, Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Community Services Directorate

Rule, Ms Catherine, Director-General

Summerrell, Mrs Jessica, Executive Branch Manager, Social and Community Inclusion

Murray, Ms Christine, Executive Group Manager, Inclusion and Participation

THE CHAIR: Good morning everyone and welcome to the last of five public hearings of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion inquiry into the ACT budget 2021-2022. Before we go any further, the committee wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people, and to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and contribution to the life of this city and region.

The proceedings today will examine the expenditure proposals and revenue estimates for the Community Services Directorate in relation to inclusion and participation; multicultural affairs; the offices for youth and women; and the Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development Directorate in relation to the skills portfolio, sport and recreation, property services and aquatic facilities management.

Before we start, there are a few housekeeping matters that I wish to draw to your attention. Please be aware that proceedings today are being recorded and will be transcribed and published by Hansard. Proceedings are also being broadcast. When taking a question on notice, it would be useful if witnesses use these words: “I will take that as a question taken on notice.” Can each witness please confirm that you have read the privilege statement the first time you speak?

I will lead off with a question and we will make our way through the committee members. Minister, I was wondering if you could give the committee an update on the Multicultural Festival and how work is going towards the planning of the next one.

Ms Cheyne: I confirm that I have read and understood the privilege statement and the implications on us. As you are aware, we are looking forward to the 25th anniversary of the National Multicultural Festival. It is a community led event and it is the largest event in the ACT events calendar, with more than 200,000 people visiting the festival. As with our entire events calendar—and I think the Chief Minister touched on this the other day with major events, and just moments ago in the previous hearing I have touched on it regarding community events—we are working through our events calendar as a whole.

As you know, we are just out of lockdown and generally there may be changes in the nature of the events and the timing, particularly noting that major events do have a significant lead time. This also leads to something that is community led, in

partnership with the ACT government.

Our key responsibilities are first determining whether the festival can be held safely and effectively—and that is the conversation that we are having across government, most notably and unsurprisingly with the office of the Chief Health Officer—just noting that this event has a very particular footprint. It is, as I mentioned, the biggest. It is not ticketed and not fenced. We are conscious that any decision will have a large impact on the community. It is something that we are still in the conversation stage right now—and when we have more to say we certainly will—discussing most importantly with our multicultural community.

You might be aware that we did establish, as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations, a community panel reference group with representatives from right across the community. Funnily enough, its first meeting was scheduled for 12 August, the day that we went into lockdown. We very much look forward to meeting with and engaging with them in due course.

THE CHAIR: Minister, you mentioned in that answer that the decision is yet to be made as to the potential format or whether the festival goes ahead at all. Do you happen to know when that decision-making process will culminate? Is that a decision that will be made soon or will that be a decision that will be made, I guess, a lot closer to the festival?

Ms Cheyne: I can confirm to you that active conversations are occurring right now. This is something that we do right across our events calendar and it is occurring at Events ACT as well. We are working with the Chief Health Officer and her office and right across our colleagues in government as well about what events generally look like. As I mentioned, no two events are the same so we are just working through the details of all of them.

I am not in a position to make any confirmation any which way at this stage but it is something that we know we need to provide a certainty on. We know that we need to do it for the Multicultural Festival, we need to do it for New Year's Eve, for Australia Day, Canberra Day and so on, but the details are just being worked through.

We are just out of lockdown and you might be aware that the Office for Multicultural Affairs has played a critical, supportive role during COVID with our multicultural communities. Yes, this work is being undertaken as we speak and I hope to say more as soon as I can.

MR DAVIS: I would like to ask about community language schools. My understanding is that the community language schools in Canberra have not seen an increase in their funding for almost 10 years but, more challengingly, the per capita funding seems to be a bit behind that of other states and territories. Can you talk me through what the government is doing to support community language schools?

Ms Cheyne: You are right. The ACT government has actually undertaken a review quite recently into our ACT community language schools and the funding arrangements associated with those. Your colleague, Mr Braddock, has also been very interested in this and brought a specific motion about this to the Assembly, I believe

in August. We are due to write an initial response to both the review and the government response to that review by the last sitting day this year.

What I can tell you is that the current ACT government investment in community language schools is \$275,000 annually. This is a grant program. It provides a per student grant to assist with community language school fees. As you mentioned, it is lower than in some other jurisdictions and we did undertake this review as part of the second action plan under our multicultural framework. It really is to ensure that we are continuing to meet the needs of the Canberra community and that future investment delivers those positive outcomes.

We have also been working very closely with this review and in responding to this review with the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs and her office and the directorate, because many of our community language schools also operate out of Education Directorate facilities. A number of community groups, not just community language schools or multicultural groups, make use of these facilities. There is just some broader work, as I understand it, going on there about how we can continue to support community language schools in those areas. We will have more to say on the last sitting day of this year.

MR DAVIS: Can I just ask a clarifying question. Perhaps it is my naivety but you will correct me if I have got it wrong. If the government responds to Mr Braddock's motion in December and there may or may not be some new announcements in this space, how would any new announcements and the funding necessary for new amounts interact with this budget? Would it be having to wait until the next budget to see new money if we are responding in December?

Ms Cheyne: This is subject to cabinet decision-making, so I really am not in a position to pre-empt at this stage.

MR DAVIS: That is fair, and I realise there were a few hypotheticals in that follow-up. That is probably fair enough.

Ms Cheyne: I completely understand where you are coming from but just because it is in the cabinet space I cannot stray there, I am sorry.

MR BRADDOCK: Far be it for me to correct a minister but I believe that the response date is actually next year, not this year, so you have got a bit more time to work on that. I am a bit more interested in the work that you are forecasting in terms of how community language schools, amongst other community groups, can access Education Directorate spaces. Are you able to elaborate any further on that?

Ms Cheyne: This is something that we have been working with the Education Directorate on. It is there. They are the owners of these facilities. I might just see if Mrs Summerrell has a little further to add in our cross-directorate discussions at this stage. More substantive questions might be best directed to Minister Berry. We will see how far we can get.

Mrs Summerrell: I acknowledge the privilege statement. Thank you for your question. I think it is really important that we recognise the enormous contribution

that language makes in our community. Canberra is a very proud and diverse community. We have over 170 languages that are spoken. Linguistic diversity is a really key pillar and a key component of ACT cultural diversity. We recognise that it plays an enormous and crucial role in the development of our personal, social and cultural identity.

I have had many discussions with the Education Directorate and my colleagues there who absolutely agree with that sentiment as well and recognise the importance of language in our community and also in our schools. Many of our schools have high levels of language diversity spoken, and the Education Directorate is very much aware of that diversity and the need to harness that.

Community language schools at the moment largely operate out of the education spaces, as you are aware, and what we are really looking at now is the increase in uptake. Again, it is really positive that we are seeing larger numbers of people wanting to participate in the language schools, showing that we really are doing wonderful work in our community to celebrate that diversity. It is really about the increase and how we manage the increase in need and in demand, and I will continue to have those conversations with the Education Directorate. They are absolutely supportive of the diversity of our community and the need to continue to harness that.

MR CAIN: Minister, I have a few questions about the multicultural bill and submissions. How many submissions were made and are they publicly available or can they be made available to me?

Ms Cheyne: The consultation period occurred earlier this year. In addition to submissions—and I will get that detail for you on the number—we also had a number of workshops. I believe that there were six in total. We are going back quite a few months now where we had really good engagement and quite an in-depth discussion about the proposed bill, the charter, and what should be included in it. I do know that we sought submissions through the YourSay website but I will just double-check. I will hand to Ms Murray about whether those have been published.

MR CAIN: Does the bill have any capacity to increase people's protection against occasional racist attacks?

Ms Cheyne: Is it all right if we just get Ms Murray to answer that first bit? Then I will absolutely go directly to what you have just asked.

MR CAIN: Just while Ms Murray is looking at that, is the bill still on track for presentation in November this year?

Ms Cheyne: We will go to the submissions. Ms Murray will answer that and I will talk you through the reforms in the Discrimination Act space, the Multicultural Recognition Act and I will also talk to you about the time frames. I might just hand over to Ms Murray in the first place.

MR CAIN: I am not looking for a lengthy explanation of the background, just be succinct please.

Ms Cheyne: How about we just start to answer some questions?

Ms Murray: As you are aware, during April and May we did consultation with the community on the Multicultural Recognition Act. We did that on the basis of the discussion paper and a fact sheet which assisted, and also the work from the YourSay page. I just note that we translated that into 14 languages. CSD hosted six face-to-face consultation sessions. This brought together more of a breadth rather than just the written submissions. We have published a listing report which summarises that on the YourSay website under the tab Multicultural Recognition Act. I am just trying to be succinct. I hope that answers your question.

MR CAIN: Yes. Minister, regarding protection against occasional racist attacks?

Ms Cheyne: Racism or race is a protected attribute already under the Discrimination Act and has been for a significant period of time. As you know, at the moment the way that the Human Rights Commission operates is through complaints. That means when something occurs, a person can complain to the Human Rights Commission and then they investigate and they may conciliate or they may engage with the person about referring it to ACAT.

However, something that I think you might be particularly interested in is that last week we announced our discussion paper regarding the reforms that we are looking to pursue for the Discrimination Act. One of the key things within that is whether we wish to develop a positive duty for government organisations and perhaps also for businesses to eliminate racism.

I know that you have experience in the legal profession so I will not go into too much detail. I am sure that you know what a positive duty is but, just for the benefit of *Hansard* and the broader committee, it requires an organisation to identify areas where discrimination may occur and to take steps to prevent this. That would extend to race.

Just on the Multicultural Recognition Act, something we are also considering is whether a positive duty regarding promoting multiculturalism in government organisations or perhaps extending elsewhere in the community could be considered. As I mentioned, this is still under consideration.

On the Multicultural Recognition Act time frames, yes, it has been delayed due to COVID. As I mentioned earlier, the Office for Multicultural Affairs is a small team and they have just done an outstanding job working with the community to support them during COVID-19.

What we would look to do, particularly given the significant interest in this and how it will be complementing the Discrimination Act and the Human Rights Act, would be to release an exposure draft. I would have hoped that this would occur towards the end of this year, but I suspect that it is more likely to be early next year.

MRS JONES: Just to ask a more detailed question on the previous answer, Minister, on the change that you are contemplating, is there any way in which this act could assist when racist attacks are occurring in the public domain rather than in the

workplace?

Ms Cheyne: We are straying into the human rights space, and I just do not have all of my Discrimination Act papers in front of me, I am sorry. Perhaps if I can take that on notice regarding the Discrimination Act, with my human rights hat on, and I can get back to you. Sorry, I am operating in a few different headspaces today.

MRS JONES: Does the Multicultural Recognition Act have any capacity to address occasional racist attacks in the public domain? Also on the submissions, could you take on notice how many there were.

Ms Cheyne: Yes, sure.

Ms Rule: I acknowledge the privilege statement. We can answer that question about the submissions now if you like.

MRS JONES: Thank you, yes.

Ms Rule: Sixty-three submissions were taken face-to-face at community forums and 73 submissions were submitted online.

MR BRADDOCK: I have a question about that positive duty under the Discrimination Act. How would that be in addition to the existing responsibilities on employers and PCPUs in terms of workplace safety?

Ms Cheyne: That is exactly right. It would be an additional responsibility, and that is exactly why we want to consult on it. This is why we will maybe not pursue it but it is something that I am certainly keen to explore. We might, in the first instance, limit it to government organisations before extending it to businesses. But what it is really about is ensuring that organisations are actively considering how they can make improvements to systems and practices to address where areas of discrimination might occur.

As I mentioned, under the Discrimination Act we currently have a complaints-based mechanism—it is when something negative happens—and that engages the Human Rights Commission. What this is about is trying to ensure that nothing negative happens in the first place, which I think is a very helpful way of looking at it and a direction for us to take as a society.

MR BRADDOCK: I am not debating whether it is helpful; I definitely agree. It is just more of a question whether there is a gap under current workplace legislation that does not ensure that people are safe from such behaviour.

Ms Cheyne: I do not believe that this is covered. I think there is safe workplace legislation but I think it does not go to this level of detail of what is required in terms of the elimination of, or seeking to eliminate in the first place, discrimination. In that active review we would be asking organisations to be undertaking this.

Mrs Summerrell: I might also add that one of the components of the Multicultural Recognition Act is the charter, and the purpose of the charter is to outline and make it

very clear what expected behaviours are. While I appreciate that you are asking a very legislative question, the charter really is around, as a community, what are the expected behaviours and how do we hold each other accountable for those behaviours. It goes back to that positive-duty component that we were talking about before, and that is what we heard from the community as well, being really clear and stipulating really clearly through that charter how we expect each other to behave and holding each other accountable for that behaviour. That is a really important part of the charter within the Multicultural Recognition Act also.

MR BRADDOCK: I think that is where Mrs Jones's question goes in terms of the actions that happen in a public space randomly between two individuals who would not normally be in a workplace together. The question is whether the multicultural act would be able to cover such a situation.

Ms Cheyne: I appreciate that, Mr Braddock and Mrs Jones. I think that there are real challenges in public situations, particularly where it is classed as bias. But there is, I can tell you now, a bit of a body of work that is being undertaken, I believe in JACS, ahead of Harmony Week next year, which I believe is going to be launched then. I appreciate that you are asking about a legislative response, but I think it is about the positive behaviours that we seek to demonstrate in a community and also to support each other in a community.

JACS is working on a bystander awareness initiative, and that is aimed at increasing community understanding on how to respond to racist incidents in a safe way. Mrs Summerrell might be able to tell you a little more about her engagement with JACS on that.

Mrs Summerrell: We are working quite closely with JACS, and I know that JACS have contracted the Griffith University as part of that piece of work as well. They are delivering a bystander training piece to ACT government staff but also to community members. The training, as the minister mentioned, will be delivered during Harmony Week, which is in March next year. That will also align with the outcomes that come through the wellbeing framework, as well as our Welcoming Cities standards.

That training is really aimed at empowering a community-led response to abusive behaviour when it occurs. It is, exactly as Mrs Jones was saying, when it occurs at the shops and on public transport but also in the workplace. Griffith University are doing a lot of work and informing us on this piece of work that every single one of us plays a role in violence prevention.

Whether it is something that we are exposed to directly or not, we want to have a community and an ability that recognises when a problematic situation is taking place but also for them to be able to feel empowered to effectively interrupt the behaviour and provide a safe space for that to occur. Through that piece of work it is our aim that we raise awareness around the ways in which that abusive behaviour is occurring and look at obviously the harm that that is causing and then how we can use this program to work to eradicate that.

The programs challenge the root cause of the attitudes, the beliefs and the behaviours that we are seeing that are normalising violence and racism. That is a really big piece

of work that we will be excited to roll out with JACS in Harmony Week next year.

MR BRADDOCK: On the Multicultural Recognition Act as it progresses, I am wondering how you are responding to the community feedback that you received. For example, I received feedback that was divided but was concerned about one of the first requirements being a requirement to abide by legislation and what message that sends just by having that in the Multicultural Recognition Act. I would be interested in your response.

Ms Cheyne: We have taken very seriously all the feedback on the Multicultural Recognition Act. This is something that has also occurred in Queensland and in Victoria, and it is something that our Multicultural Advisory Council certainly pushed for. As you are aware, it is an election commitment and is in the agreement.

I think legislating for multicultural recognition actually sends a really strong signal. Putting something in legislation—because legislation is not easy to change—also shows why we have worked so hard on ensuring that we have got a range of views that are feeding into our multicultural charter. It reflects who we are as a community and where we want to head. I think having that in legislation, that we can point to and that can guide all of our further work in that area, is something that is very worthwhile rather than just having something in a document or a strategy that we might be able to change at a whim.

THE CHAIR: With that, we are out of time. Minister, thank you for your attendance today. The committee will suspend briefly while we get new officials in.

Short suspension.

Appearances:

Steel, Mr Chris, Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Arthy, Ms Kareena, Deputy Director-General
Andersen, Ms Josephine, Executive Branch Manager, Skills Canberra

Canberra Institute of Technology
Cover, Ms Leanne, Chief Executive Officer
Whale, Mr Andrew, Executive Director, Education and Training Services
Tong, Mr Greg, Senior Director, Finance

ACT Building Construction Industry Training Fund Authority
Carter, Mr Glenn, Chief Executive Officer

THE CHAIR: Welcome back. The committee will now begin questioning relating to the skills portfolio; the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority; provision of vocational education and training services; and the Canberra Institute of Technology. The committee welcomes Minister Steel and all officials. I will lead off the questions and we will make our way through the committee members.

Minister, there has been a lot of discussion recently within the community about skills shortages. I was wondering if you could tell me what you have been hearing from industry?

Mr Steel: We have been in discussion with industries through the newly created advisory group. We have been listening to various segments in construction and a whole range of other industries—hospitality and so forth—about what they have been hearing from their member organisations and businesses, particularly during the pandemic, about what sorts of issues have been coming up for them.

There is a skills shortage in certain areas that has been around for some time—that is, early childhood, disability, aged care, those sorts of areas—and that has not changed. They are now the focus of our investment in JobTrainer. Then there are obviously some other areas that have become more acute as a result of the pandemic. Hospitality, I think, is probably one of those where we have seen people disconnected from their employer as a result of lockdowns and so forth. There is a bit of uncertainty about what the future holds there, whether those people will come back into the industry or whether they will need to seek new employees who might need to train and get the skills they need to move into that workforce in the future. Skills is part of the picture.

There are also, I think, concerns in industry about a general workforce shortage. We have had caps on skilled migration to Australia during these last two years. That is having an impact as well. Just the sheer number of people who can take up positions is having an impact.

There are other factors involved as well, low pay and conditions being one of them in certain sectors. That has always been a problem in, for example, early childhood, aged

care, hospitality and retail, where those wages and conditions tend to be lower, and as a result they struggle to attract people into those workforces.

The government is making a very substantial investment in skills in this budget—a \$126.3 million record investment in skills to support the economic recovery. We do see skills as being a key part of making sure that we can come back even stronger into the future. There are a range of other things that need to be considered as well, to make sure that we have got the workforce that is needed to meet the economy's needs.

THE CHAIR: You mentioned specifically a shortage in construction. I was wondering how the ACT government supports the training of apprentices in construction.

Mr Steel: There has been a very substantial increase in the budget in the Australian apprenticeship user choice program. This is a further investment in making sure that we support apprentices. We have also increased subsidies within the program from 1 July for certain trades like plumbing, which has seen a 10 per cent increase in subsidy. There has been a significant increase in the areas of concreting and tiling as well. Increased subsidies for concreting have gone up by 70 per cent and roof tiling by around 22 per cent. We have been targeting our subsidies to where they are needed within the broader industry, recognising that there is a need to have more people trained up in those areas.

Then we have been providing a whole range of other subsidies and funding. We provide support funding to support training organisations to complete their qualifications. We provide subsidy loadings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners and learners with a disability. Apprentices and trainees who complete their qualification are eligible for a \$300 payment as well once they have got that employment and training outcome. Apprentices who move from interstate for structured on-the-job training are eligible for travel allowances.

The ACT Building and Construction Training Authority provides a whole range of other support and incentives, up to \$6,000 in employer incentives for employers of a first-year apprentice in designated qualifications. Then, of course, the Australian government also provides a whole range of other supports, and that has most recently included a wage subsidy for second- and third-year apprentices and trainees. That is quite significant.

All of those things combined are providing a really significant support, particularly in this very large sector in the ACT economy where we do need trades and where we have got a big pipeline of work coming—a \$5 billion infrastructure program announced in the budget that is providing a pipeline of work to the construction industry—giving them certainty about what is happening but also providing some obligations through our local industry participation plans.

We require people who are doing work over the amount of \$200,000 to respond to government and provide us with information about how they are going to provide training and provide opportunities for apprenticeships. That is a significant part of how we can support apprentices in the construction industry as well.

We just announced some of the focuses of some of our major projects today, in particular stage 2A in London Circuit. We will be working towards a minimum of 10 per cent labour spend on employing and supporting apprentices and trainees. There also will be a focus on supporting women in trades and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices on those projects.

The Canberra Hospital expansion will be working towards a 30 per cent ratio of apprentices, trainees and cadets across the workforce and a 10 per cent total spend on subcontracted trades on the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As you would expect with the CIT Woden project, we are making sure that we have a big focus on supporting apprentices there as well.

We will be focusing on apprentices and trainees in a range of areas but specifically those coming from CIT, given the linkages there. We are walking the walk on supporting apprentices and providing that pipeline of infrastructure projects for the industry and making sure that there are opportunities for apprentices and trainees to skill up and to work on some of those big projects.

MR DAVIS: I was just hoping you could talk me through the process of sourcing and then encouraging apprentices to take up all of these newly funded positions. I ask the question particularly in the context of a few constituents who have been in touch with me recently, all young men it should be said, who have put it to me that they have been encouraged to continue with their studies until year 12 but, if given the option or the pathway, it would be their strong preference to instead take on an apprenticeship in the building and construction industry. As you highlight, not just with the infrastructure spend but with our pretty aggressive policies in social housing, we have a lot of stuff to build in Canberra in a pretty short period of time. I would like to understand better that pathway of finding and promoting the apprentices to the programs.

Mr Steel: It is a role for government and it is a role for industry, and nationally we have been having this conversation about how we can, through careers information, provide better information about the opportunities to take up an apprenticeship or traineeship in a whole range of different areas. We are looking at some reforms in those areas.

We have got a demand-driven, user choice Australian apprenticeship program. As the title suggests, people can take up a whole range of different qualifications that have been identified on a skills needs list, and the places will be there and the support will be available for them. We also, of course, closely work with employers around the opportunities for them to either host or employ apprentices and trainees, and we have a field officer program that provides support for the trainees and their employers in the process.

What we are trying to encourage is for it to be seen as a legitimate pathway for students who are looking to go into vocational education and training and are considering this as an option to build a career. I am really pleased to say that at the moment we have a record number of trainees in apprenticeships working, higher than we have ever had in the ACT's history. Certainly a lot of people are taking up these opportunities.

The good news is that we are seeing more women in trades as well. It is still much lower than it should be, but I think, certainly with some of the targeted work we can do around some of the major infrastructure projects in particular, we are trying to encourage women to see this as a viable pathway, particularly in the construction sector, to go on and take up a trade.

Others may have some comments to make, including Glenn Carter.

Mr Carter: Further on the uptake of apprentices, the authority also funds a vetting schools grant of \$500 per student that is currently enrolled in either an ASbAs program or a cert 1 or cert 2 in construction pathways. Last year that equated to about \$118,000 to \$120,000 worth of funding. Most of those students undertaking that as part of their VET pathway would obviously look to want to achieve and to progress to an apprenticeship, and we also follow up with a further incentive any employers that will employ from that base of school leavers after they have completed their year 12.

We also fund an amount to the Construction Industry Training Council, who operate a schools-based program where they go around to various schools to promote the industry. We also provide a range of sponsorship grants to any number of industry associations that reward and monitor the excellence of apprentice awards to promote the industry and promote apprenticeships in that fashion.

MR DAVIS: It would seem to me that there are more people wanting to do apprenticeships than positions currently available, would that be correct? What would we identify as our biggest circuit breaker here? Are we not where the people are at? Are we not getting them in the programs? Are we not funding our positions for apprenticeships?

Mr Steel: Not necessarily. Skills officials can provide information on the data when they enter the meeting. Certainly there are opportunities to undertake subsidised training. As I said, these are demand-driven programs so if they want to take them up, they can. It is whether employers are willing to take them on as apprentices. That has been challenging during the pandemic. It is fair to say that when your business has been shut down due to a lockdown or other restrictions, it is pretty difficult to take on an apprentice during that time. So it has been quite a disruptive period.

The Australian School-based Apprenticeships program is another opportunity for people to complete their education by getting into a trade while they are at school, as Glenn touched on. The support network that has been established for ASbAs has provided a dedicated one-stop shop for people who want to do an apprenticeship to find out what is available and to connect with an employer.

There is also the group training organisations that pool the apprentices and then provide them to host employers at certain periods of construction of a project and provide them with an opportunity to get hands-on training opportunities and work placements in a more flexible way.

So I think there are the opportunities there, and with a big construction pipeline, not just here in the ACT but nationally, with a huge number of big major infrastructure

projects, particularly in the transport sector, there are going to be big opportunities there as well. Skills officials can give further detail.

Ms Andersen: I acknowledge that I have read and understand the privilege statement. We do not have any evidence to suggest that there are people who are seeking apprenticeships and that there is not the opportunity for them to undertake those apprenticeships. We have an apprentice network provider in the ACT, Sarina Russo Job Access. The apprentice network providers are contracted to deliver that service by the commonwealth and it is their role to connect employers and prospective apprentices. They have not provided us with any information to suggest that there is a mismatch. If anything, employers are very keen to take on apprentices and not the other way around. It is not the case that there would be a school leaver, for example, who would not be able to access an apprenticeship or a traineeship.

MR DAVIS: I have got to ask a clarifying question because I know that we have seen the numbers come out today from the ABS to say that our building and construction sector has slumped by about 5,000 employees. Do we believe that to be directly attributed to the COVID lockdowns or is there a broader, systemic issue at the moment? We have currently got 272 apprenticeship positions in the ACT listed on Seek, but the industry says they need 5,000 more workers. I cannot figure out what the issue is there. What is the gap? Who is not pulling their fair share of the weight?

Mr Steel: Kareena can talk a little bit more about the economic conditions, but certainly the construction sector is one of our strongest sectors in terms of employment in the ACT. Some labour is brought in from interstate from time to time for projects. Because of, obviously, border restrictions that have been in place in other states, then the movement of those workers has been stopped during those periods. So that is one of the pressures that the construction industry has been facing up until just recently. So that may resolve itself with the restrictions easing. But there are a whole range of other issues as well that Kareena may be able to touch on.

Ms Arthy: Thank you, Minister. I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. Yes, I have to admit, I have not seen the statistics that you are referring to; but in general when we are looking at the construction industry, it is one of those industries in Canberra that does suffer from skills shortages because we have such a big pipeline of infrastructure that is getting built here. Our proximity to southwest Sydney, which is where there is also a big infrastructure program, means that for skills that are in demand it is quite difficult for us to attract them here to Canberra.

So when we are talking about the skills that are needed, not all of those skills can be met through the apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship program is a fairly narrow subset of what is required by the entire industry, so it is not a straightforward example.

One way to look at the number of jobs is the fact that we do have such a strong infrastructure sector here. Something that we are working with the construction industry on is around how do we make sure that we have the supply of skills not necessarily provided through CIT or through the training providers, but how do we actually attract the workers that we need into Canberra? It is one of our biggest sectors; it is one of our sectors that has got some of the most pressure on it in terms of

being able to meet demand and it has also got very strong competition, particularly from southwest Sydney and other areas as well where most of our skills do come from in this area.

MR DAVIS: I know it sounds like I am labouring the point, but I am really struggling with a couple of constituents that I am dealing with who are in the later years of their high school education. They want to take on an apprenticeship; they are actively seeking opportunities for apprenticeships and they put it to me that they are feeling actively discouraged from a range of places from taking up those apprenticeship opportunities, and instead feeling pressured to complete a year 12 certificate, particularly with tertiary units.

Minister, do you think the experiences that are being put to me are anecdotal or do we have some systemic challenges there about how we as a city and as a broader community encourage people into apprenticeships rather than sort of trying to fit square pegs into round holes?

Mr Steel: As I said, there is further work that is being undertaken nationally, and Kareena has been involved more directly in those conversations and might be able to make some comments around how we can improve career advice that is provided around apprenticeships and traineeships. The Australian Apprenticeship Support Network provides that place where if people are interested in doing an apprenticeship, they can contact them, find out what is available, connect with an employer and see what sorts of apprenticeships they might like to undertake. There are supports there for people that want to do that, but we need to continue to work on the information and make sure that that information is encouraging new entrants into these different trades and other qualifications.

Ms Andersen: Thank you, Minister. To that end, Mr Davis, from a Skills Canberra perspective, we work proactively with the Education Directorate and career educators in schools to ensure that everybody—from career educators to teachers to the young people who are in the last years of their schooling—is very well aware of the opportunities available through the apprenticeship system.

We certainly have not seen a decline in the uptake of apprenticeships in building and construction. If we look at our data, in September this year compared to September 2016 there has been a 526 per cent increase in the numbers of apprentices working in the building and construction sector. So the opportunities are certainly there and we do our very best to connect the dots for those young people to make sure that they are able to access the right services and the right information at the right time.

MR DAVIS: Was it 526 per cent?

Ms Andersen: Yes, there has been a huge increase in the numbers of apprentices in building and construction. This year we hit a high of 2,639 apprentices working in building and construction and if we compare that to 2016 there were far fewer. Excuse me; I misread my numbers. So if we look at 2016, we were looking at around 1,500 apprentices working in building and construction and now we are looking at about 2,640 apprentices. So please disregard my percentages from earlier.

MR DAVIS: I appreciate that clarification, thank you.

MR CAIN: Minister, I have got some questions about the JobTrainer program. The budget outlook says that the extension of the program will continue to provide free courses over the next two years to support young people to gain critical skills and assist them in the employment market with the provision of 2,500 additional training places. How much money was spent on the JobTrainer initiative for 2021-22?

Mr Steel: JobTrainer has come in two parts; it started last year and we have announced funding for the second round of JobTrainer. It is a substantial increase in the amount of support that we are providing for training and this provides free training places. The second round is going to be done in a slightly different way to the first round, so it will be delivered through the Skilled Capital program. Similar to the first round, it will be targeted at young people and those who are not in work, so job seekers.

It also has an additional element to it for the specific qualifications in digital skills, disability, early childhood and aged care, where the eligibility requirements are more relaxed so that everyone can take up those qualifications. They will constitute the first round.

Josephine can talk a little bit about what we have seen in terms of the numbers in take-up in the first round of JobTrainer from last year, if that is what you are getting at, Mr Cain. We can provide some information on the numbers. Certainly, what we saw is large numbers of people taking up the full qualifications rather than the short courses under JobTrainer 1. They were snapped up very quickly, so this second round is going to be very welcome.

Ms Andersen: Thank you, Minister. Thank you for the question, Mr Cain. As the minister has said, we have seen very strong uptake in training places in the first phase of JobTrainer. As at 30 September we had 2,107 enrolments. If we look at the cohort split of those enrolments, 962 were aged between 17 and 24; 998 were job seekers; and 147 fitted against both of those categories. In terms of the number of women enrolling in courses, about 57 per cent are women. If we look at age group, the vast majority of enrollees are aged 20 to 29, but we have the rest fairly evenly spread between a 30- to 39-year-old cohort and the 17- to 19-year-old cohort and then the 40- to 49-year-old cohort. It is certainly meeting the needs of a few different age ranges in terms of the course offerings.

To date, there have been enrolments in 95 different courses under JobTrainer. If we look at the top 10 courses, there has been a large number of enrolments—about 114—in the introduction to organisational cybersecurity short course that CIT is delivering. There is a skill set for professional graphic design practice that CIT is also delivering, where we have nearly 100 enrolments. Again, we have got strong uptake of the certificate III in information digital media and technology, with over 85 enrolments. Then, in order of enrolment, we have very strong uptake in fitness-related qualifications; early childhood education and care; project management practice; accounting; the certificate III in individual support; and security operations.

MR CAIN: Obviously there is a lot of detail we can also acquire ourselves through

questions. Are you able to provide a breakdown of the funding and which institutions received it? The first round of the program was stopped by the ACT government in February of this year for private providers. Why was that?

Mr Steel: Because the placements were taken up. They were snapped up. It was very, very good to see so many people wanting to take up the free training places. That is why it is great to have the further funding that the ACT government has provided together with the commonwealth to now undertake further rounds of JobTrainer, starting with those key skills areas in digital skills, early childhood, disability and aged care. Following that, we will be undertaking another release of the Skilled Capital program which will be focused on the skills needs list.

We have been consulting with industry and RTOs about what are the skills areas that we need to be targeting for the skills needs list, and that has been really useful. I think the Industry Skills Advisory Council has provided us with some really useful information about the areas. The areas are not surprising—hospitality, for example, where there is clearly going to be a need for more people to train up and move into those jobs.

With JobTrainer 2 we will have a focus on making sure that there are jobs at the other end. For the first time there will actually be a requirement for RTOs to demonstrate that there are actually jobs in those areas where people are training. That is going to be a new element so that we make sure we can link people who are undertaking training with a job outcome.

MR CAIN: Please correct me if I have not got this right, but there appears to have been a technical adjustment of \$3.5 million. Could you explain the background to that and where that money has gone or not gone?

Mr Steel: Have you got a page reference number for that one?

MR CAIN: Rather than take up more time, I will put that question on notice, unless someone knows pretty immediately.

Ms Arthy: Thank you, Mr Cain. That technical adjustment is to account for the payments to training providers over the course of the delivery of those program enrolments.

MR MILLIGAN: You mentioned in the first round 2,107 people took up this offer. The second round is about to start. How many do you expect to take up this offer? I am keen to find out the breakdown of those positions that have been offered for those courses. How many went to CIT and how many went to independent RTOs?

Mr Steel: I think Josephine Andersen can provide some information about where the funding went for JobTrainer 1, but we expect over 2,000 training places will be provided with JobTrainer 2. This is going to provide opportunities for the free training to be undertaken, subsidised at a higher level than we would usually do under Skilled Capital, for example.

With JobTrainer 1, I mentioned that we saw a higher than anticipated number of

people taking up full qualifications for the free training rather than short courses. The exact number of people that will go through the program really depends on what types of qualifications they are doing. If they are doing longer, full qualifications, there will be fewer placements available overall, but that might be a really good outcome for many people who want to get a full qualification for free under this program and get a job at the other end. Josephine can provide some detail on what we expect for the numbers for JobTrainer 2.

Ms Andersen: Thank you, Minister, and thank you for the question. Under JobTrainer 2, as I think the minister mentioned, we need to meet targets around providing 575 aged care places and 170 digital skills places. We are looking to deliver those places through the Skilled Capital mechanism. In total, however, for that stream of the program we are looking to deliver around 2,300 places. Again, as the minister has said, it does depend on the uptake of full qualifications versus short courses, so that number will change over time.

In the second stream of JobTrainer 2, we are looking to deliver some pre-apprenticeship and pre-employment programs that are particularly tailored for school leavers. We are looking to deliver around 200 places through that stream of the program, noting that many school leavers will be attracted by the opportunity to undertake a full qualification through the Skilled Capital stream.

Finally, we are looking to deliver a foundation skills employability program stream as a third stream of the next phase of JobTrainer. We have not allocated training places to that particular program yet. We are possibly not going to be able to count those towards the number of places delivered, in the formal sense, under the program; but certainly we would look to provide a significant number of opportunities for people to access that program, which will be particularly targeted to people who are long-term unemployed and may experience other barriers to employment, education and training.

MR MILLIGAN: There was an area of my questioning that I do not think has been answered yet—that is, how many places have been offered to the independent RTOs compared to CIT? I would like to know that figure for the first round and I would also like to know that figure for this second round. Has there been a decision to limit the number of places offered to independent RTOs?

Ms Andersen: Thank you, Mr Milligan. For the first round of JobTrainer, CIT was provided a deed of grant to deliver 2,500 places. That comprised 1,200 places for short courses or statements of attainment; 500 places to deliver some bootcamps or taster programs; and 800 places for full qualifications.

In relation to the number of places delivered by or that private training providers enrolled students into, there was not a limit on the number of places as such; it was a budgeted amount. There were 554 places taken up by independent providers in the first stream. In relation to the Ginninderry SPARK program, 190 places were allocated to that stream. For the extension and expansion of JobTrainer, the first stream that will be delivered through the Skilled Capital mechanism will be open to all training providers, including CIT.

MR MILLIGAN: I want to refer to budget statements I—the Building and

Construction Industry Training Fund Authority. As I understand it, a 0.2 per cent levy is applied to building projects here in the ACT. That levy is meant to go towards the training of employees. For 2020-21 nearly \$5.8 million was raised through that levy. How does a business apply to have one of their employees put through this program, and who provides this training?

Mr Carter: The authority collects the levy of 0.2 per cent on the value of agreed work, in accordance with its schedule, within seven days of works commencing. The authority operates five operational programs. One is for entry-level training, where it provides incentives to employers that employ apprentices, including group training organisations and schools programs. The bulk of our funding—pretty much 55 per cent of it—is provided to existing workers and upskilling for the professional development of the industry in programs which the ACT government has not previously subsidised.

These tend to be full-fee commercial programs for high-risk licensing courses, from forklift through to rigging and crane driving, where an employer requires their employees to be trained in those programs. They get to choose the RTO that they wish to use. The authority has no prerequisite settings on who it determines to be a registered training organisation, so long as the registered training organisation is ASQA compliant and has the relevant qualification, if it is a qualification, scoped for delivery in the ACT.

With applications in 2021-22, there were about 11,700 completed training programs where rebates were provided. The authority's current settings offer, in general terms, up to 70 per cent of the full cost of the course to be rebated upon successful completion. We do, however, from time to time have specific targeted programs where we offer a higher rebate level.

Currently, since the commencement of the lockdown period in July, industry feedback was that there was significant concern regarding mental health and impairment programs, so the authority has agreed to operate those for the next 18 months at a 90 per cent full-cost rebate. Simply, employers can apply directly to us online. It takes literally minutes from your mobile phone or a tablet.

Alternatively, we do receive, on average, about 750 applications from private providers, who pre-apply to us at the beginning of any calendar year for a specified number of places in a range of different programs that they wish to offer. We pre-approve that, and the registered training organisations pass that rebate on to eligible applicants through a reduced fee payment when the applicant goes.

We receive a monthly or bimonthly claim from those registered training organisations. They give us a full list of the applicant's details, their date of birth, their occupation and who they work for. At the end of the year, we do a random audit across 25 independent programs associated with that, just to ensure that full compliance has been made and there have been no administrative errors.

MR MILLIGAN: What type of satisfaction rate or feedback has the government received from the people participating in these programs? Is it meeting expectations? Is there a high demand for it? What are the government's further plans for this levy

into the future? Are they looking to extend it, continue it, raise it or drop it? Is there a balance there?

Mr Steel: I do not intend to make any announcements—not that we are intending to make any announcements in this area. Glenn can talk to the feedback that the training authority receive. They have a lot of industry engagement, which also provides them with feedback about the use of the funding and where it should be directed.

Mr Carter: The authority undertakes significant feedback—not itself; we contract the Construction Industry Training Council, the electrical advisory board and various other bodies and associations for feedback during the consultation period, which is an ongoing consultation period for the annual training plan. The annual training plan outlines the framework by which the authority can spend money, and it is purely based on training.

The feedback I get is mainly from other industries that say, “Gosh, I wish we had this.” A typical scenario would be a small electrical firm in Mitchell who may have 20 employees. They will have an ongoing annual training cost—compulsory—for mandatory training that they must meet of about \$20,000 a year, just to keep their people up to speed with all of the particular training requirements around wiring law changes.

They receive back in the order of up to \$16,000 to \$17,000 against all of those costs, so training is a significant impost on businesses. Certainly, there is the ability for those local firms here in the ACT to receive that money back. Again, it does not cover their full costs but it does make training a lot more affordable.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions for the training fund authority? Ms Clay, do you have a question for the training fund authority?

MS CLAY: I do not think that it is. I will tell you what the question is, and you can tell me where it belongs. I have a question about sustainability upgrades at Bruce CIT.

THE CHAIR: We have CIT with us. Mr Carter, we are done with the training fund authority. I think you are done for the day.

Mr Carter: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, everybody.

MS CLAY: Minister, I have had quite a few questions from constituents in Bruce about the CIT campus there and sustainability upgrades. I am pleased to see a lot of the work we are doing across government in that area. The specific question was about the social cost of carbon. They were wondering whether, with the social cost of carbon, that means we will have a bigger sustainability upgrade at Woden CIT, with sensor lights that go on and off automatically, showerhead replacement, a whole lot of water savings, energy use, insulation and all of those sorts of upgrades, with it being quite an old building. Can you give me a bit of a time line on that and where the funding for that might come from?

Mr Steel: I think the last half hour of the session is meant to be for Major Projects Canberra to talk about CIT Woden, specifically.

MS CLAY: I have a question on that one, too.

Mr Steel: You were asking about CIT Woden, weren't you, or are you talking about Belconnen?

MS CLAY: No, this question is about Bruce CIT.

Mr Steel: CIT can comment on that. Leanne Cover and the team can comment on what things they are considering as they upgrade the buildings, from a sustainability point of view. CIT Woden will be the subject of the last half hour, I understand, of this session. Leanne, do you have any comments on what is happening at Bruce with the modernisation of the campus and sustainability?

Ms Cover: I acknowledge that I have read and understand the privilege statement. Further advice around Woden will be provided later in this session, as you have indicated, Minister. In terms of the Bruce campus, we are always looking to upgrade; particularly, there is a very strong focus on sustainable elements in the Bruce campus. That has been the case over the last 15 years.

A number of built infrastructure assets at the Bruce campus assist, such as solar panels in terms of renewable energy sources, and water storage and water capture. In terms of internal building assets, there are light fittings et cetera for reducing outputs there. There is a program of renewable energy replacement for things like lighting, which you have specifically asked about. I will ask Mr Whale, the Executive Director, Education and Training Services, to comment more specifically about other elements of the Bruce campus.

Mr Whale: I have also read and acknowledge the privilege statement. Leanne has touched on a number of measures. I point out that during the 2020 experience with COVID, the ACT government provided what they referred to as screwdriver-ready funding for a number of facility upgrades. We spent a good portion of what we got on our Bruce campus. Because it is a bit of ageing infrastructure, it was very fortunate that we could upgrade a lot of the facilities that are student-facing.

Some of that is linked in to our sustainability. As Ms Cover mentioned, we have significant solar panel capability, and we continue to grow that, for generating our own electricity at Bruce campus. We are also exploring the options on installing battery storage systems for use outside the current power generation windows.

We are working with the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate on further solutions that will reduce our carbon emissions, specifically in the areas of replacement of gas-operated boilers that generate heating, not just on Bruce but on all of our current campuses. Again, as Ms Cover mentioned, we are working on a lighting upgrade schedule that will reduce power consumption for our lighting systems. Some of the options that the member referred to are included in that upgrade schedule.

We are also participating in the Origin Energy smart charging trial, with electrical charging stations being installed at our Bruce, Reid and Fyshwick campuses to

support the recharge of a fleet of electrically powered vehicles. They are the ones that we have picked up, but those across government may use our campuses to charge while they are on our campuses.

In addition, significant planning is going into Woden, which has already been referred to and will be discussed later on.

MS CLAY: When do you expect all of those upgrades to be completed? Will that mean we have electric charging capacity, solar panels, really good insulation and modern light fittings at every single campus?

Mr Whale: There is limited expenditure going on here. We are based at our Reid campus at the moment and, given the short life cycle, pending the move to Woden, there is not a huge investment in the campus here, with some of the sustainability measures that I referred to. The focus is really on Bruce, Fyshwick and Woden, going forward.

Bruce has about a dozen buildings, so it is not simply a matter of saying, “Let’s seal up this building and move on that.” It is a program of work over years that we continue to do. Regarding the solar panels, if you drive past the back of the Bruce campus near the stadium, you can see the amount of solar panels that we have installed.

It is also relevant to note that we use those facilities at both Fyshwick and Bruce to train our students that are going through. They are taught how those work. Whether it is the solar panels, whether it is the battery systems or some of the partnerships that we have with industry players around the territory and the region, we use them to help train our students in partnership with those providers.

Beyond what we are doing physically on the campus, we are investing in students and future employees across the territory in sustainability capability. It is an ongoing thing. There is no set date. It will continue for as long as we occupy those sites. We continually upgrade facilities and have a continued focus, as we do those upgrades, on sustainability options. Where possible, we are partnering with EPSDD, as I mentioned.

MS CLAY: It does make sense that you would focus on the long-term campuses. I do understand that; that is good and logical. Have you had a chance to look at the social cost of carbon and whether you think that will apply to CIT operations? If it does, it might give you a bit more impetus to continue and hasten those works.

Mr Steel: It will be an important decision-making tool for government, but there is obviously a fair bit of work to do in terms of coming up with guidelines about how that will apply at this stage. Andrew Whale and the team at CIT might want to have a discussion with EPSDD about that in the future, as it is applied. It will be a bit of a change in the way that we assess various projects and inform decision-making, going forward. There is still a fair bit of work to bed that process down, I would say.

MS CLAY: I look forward to asking you about that at the next estimates.

THE CHAIR: I also have a question about CIT. What work is underway at CIT to

engage with emerging industry?

Mr Steel: I will hand over to Leanne shortly, but I will just give a brief introduction. CIT have been doing a tremendous amount of work in relation to their strategic compass. As part of that work they have been engaging with industry, as they do continually, in relation to their course offerings. This new compass has set the strategic direction going forward, focusing on areas where we know that there is going to be a skills need and CIT can play a role in delivering that training, but also provides flexibility to move into areas where we do not know whether there is going to be a skills need in future and we need to be flexible in responding to that emerging need. Leanne can talk about what has gone into the compass.

Ms Cover: COVID has certainly shown us that the jobs of 2021 will not necessarily be the jobs of 2025. All of our courses are not orientated to thinking only about the Woden campus and the opportunities that that affords the ACT community. In terms of the service offerings from CIT, as the minister said, we are already heavily engaged in supporting those emerging jobs in some of the areas that we are seeing strengthen across Canberra. We are seeing all industries transition to more digitally focused services, and we are seeing different sources of sustainable and renewable products being used, particularly in the building and construction industry but also in the licensed and allied trades. We are also seeing changes in some of the technology that is being used, say, in aged care, child care and across the health care sector as well.

In terms of particular areas aligned between the CIT offerings now and those that are emerging with the ACT government's priorities for attracting and retaining skilled workers in Canberra, there is training in cybersecurity, data analysis, renewable energy and also the broad range of skills that are going to be needed for the community services and healthcare sectors. Those service industries we can see are growing and expanding but also integrating.

We are seeing a lot of cross-skilling happening, for instance, in the automotive industry with cybersecurity and awareness training, for example. We are seeing and hearing from our early childhood education and care industry that the integration of technology is being used by those service providers as well. We expect that to be the case in the aged-care training sector as well. We think that Woden does give us a great focus to upskill, reskill and cross-skill the ACT workforce in those emerging areas.

We are also working with the ACT government as they align and pursue opportunities in the cybersecurity area. Obviously, being in Canberra, the opportunities align with the defence sector. Supporting small businesses here around cybersecurity training is just one example. We are also seeing emerging technologies in the trades, as I mentioned, and the auto industry. We are working closely with Tesla and are looking at opportunities with renewable energy companies, like Neoen, in the renewable and sustainability sector as well. It is quite a cross-sector approach to those emerging jobs.

MR DAVIS: Minister, I am very excited about all of the new money and all of the conversation about the Woden CIT, but I have to say that, wearing my local member hat first, it makes me a little concerned about what that might mean for the future of the CIT site in Tuggeranong. Can you talk me through what, if any, new investments

have been made in this budget for an expansion of programs or services at the CIT site in Tuggeranong?

Mr Steel: Obviously, the focus on investment in campus modernisation for CIT has been at Woden. But we are also undertaking work called package 4 of the work that is being undertaken on the Yurauna Centre, which will be built at the CIT campus in Bruce. The Woden CIT campus is going to be a really important anchor point for a whole range of training delivery in a way that we have not seen on the south side before. That will provide, I think, greater opportunities at Tuggeranong. Leanne can talk a little about the role that Tuggeranong and the Gungahlin campus will play in the future of CIT.

We have seen, certainly with COVID, that students often need to work from home and online a lot more. There may be greater opportunities for them to go to regional campuses in order to undertake work. CIT is undertaking, in the lead-up to moving to Woden, a very significant program of change around moving CIT training online. We expect that this is going to change the way that people use all of our campuses. They may be able to engage in training online from Tuggeranong into the main Woden campus or vice versa in future with the new online platforms that are being developed. That has been a big part of the design of the actual bricks and mortar and, obviously, the telecommunication connections and smart learning tools that are being developed for Woden. Leanne can talk a little bit about that.

MR DAVIS: Just before we go to the officials, can I ask a couple of clarifying questions? I do want more of the detail, though. Minister, do you still see a future for the CIT Tuggeranong site after the CIT Woden expansion is complete and online?

Mr Steel: Yes, I do. Obviously, we will be informed by CIT's operational view about what should happen there as well. I think Labor were the only party that took a commitment forward at the election to provide extra training at CIT Tuggeranong, which was to support the drivers and mechanics who currently work at the Tuggeranong depot and the Belconnen depot, and on our buses, to upskill to get the training that they need to be able to work on our new electric bus fleet. That is going to form a really important part of the procurement for those new buses, which has already started. We are keen to use those regional campuses, if they are close. For example, that one is very close to the bus depot, so it makes a lot of sense to have the training delivered there. There will be, I think, further opportunities to use those spaces, but also use them in different ways with the digital environment as well. Leanne can talk further about what is going on at those campuses and the transformation digitally.

Ms Cover: Committee members know how important the integration is between both the theory and the practice in vocational education and training. Indeed, what makes VET so unique is that the theory is integrated with the practice. A lot of that practice is delivered through the exceptional facilities that CIT has that either simulate or replicate industry standards in those facilities. We see the ability in future to really add value to those face-to-face experiences, which are delivered by exceptional staff at CIT who work very closely with industry to make sure that the training is fit-for-purpose for what industry needs and ensures that the students get the skills for not only today but those emerging ones that we spoke about previously.

The opportunity for us to integrate greater flexibility and accessibility for students through digital platforms is certainly very exciting. The Woden campus gives us an opportunity to create that increased accessibility not just for Woden residents and Woden students but, indeed, those across all of our campuses. The Tuggeranong and Gungahlin campuses continue to be a great part of the network of CIT offerings. We are always looking to try and balance delivery. We know that accessibility is important for students across Canberra. We are always trying to balance it, though, and make sure that our facilities are centres of excellence and centralised in particular parts. We have some strengths, obviously, with each of our campus offerings. We know that the Gungahlin and Tuggeranong centres are really important for us in terms of the variety of digital skills and accessing some programs face to face there.

We think that we will continue, obviously, to do the great work face to face that VET uniquely positions itself for in terms of both theory and practice being integrated. We think that there are opportunities to increase the digital flexibility and accessibility. We see in future that students will want to have more choice around when they study and how they study. From the learning that has happened over the last 12 months in particular, as a result of COVID, we know that there will be more flexibility for ACT workers who want to work from home, who want to work from different locations and who want to work in different ways.

We also know that there is a blending of professional and personal commitments that our students have. COVID has certainly shown us that. We have had to work very closely with our students, very personally, to understand what their needs are. Sometimes they have children at home studying or caring duties for other members of their family or friends that they are undertaking. We know that the increased digital capability is going to be important to help increase the flexibility and accessibility of courses, going forward.

In addition to that, we know that technology will also present different insights to training to complement the physical infrastructure that we have as well. So virtual and augmented reality will play a role as we move forward, particularly for some of those unique experiences that cannot be complemented with a practical face-to-face, through some of the digital technology as well. So it is definitely a blend of face-to-face with those digital skills, going forward, for all of our campuses, and then constantly trying to balance where to deliver those courses to give that accessibility and flexibility; but also taking advantage of the facilities which are highly specialised and replicate what happens in the industry across our campuses as well.

MR DAVIS: I understand that two fully vacant floors remain in the Tuggeranong Innovation Centre, which CIT Tuggeranong currently occupies. I also understand that the government had some conversations with the landlord, trying to explore options to utilise that space. Can you give me an update? Are those conversations ongoing? Have we identified a use for that additional real estate?

Mr Steel: It is not our real estate; it is owned by the Tuggeranong technology centre. Those two floors are not part of CIT. CIT occupies, I understand, one part of that facility and rents that facility. I understand—and Leanne can comment further—that there is not at this time an additional need for extra space down there to deliver

courses. That is a matter for the private landlord. I know that they have re-badged their centre—it used to be called something else—and I am sure that it is a very smart marketing technique that they have used there. At this stage there is not a need, I do not think, from CIT’s point of view, to occupy any additional space there.

Ms Cover: No, there is not any immediate need for us to increase our capacity at Tuggeranong. We are in frequent conversations with the landlord there around any opportunities that may eventuate in future, but at this stage we do not require any further capacity of the building.

One of the things to note about the facilities—and that is why the Woden campus is so critical for the future of the institution—is around the special nature of facilities across the VET sector. The Tuggeranong centre lends itself to more of a digital focus on the technology. You can imagine that there are other facilities and centres of excellence across the institute that lend themselves to more specialised facilities around the trades, for instance, at Fyshwick; the specialisations in health and the community sector work, say, at Bruce; and some of the specialised facilities that will be going into Woden in terms of hospitality, the cyber training that I was talking about earlier, data analysis and also some of the creative areas. They all require quite specialised functional facilities. Those are part of the training package requirements—in addition to what we know and get feedback from the industry about—and what the ACT facilities need to look like as well.

MR CAIN: Minister, regarding output 3.5, skills, could you explain a bit more about the plan to utilise skilled migrants to address the skills shortage, and is this a new government initiative?

Mr Steel: No, it has been around for some time. We have, through the critical skills needs list, identified a range of areas where the ACT requires people to undertake various roles and the ACT government can, as a result, have people come and nominate for those specific visa classes to come over here to the ACT to perform those roles. That has been going on for some time but, obviously, with the migration cap and the effective stoppage of migration over this period, that has been very challenging in terms of bringing people in. I will hand over to Josephine and Kareena to talk a little further about the program.

Ms Arthy: The territory migration agreement that the ACT government has with the commonwealth was signed in 2014. What that does is provide the ACT with flexibility around nominating skilled migrants. The ACT government does not issue the visa but when an individual is nominated for either, at the moment, a 190 visa, which is a permanent visa, or a 491 provisional visa, it triggers an invitation to apply for that visa by the commonwealth. In 2021-22 we have 2,000 places and we have a split of 600 places for the permanent 190 visa and another 1,400 places for the provisional 491 visa.

MR CAIN: What skills shortages are being targeted in particular?

Ms Arthy: There is a critical skills list that the minister referred to which we are updating quarterly at this point to make sure that it remains current, and there are 161 occupations on that list. They are those occupations that are considered essential to

support COVID recovery in the ACT.

MR MILLIGAN: Will the government be utilising any migration agents to identify people and bring them into the ACT?

Mr Steel: Not specifically but the people who may wish to nominate for those visas may use a migration agent to support them to do so.

MR MILLIGAN: Has the government identified any particular countries that they could target in relation to where the skills shortages are here in the ACT?

Mr Steel: There has been some international engagement, which Kareena can probably talk to more than I can, in relation to training opportunities more broadly and having overseas students come to Australia. Again, during this period, that has not been possible because of people not being allowed into the country. The CIT in particular can talk to their experience with international students there. But there has been some ongoing international engagement as part of our strategy around opportunities to have people come here to do training in areas that are important. Kareena and Leanne.

Ms Arthy: This is under the Chief Minister's portfolio, mainly around the international engagement strategy. We have been involved in working with some of the overseas delegations, particularly one in 2019, I think for Indonesia, where we really did try and target the students to potentially come to Canberra. We find that we have got quite a lot of international students here in the ACT, and to be able to convert them to be able stay here is a fairly important target. We do a lot of work there as well. We have also been in India in, I think, 2019, to target, again, students to come in.

In terms of the broader engagement, that is mainly for the commonwealth government because it is actually a commonwealth government program. We just provide part of the implementation elements of it.

I do not know whether, with CIT, there is a specific element that they do, because we tend to leave the universities to target the different countries, as well, for where they source their people from.

MR MILLIGAN: In relation to the international engagement strategy then, what component of that or what funding of that strategy is allocated to this particular target of attracting migrants to cater for the skills shortage?

Ms Arthy: The international engagement strategy is done by the Commissioner for International Engagement—a different output. That question is probably best directed to him. What I can say is that we regularly input into international engagement and activities and missions, for whoever is travelling, so that we can try and get that in. It is probably best directed to the Commissioner for International Engagement.

Mr Steel: CIT can talk to the work that they have been doing to attract international students and the disruption that has been happening at the moment.

Ms Cover: Like all institutions, particularly in the tertiary sector, CIT has been impacted by, obviously, the global pandemic in terms of international students. Generally the institute has a really diverse range of international students, around the order of over 80 different countries, represented across the profile.

Student numbers do vary from year to year, depending on the costs and the demand of international students. Their pursuits also change. But we have in the range between 800 and 1,000 students from year to year that are international students. As Ms Arthy said, we have been working with the ACT government in terms of our plans for bringing back international students next year.

CIT recruitment, though, is also coming from interstate. A lot of the international students that we are recruiting at the moment—and it has been the case for a number of years—are attracted to Canberra as a really liveable city for them to, one, study and, also, find employment. A lot of the international students that we get are coming from Melbourne and Sydney, looking for a different type of experience in Canberra.

Students do come to CIT specifically for courses, particularly around some of our hospitality, baking, those types of specialist courses, that can give them international experience for the students. We know that the Australian qualifications are highly regarded across many different countries.

The spread of our students is quite diverse, as I have said, around 80 different countries. We have quite a lot of diversity in terms of no particular country, in terms of reliance, which gives us greater flexibility in terms of the impact of COVID. Nevertheless, we have had, obviously, a downturn in our students as a result of COVID.

During the COVID period we have been able to support our international students through a variety of mechanisms. We have a student association, and the student association is a great interface between the institution and students in terms of understanding what types of specific needs students may have, particularly international students that were impacted by COVID. We also have liaison officers in each of the colleges that work very closely to understand the needs of international students, as well as support students in a variety of ways in terms of helping them with their employment, with their accommodation, and other services that they may need, mainly in terms of referral services as well.

CIT Solutions, in terms of our recruitment for international students, has one of the best risk ratings for an RTO, a registered training organisation. Our categorisation risk has been low, which is fantastic. That gives us greater capability to try to recruit from more diverse countries as well.

Once the borders do open up internationally and we do see an increase in movement in our students, we have aspirations to obviously increase our international students and complement what is happening across the ACT government in that space as well.

MR MILLIGAN: Just finally then, coming back to what migrants have come across to date—I realise that there have been restrictions put in place due to current circumstances—what targeted strategic outcomes does the government have in

monitoring what migrants come across, what courses they do, and what is the outcome and measurables?

Mr Steel: The critical skills needs list is that list that is updated quarterly. That makes sure that the areas where we are attracting migrants in, under those various visa subclasses, are areas that the economy clearly needs those skills in. That is a key part of what we are doing. The team can talk a bit further about what other outcome measures we look at and the success of that program.

Ms Cover: In the last three years the top five nominated occupation groups are accountants, information and communication technology professionals, engineers, nurses and cooks/chefs. The top five countries of origin are China, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Philippines, in that order.

In relation to the last two years since July 2019, of the individuals that the ACT government has nominated for one of those visas, nine per cent have come from overseas, noting that we were unable to nominate anyone living offshore from July 2020; 69 per cent came from interstate; and 22 per cent of our nominees were already living in the ACT.

Mr Steel: I just want to make the point that the demand for the territory-nominated places far exceeds the number of places that are available. There is huge demand for this, as you can imagine. This is a concern. It is something that I think we need to continue to talk with the commonwealth about, particularly with the growing skills shortage that we are experiencing as a result of the pandemic and because we have had a slowdown in migration overall.

We have only a certain number of places that we can allocate to the program and in the critical skills needs areas. That does, unfortunately, cause a lot of concern amongst, particularly, our multicultural community.

MR MILLIGAN: Looking at the CIT balance sheet, in the notes section on page 174 of the booklet, it indicates that more than \$6 million of the funding for the JobTrainer program for 2020-21 went to CIT. How many enrolments did this cater for?

Ms Cover: As was mentioned earlier, in JobTrainer 1 there were 2,500 places allocated to CIT across a range of different areas. There were 800 places allocated to CIT in the full qualifications. There were 1,200 places allocated in the short courses and 500 places allocated in the starter courses; they were available as well. That gives the total of 2,500 places, which makes up that funding figure.

MR MILLIGAN: With the JobTrainer program, is that money meant to go towards additional places on top of what is currently on offer?

Ms Cover: These are additional places for JobTrainer in those three particular areas, yes.

MR MILLIGAN: Looking at the enrolment targets on page 160, it seems that the numbers have not gone up; is that correct?

Ms Cover: The statement of intent is for what we call profile allowance, which excludes the JobTrainer, the Skilled Capital and the Australian apprenticeship figures. These are to do with the appropriation on profile hours of subsidised courses by the ACT government in that space. The JobTrainer places are separate to those.

MS CLAY: Chair, I have one question about the Woden CIT campus. Do you want to move on to somebody else and we will come back to it?

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is for the next session. Minister, could you give the committee an update on any discussions that are being undertaken regarding the national skills agreement?

Mr Steel: Sure. The commonwealth government, through the subcommittee of national cabinet, has been discussing with the states and territories a new skills agreement which would replace the current agreement that has been in place for some time. At this stage they have been presenting us with some information about their offer, and we are still working through that information at the moment to better understand what the commonwealth is offering.

The model that they are moving towards is an activity-based model of funding with an efficient price. We have some concerns about this, on several different levels. As I said, we are still working through that information to get a better understanding of their offer and how it affects students, RTOs and the government in terms of funding.

We have some fairly substantial concerns, it is fair to say, about the potential of ratcheting up student fees, because of the fee bands that they want to set. We have concerns about the efficient price cutting subsidies, both for CIT and for private RTOs, in many qualification areas. We have concerns about the model not recognising the nature of the ACT and the higher cost of delivering training in this jurisdiction.

Nationally, there has also been concern about the extent to which the commonwealth want to take control of a sector that they do not fund in the majority. The states and territories are the majority funders of our VET system, but the commonwealth, through this agreement, is seeking to take significant fiscal autonomy and control away from the states and territories. We are also concerned that, in doing so, the VET system will not be able to respond as well and as flexibly to our skills needs here in the ACT.

This has been an ongoing conversation, often on a two-weekly basis, with officials sometimes meeting several times a week over the past year or so. There has been a change in minister as well. Minister Cash began that conversation, and now we are having it with Minister Stuart Robert. This is a process that we expect will go on over the next year. We will be in a better position to understand what the commonwealth is offering once we have been able to undertake some further financial analysis.

One of the other key concerns is around public TAFE. The ACT government believes that public TAFE is the centre of our vocational education and training system. We think that it will form a really important part of delivering high-quality vocational education and training in the future.

We are concerned that the offer that has currently been provided, which has a model of what they are calling a historic funding stream, suggests that TAFE is of historic construct, rather than one that will play a critical role in the future in delivering VET services to a really high quality standard.

There are a lot of conversations to have. I hope that this offer is not driven by a Liberal ideology of wanting to cut TAFE, as we have seen in other jurisdictions, and cut the subsidies available for TAFE to deliver high-quality services in favour of cheap and cheerful training delivery by low-cost RTOs.

Even our private RTOs, and the peak bodies that represent them here in the ACT, are now getting a sense that there are real concerns with what the commonwealth is offering in relation to this national skills agreement. There is a lot of further work to do to make sure that the settings are right that will deliver the funding that is required to be able to see more people trained in the ACT, and that we are not discouraging people from taking up training. That would be the case if student fees rocketed as a result of really strict requirements on the fee band.

That gives you a sense of what is happening, and I am happy to take any supplementaries.

THE CHAIR: No, none from me. That was very comprehensive.

MR CAIN: Regarding ICT infrastructure at CIT, I make reference to the increase in funding for CIT plant and equipment and ICT infrastructure, from \$5.028 million last year to \$6.285 million. Obviously, I am keen to know what this is being spent on and who is contracted to provide the infrastructure.

Mr Tong: I acknowledge that I have read the privilege statement and understand it. With the project in particular, I do not have the information as to the actual contractors who are undertaking that task. Can I ask for some clarification as to the question?

MR CAIN: With the increase of \$1.25 million in CIT plant and equipment and ICT infrastructure, what is it being spent on? You can provide me with the name of the contractor later, I trust. What are the targeted strategic indicators for this project?

Mr Tong: It will be primarily through engaging contractors to undertake that work. Some of that work would be undertaken through the ACT government's digital data and technology services as well.

Ms Cover: I can comment on the work that has been undertaken to date in terms of some of the upgrades in the digital infrastructure to assist our students to access updated technology. We have rolled out the Microsoft 365 suite to all students across CIT. That has been a significant program of transformation for our students to access, and to have that mobility to assist with their teaching and learning as well.

The Bruce CIT campus has undergone investment in terms of ICT infrastructure upgrades. That was completed in April this year. That has been to upgrade our wi-fi coverage, which has really improved the speed and accessibility, which has increased

by over 400 per cent at the Bruce campus. That is really important because we have a lot of students, obviously, all trying to access that network at the same time around particular peak days and times of the week, so that upgrade has been really substantial.

Through the better ICT services project, which you are referring to, the Microsoft 365 environment that I mentioned was completed in February this year. Again, a shout-out to all of our staff who have really helped students, particularly those who helped students during the period of disruption with COVID to have access to those new applications. It has been fantastic for our students, and our staff have been fantastic in supporting that rollout as well.

The key focus so far has been on our digital technology, and not just in assisting our students with greater flexibility and accessibility during COVID, when we have had to pivot and work very much in the digital space. As I said earlier, that is a challenge for all vocational education and training, because whilst digital technology is really critical to vocational education and training, it is very much complementing what happens on the face-to-face, practical side of things. The ICT infrastructure spend has obviously been critical. It will be ongoing. Technology is changing at such a rate that we will have to keep investing—

MR CAIN: What is the period of this contract? That is my last question on this issue, Chair.

Ms Cover: The delivery of services is made up of different sorts of contractors. I am happy to provide that information to you out of session.

Mr Tong: In terms of your initial question, we do not have specific output measures. When we talk about the student experience, we did realise an improvement of up to 400 per cent in internet speed at the Bruce and Fyshwick campuses. The work was long overdue to get CIT up to a standard which was great for student outcomes.

MR CAIN: Thank you. I would like that at home, if possible!

THE CHAIR: The committee will now suspend briefly for lunch.

Hearing suspended from 12.50 to 1.34 pm.

Appearances:

Steel, Mr Chris, Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State

Major Projects Canberra

Edghill, Mr Duncan, Chief Projects Officer, Major Projects Canberra

Navarro, Ms Tania, Senior Director, Communications and Engagement

Hall, Mr Damon, Executive Group Manager, Project Development and Support

Ford, Mr Wayne, Executive Group Manager, Project Director CIT Woden Campus Development

THE CHAIR: The committee will now begin questioning in relation to Major Projects Canberra. Welcome back, Minister Steel, and officials. I will lead off with questions and we will make our way through the committee. Minister, can you update the committee on the community consultation that has taken place with regard to the new CIT campus in Woden?

Mr Steel: Hundreds of hours of consultation has occurred with students and teachers at CIT, as well as with the broader community, about the CIT Woden campus. A lot of that work has been done by Major Projects Canberra. I will hand to them in a second just to talk through it as well. CIT have also been directly involved in communicating with their stakeholders about the new campus.

It is important to note that a whole variety of different things have been consulted on already. The bus interchange and transport interchange with light rail has been part of the consultation and will be integrated with the project, as well as the bus layover project, which is already under construction. There has been a lot of discussion around the integration of the projects.

To date, the consultation on the CIT campus has involved discussion around block massing for design. We have been out consulting with the community about the internal road network, particularly a north to south connection between Bowes and Bradley streets. We are about to embark on quite a substantial period of consultation in relation to the CIT campus, focusing on some of the public spaces as well. A lot of the consultation that has been occurring, particularly with staff and students, has been on the internal part of the CIT building—what is going to happen within the building and teaching and learning spaces—so that the functional reference design that has been provided and will be provided to the proponents, who are going through the tender process, meets the needs of CIT, going forward, so that it can deliver the whole range of courses that it needs to when it opens but also into the future as well, noting that the whole of that sector continues to evolve. I might first hand over to Leanne to talk about what consultation she has been doing from CIT's perspective and then to MPC to talk a little bit about the actual construction and consultation that has led to and informed the design.

THE CHAIR: In the interests of time, if we could not delve too deeply because we have got 23 minutes to get through five people?

Ms Cover: I will be brief. Just to add to the minister's commentary about the

consultation, we have had over 70 different meetings with staff and students since March this year. Obviously, consultation, as the minister said, has been to inform the reference design, but in many respects the consultation will be ongoing, not just internally with our staff and students but with the broader community. We anticipate that the consultation mechanisms that we have set up with MPC will continue into the future as we move to the construction of the campus.

Mr Edghill: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. The community consultation process actually began before the business case was approved. The minister noted one of the bigger pieces of consultation there, which was around the blocking and the massing of the new facility on the site.

We have provided a number of different options to the community. There was a clear favourite that came back through that process and that has directly fed into the concept design and now the more detailed design phases that we are moving through. So, very definitely, the community consultation has and is continuing to shape the actual design and delivery of the facility. Since that point in time, I might pass to Tania.

Ms Navarro: I have read the statement; thank you. We have done quite a bit of engagement, to date. Obviously, the most important engagement that we are doing is that ongoing stakeholder engagement with nearby residents of CIT, with businesses, with bus drivers and with stakeholders. That is ongoing. We set up a traffic and construction reference group to make sure that we kept in contact with those stakeholders on a regular basis. We set up information portals and tools so that we could continue that ongoing dialogue with them.

We have also undertaken some packages of engagement in recent times. A couple of the big ones included a package of engagement that we did in November and December, where we did a pre-DA engagement. In that engagement package we did pop-up information sessions with the community, we ran a survey and we did 21 in-depth stakeholder briefings. We received about 983 responses to the survey that we did. We had about 650 overall conversations around that pre-DA package. The “what we heard” report on that is currently up on our website.

Another engagement package that we did recently was on the Bowes-Bradley connection that the minister mentioned. Again, we did a survey on that. We received well over 200 responses to that survey. We did six community information pop-up sessions. About 1,800 people visited the project information on the website. We had about 300 conversations with the community and received about 144 written comments on that consultation. Again, we have a “what we heard” report coming out on that soon. We received some really good feedback from the community around that connection. Coming up—

THE CHAIR: I am sorry to interrupt, but we are really running short on time.

MR CAIN: Correct me if I am wrong here; the project is listed with the bus interchange. How much of the budget is split between the interchange and CIT Woden, and why were they not separated?

Mr Steel: The exact same question was asked by Elizabeth Lee in a previous hearing and was answered by Mr Edghill. I might, in the interests of time, refer you to that answer rather than going over it again, if that is okay?

MR CAIN: I appreciate that; thank you. Will the same contractors build both major projects? If that has been answered, I will look it up later.

Mr Steel: There are four packages of work. The layover is the first package, which is under construction. Canberra Contractors are undertaking that work. The second package is being undertaken by Huon, which is the bus interchange. The third package we are currently in the final stages of a procurement process for, so we do not have a final delivery partner for that one at this point. Package 4, the Yurauna Centre at CIT Bruce, will also go through a procurement process, I understand. Did you have anything to add on that, Mr Edghill?

Mr Edghill: Only that the two short-listed respondents from package 3 are different to those other parties that you mentioned before. They will be different contractors for package 3 than for package 1 and package 2.

MS CLAY: I was wondering whether the new Woden CIT campus might have space for a live music-arts venue. There is a broad scale of what that might mean. It could mean a large and fancy standalone facility or it could mean a cafe or pub with room at the back for a band. Or it could mean a little community hall with room for pictures and performance space. Has that been part of the consultation and is that part of the plans at the moment?

Mr Steel: The scope of the project does not include a live music venue per se. It includes a whole range of things—a youth foyer, in particular, and all of the functional needs of the CIT to deliver the range of courses that it needs to in this particular location. Then there are the packages for the interchange and the light rail stop and so forth. No, it does not include that explicitly. One of the reasons is that there is a range of other spaces where this type of activity can occur in Woden.

The upgrades to Woden Library, which will be completed before the end of the year, include a recording studio, for example, for music. The new Woden community centre is planned to have a flexible multipurpose space that could be used for those types of activities. I am sure that we will have further engagement with Woden Community Service, which runs the youth centre and often does have band competitions in there, about what spaces they can use. Duncan might be able to talk further about some of the spaces.

There is a lot of commercial space around Woden that is being developed at the moment. There is nothing stopping a pub setting up in one of those locations and, indeed, one has just been established—I think it has some sort of bowling alley in it—in the Alexander and Albemarle building that will be open in November. We expect that this is going to activate a whole range of other commercial tenancies that have not existed in Woden before. It is certainly bringing a lot of exciting opportunity.

Mr Edghill: In terms of the CIT facility itself, as we conclude the procurement process and as we identify the preferred delivery partner, the next stage in the process

will be to work through the detailed design. The detailed design for the internals of the facility is still moving. Certainly, what is being contemplated in the concept design is primarily what does CIT need in terms of its course offerings. But there will be an opportunity potentially for CIT to have a cafeteria which potentially is able to be used for selling things to the public.

We are also paying close attention to how the CIT may best use the roof space of the facility. There is some interest in different opportunities that we work through with that. Incidental to that, of course, there may be space for somebody to plug in an amplifier on the roof or in the cafeteria. We are looking at it primarily from the perspective of what does the CIT need with respect to its course offerings; that is our starting point.

MS CLAY: There is always a social aspect that goes along with an educational institution. The minister has already mentioned that there is a youth foyer. I am sure that you will have some catering responsibilities so that people can eat and perhaps drink there. It strikes me that all of those elements would go very well with the live music aspect. It sounds like you are not putting it in the plans, but it might be compatible with some of the plans. Is that where that is headed?

Mr Edghill: It is certainly not a driver. You are exactly right, Ms Clay; there are functions that the CIT will have within the facility that could be, in time, complementary to that. Our primary focus, first and foremost, is what does the CIT need in terms of its course offerings. As I say, there is still quite a design process for us to go through. In terms of the scope which has been put forward to the bidders, we have not stated that it must be a live music venue; it does not form part of the scope. That is not to say that at some point in time somebody might not be able to, as I say, plug an amplifier in and do what they do in terms of some of the other offerings that will be within the facility itself.

MS CLAY: Was this part of the consultation? Did you ask people if they wanted, as part of this facility, to have live music or art involved at all?

Mr Steel: We have been consulting very heavily with CIT as part of this project to understand what their functional needs are in designing the campus. That has included a whole range of different specialised facilities for hospitality—kitchens, for example—and other types of spaces that need very specialised facilities. CIT have also been doing some thinking around planning for music. Leanne can talk to that.

Ms Cover: Duncan referred to the integration in terms of the flexibility of the floor plans and the spaces that the new campus will actually afford us not just in teaching and learning flexibility but, as you mentioned, the opportunity to do live events. We anticipate having gallery spaces. We will have spaces that we can obviously not only display student work but integrate with the community to share facilities and to run events. We know that, with the flexibility of the campus, we will have the ability to run events at multiple sites, both inside and outside. The way that the campus is going to be laid out across the site gives us some opportunities to integrate those types of activities, both socially and in formal education settings. Things like makerspace, galleries, a cafe, a restaurant and those sorts of facilities will be there. We anticipate that those sorts of live, creative aspects can be integrated into the floor plans as we are

currently designing them.

MR MILLIGAN: I noticed in the 2019 budget that the original budget for the CIT campus was \$240 million but that has since changed and it is now \$280 million. I was just wondering if you can explain the significant blowout of \$40 million between 2019 and now.

Mr Steel: Again, this goes to the line of questioning which Peter Cain was asking about, which we have already addressed in a previous hearing. Duncan can walk you through it. There is obviously significant integration here with the other packages of work.

Mr Edghill: I think that it is simply a function of the year from the budget coming into this year's budget that was not there previously. In terms of the value of the project itself, we are still within the budget that was put forward in the original business case, so there has definitely not been a blowout on the project before. I might ask Damon Hall to add to that.

Mr Steel: Just before you do, I think the point was made in the previous hearing that we are currently in sensitive commercial negotiations on this project, so we are actually not in a position to talk about the costs, the exact costs, of the project publicly at this point in time. When we can, we will.

MR MILLIGAN: We are still in negotiations, so it could further go out potentially?

Mr Steel: We have not got a price yet, so we do not know that.

MR MILLIGAN: We will soon find out, will we not?

Mr Steel: It will be from the market. It will be whatever the market delivers through that negotiation.

MR MILLIGAN: Can you certainly confirm that the campus will be open to students in 2025?

Mr Steel: Damon, do you want to comment on that?

Mr Hall: Yes, certainly. Maybe this is just my own conservatism. With any infrastructure project, anything can happen between now and the end but certainly our expectation, as we stand today, is that the project will be delivered on budget and on time, which would mean that it is open for students by 2025. The big caveat to that, of course, is I think that the pandemic has still got a way to play out and there are market disruption and market capacity constraints and so forth that are still going to play out not just in Canberra but around Australia. But as we stand today, our expectation is that, yes, the facility will be open and available for students in 2025. That bit will be delivered within budget, is our current expectation.

MR MILLIGAN: Do you roughly know how many students can be housed at this campus?

Mr Hall: I may pass to Wayne, if that is okay?

Mr Steel: Yes.

Mr Ford: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. The capacity for CIT Reid campus to CIT Woden campus, we are looking at a capacity of about 1,500 students on average per day using the campus and about 6,500 students across the course of a year.

MR MILLIGAN: That is 1,500 enrolments, online courses or whichever? Is that going to be an element of CIT in the future?

Mr Edghill: No. If I may, just to clarify, I think what Wayne was talking about there was the current expectation is that there will be 1,500 attending per day. Not every student attends the facility every day. So 6,500 different students over the course of the year but 1,500 at any one particular day.

THE CHAIR: Minister, I was hoping you could talk to the committee about some of the sustainability elements that are going to be included in the project.

Mr Steel: We are keen to really showcase best-practice, sustainable building construction in this project, and that has certainly been a big part of the engagement through the development at the reference design process and is now feeding into the final designs with the proponents for the project. It is going to be a key criterion that is embedded in the designs for the CIT Woden campus project, including the following initiatives: the building will be all electric, supporting a transition away from fossil fuels; there will be best-practice energy and water efficiency design features and fittings; and high-performance facades to minimise energy loss and maximising thermal comfort.

There will be best-practice waste management, as well, included within the construction, including the potential for an on-site organics capture and re-use system. Solar PV will be part of it—we are expecting to bring in energy covering about 15 per cent of the building's electricity use. There will be a range of water sensitive urban design treatments provided through the landscapes on the ground floor and also on the rooftop terraces as well, so that we have got that living infrastructure. That is a key thing that I particularly want to see in this area, that we are across the three packages of work delivering a higher canopy cover once we have left the area and completed the projects.

There will be improved urban realm and green space over the footprint. We are working towards that 30 per cent tree canopy target that we are trying to meet with a net increase in tree canopy cover from where we left it. There will be a range of smart campus inclusions, and that goes to the work that CIT is doing to move things online, but it includes also the building management systems and enabling visibility to occupants and visitors of some of these sustainability achievements as well.

Then a big part of what we are trying to achieve here is best-practice, end-of-trip facilities as well as part of the design, so that students and staff can cycle in and have all of the facilities that they need that are consistent with our end-of-trip code

guidance that we have provided from the ACT government. We are really hopeful that this project is going to deliver a sustainable building and possibly one of the most sustainable government buildings currently built.

MS CLAY: Is the on-site organics processing facility a compost facility or a worm farm or what is that?

Mr Steel: I think that is just being worked out at the moment with the proponents as part of the design, but Duncan and the team might be able to comment further.

Mr Edghill: That is exactly right. We have got two live bids that we are assessing at the moment. In the procurement process we set out our sustainability expectations and our high sustainability expectations associated with this facility. Both of the bidders have provided their own thoughts as to how our sustainability aspirations can be met. Some of the finer detail is what we are working through at the moment and the end solution will depend upon which of the two shortlisted bidders we appoint as preferred.

But very definitely, as part of the RFT process, we have set the bar very high and, depending upon the bidder, the exact way that that is manifested could look different between them. We definitely have a lot of interesting ideas and details to be working through with both of those bidders.

MS CLAY: Would you intend to apply those for the CIT campuses, on-site organics, do you think?

Mr Steel: That is a question for CIT, I think.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, everybody. The time being 1.59 pm, we might call it a day. Thank you, Mr Steel and officials for being here today. The committee will suspend for a quick 15-minute break and resume with Minister Berry for CSD 1.1.

Hearing suspended from 1.59 to 2.17 pm.

Appearances:

Berry, Ms Yvette, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women

Community Services Directorate

Rule, Ms Catherine, Director-General

Summerrell, Mrs Jessica, Executive Branch Manager, Social and Community Inclusion

Murray, Ms Christine, Executive Group Manager, Inclusion and Participation

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, and welcome back. We are joined by the Deputy Chief Minister in her capacity as Minister For Women as we inquire into CSD output 1.1. Minister, I was hoping you could update the committee on the work that is currently underway implementing the Second Action Plan under the ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026.

Ms Berry: There has been significant work being done to implement the actions out of the action plan. I can ask Jessica to provide a little more detail but there is quite a lot going on, It might be quite a response, I expect.

Mrs Summerrell: I acknowledge the privilege statement. Thank you very much for the question. The Second Action Plan is, as the minister said, a huge piece of work that brings together multiple directorates and people to work on progressing this. The Second Action Plan is part of the ACT Women's Plan which, as you would know, is a 10-year strategy document. That strategy informs what the minister and the Office for Women's priorities are and the work programs that sit underneath that.

The ACT Women's Plan is the government's ongoing commitment to improving gender quality in the ACT. Underneath that overarching strategy document there are three action plans which are delivered through the ACT Women's Plan. The First Action Plan, as you would know, ran from 2017 to 2019. Then the Second Action Plan, which is currently underway, started in 2020 and will conclude in 2022.

The Second Action Plan is also known as Equity Together, and it was launched by the minister in March 2020 at the ACT Women's Awards. Equity Together was an amazing piece of work which was developed through extensive community consultation, which included the 2019 Women's Summit, which brought together stakeholders to identify all of the possible actions that could be included in the Second Action Plan. Participants that attended the summit were incredibly positive about the way that that plan was developed and their experiences in coming together to shape what that action plan looked like.

From that, Equity Together includes 29 actions, which are grouped under five objectives. Those objectives are improving the mental health and wellbeing of women and girls in the ACT; fostering gender equity in Canberra workplaces, including through improved gender equality in leadership and workplace participation; building a community where women and girls are safe and supported to participate; improving

housing support and sustainability and reducing homelessness for women; and developing appropriate and accessible services, programs and policies for women and girls, ensuring consideration of those from diverse backgrounds.

Through the work that is done across directorates and with our implementation leadership group, I am pleased to report that after only one year of implementation one of the actions has actually been fully delivered and an additional 27 actions are completely underway. There was one action that was put on hold because of COVID, but again I am pleased to report that that action has now recommenced.

From within a number of those actions, there are large pieces of work that are happening to progress many of those actions, including the work around women in construction, which is a large piece of work from within that action plan. The progress around the specific actions in women in construction are really incredible and again are bringing together large parts of the directorate. That has been a major focus for many of us in delivering that.

To support that part of the action plan there have been implementation workshops that have been held over the life of the plan. The first implementation workshop, which was held in December 2020, considered the topic of how to get more women into roles in the construction industry in the ACT. That implementation workshop, again, is how we are progressing the actions as a whole collective across government, industry and community. And that workshop brought together government, industry, unions, peak bodies, women's community groups as well as women in the construction industry themselves to really work out the best way to implement those actions so that we are really clear about what success looks like.

Some of those actions we could just tick off and we could get them done, but we are really committed to looking at a really sustainable and long-term answer to some of those pieces of work. There is huge momentum in this space and it is really exciting to be part of it. This is the approach that we will take to a number of actions through the implementation workshops, and we are seeing really great success in that space.

MS LAWDER: With regard to women in construction, I am excited to see that as well. It is a worthwhile thing to pursue. But I am interested in the allocation, the tender and funding that have been awarded to the CFMEU. Were the donations that the CFMEU made to the ALP declared in their response to the tender?

Mrs Summerrell: Minister, would you like me to answer?

Ms Berry: Yes, I think that it would be good to take Ms Lawder through the tender process for those grants. There was a very rigorous process that organisations needed to go through to meet the requirements under that request for tender, and Mrs Summerrell can take you through those.

MS LAWDER: Thank you but I am asking specifically about the CFMEU. I guess I can follow up to show you where I am interested in going with this. The board of the CFMEU is exclusively male. There is not even one token woman spot on the CFMEU board, let alone half or a more reasonable number on the board of the CFMEU. Why are we awarding a grant to an organisation that has no representation of women on

their board? My earlier question was about the declaration of donations to the ALP in their response to the tender.

Ms Berry: I think it is appropriate, in responding to your question, just to take you through the process, because it does provide a wholistic response to how the process was run for that tender and how the CFMEU were the successful organisation.

MS LAWDER: All right, thanks.

Mrs Summerrell: As the minister mentioned, there was an extensive tendering process that was undertaken for this, which was compliant with our tendering requirements. The scope of work was put out there for people and organisations to respond to and then there was an independent assessment process that occurred to evaluate the tenders that were received through that, based on the selection criteria that we were seeking for that piece of work, and then that was scored. That is the way that the tendering process works. It is scored against the criteria and then the successful recipient is determined through that process.

MS LAWDER: I am sure that applies to most of the grants processes or all of the grants processes the government runs. However, my question remains: how is it appropriate or how does it fit with this government's so-called or stated agenda about women's equality to award this to an organisation with no women at all on their board? If that is not considered, why not?

Ms Berry: I think you are right to point that out and I think the representation on the CFMEU board represents the challenge that we are faced with in the construction industry with the low representation of women more generally. But also, in applying for this grant, I think it says that the CFMEU wants to see that change and wants to be part of initiating that change, not only with their own organisation but with the workforce as well. I think they are genuine in their willingness to be part of this and are wanting to see more women and girls participating in both their own organisation and within the construction industry more generally.

That definitely needs to improve, and I suggest that once we get more women into construction then they will be definitely able to be represented on the CFMEU board, and that is, I imagine—I hope that it is—the CFMEU's aspiration for that to be the case.

MS LAWDER: I hope so. But it would be nice if they actually—

THE CHAIR: This line of questioning is wildly unrelated to the original question; so we are going to move on.

MR DAVIS: Minister, I want to ask about the \$560,000 to support women's workforce participation. Can I clarify whether that is new funding or rolling funding for an existing program? How will that program be assessed on its success?

Ms Berry: The funding is an extension of an existing program over the next four years. With participation grants for women, the success of the program is shown in the examples provided by women who have been able to access those grants to return

to the workforce. Often they are women who have been out of the workforce for a longer period of time, they have been victims of domestic and family violence, or they have been raising a family at home and have not had the opportunities to do the professional development that maybe their other colleagues have been able to do. The participation grants are about being able to get a licence, maybe car lessons, maybe purchase IT, phones, internet access, computers—even clothes.

Alongside the grants there are other wraparound supports for those women to make sure that they can get to appointments or get food vouchers, if that is the other kind of support that they need. We are hearing from women who have been involved in that grants process that it has provided a significant lift in their opportunities and chances to return to the workforce. I will ask Christine to give a little more detail.

Ms Murray: Thanks for the question, Mr Davis. I acknowledge the privilege statement. I think the minister raised the key point here. We have heard from women what the barriers to their participation are. We have run programs which support women, and we have learnt from and evaluated on the basis of that, and extended the programs.

Some of that is incredibly practical help, as the minister outlined. Equally, there is a need for extended wraparound and support services to ensure access. It is one thing to provide a computer; it is another thing to provide a computer and support to continue to maintain your capacity to engage with your learning in relation to employment or training opportunities. We have heard very strongly from women that they needed a little bit more, so that is what this money seeks to do.

In terms of your question, Mr Davis, in relation to how we know, built into this program is an ongoing yearly review, an assessment and a reflection back, and then a larger scale evaluation at the end of the program. We do not want to get to the end of the program and say, “We could have made this slight change to the training, the mentoring support or the wraparound supports that we have provided.” It is really clear that the ongoing conversations are as important as those evaluations and assessments, and the flexibility that has been built into the system to provide support based on the feedback that we have had from women who have accessed the program.

It is one of the most successful programs that we have seen in the women’s space, which is why there has been an extension of moneys applied to that. I hope that answers the question, Mr Davis.

Ms Rule: Mr Davis, there is one more detail that you might be interested in. I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. Built into the program is an evaluation at year 3. There is a funding provision for four years, pending the outcome of an evaluation at year 3. We appreciate the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of the program to make sure that that ongoing commitment of money is spent to best effect.

MR DAVIS: That sounds great. Essentially, do we have enough money for this program to meet the demand? Is the demand currently outstripping the funding?

Ms Murray: This is currently a very targeted program that we are running. It

particularly focuses on those people who have high rates of family violence and low incomes. The reality is that the need will probably always outstrip the capacity. But we also do not want to go too large, too quickly, as we build this program. I hope that there will be some continuation of reinvestment regarding those people who have successfully participated through the program. As we have seen, those people come back and might be interested in mentoring along the way.

Let us walk in this program and do it really well, and build something that is stronger and sustainable into the future, in terms of those people who have some of the highest needs, and working with people who have not had the same opportunities that many of us in the room today have had.

Ms Berry: It goes to some of the work we have done in adjusting that program, based on the feedback that we have been getting from women who have participated in and been able to access those grants. It is about making sure that there are all of those wraparound supports, as well as providing opportunities for these women to participate in classes to do resumes, learn about interview techniques, public speaking and things like that.

That has been important feedback that we have had from participants in the past. We fed that in to this program as well. Now it is a more fulsome program and provides greater supports that women have told us that they have needed, rather than assuming, “These are the kinds of things that they need.”

Ms Rule: It may be worthwhile talking about the expansion of the program for the AMC. Jess could give a little bit of detail in relation to that.

MR DAVIS: That would be great.

Mrs Summerrell: The return to work program—I feel like I say this all the time—is another incredible program that supports a number of women in our community. As the minister said, it is for women who have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time. The grants provide a \$1,000 one-off grant to 160 women to participate in that program; then there is that additional wraparound support which we know is so incredibly important, and something that we have seen as the next step to support women.

As Christine mentioned, a lot of these women are coming from high levels of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and often from domestic violence situations. When we have that first contact with them through the workshops, we identify that they often have other needs and supports that we are glad to be able to support them with. There is that practical assistance that we provide as well, with resume writing, dressing for an interview and that sort of thing.

One of the things that we did recently was to expand the return to work program to the AMC. That has been, again, an incredible piece of work that we have done. I want to give a shout-out to our return to work officers, who have worked really closely with the AMC and our colleagues in the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to make this happen.

We have had to tailor the way that the program runs in the AMC, but it does provide the grant to women in the AMC, as well as that wraparound support. One of the cases we have seen there, which was so incredible, was the support that we provided to someone in there to do some additional study through university. That seems very simple, but when you are working in the AMC environment, it is often not that easy, just in terms of connectivity and all of the things that many of us take for granted.

We worked really closely with the AMC to be able to provide that opportunity, and access to textbooks and information. That person has done incredibly well through that program and through their studies. I think they received distinctions or something close to that for nearly every piece of work that they did.

That is where we see that whole collective of the grant, as well as the wraparound support and how we are able to tailor that to the needs of people. The AMC expansion is really exciting, and we are looking forward to being able to do more work in that space.

Ms Berry: On the individual that Mrs Summerrell was referring to, I had the chance to have a conversation with her, and she has become a real mentor and leader in the AMC for the other women, to talk to them about accessing this program and to broaden their horizons. It has actually gone further than you could probably review, in reviewing this. That is an unexpected but very welcome outcome as a result of this.

MR CAIN: Minister, I have a question regarding the women's budget statement—in particular, the women's health matters safety map in regard to improving gendered urban infrastructure design. How many safety complaints did Beltana and Kallaroo roads in Pialligo receive on the safety map?

Ms Murray: Thanks very much for the question, Mr Cain. The women's safety map is something that is coordinated by the women's—

MR CAIN: Could you just answer that question? Are you unable to answer that question?

Ms Berry: Mr Cain, you are asking a question about a survey that is conducted by the Women's Centre for Health Matters. The government works with the Women's Centre for Health Matters to understand the responses in the survey and make the adjustments where appropriate. It has actually been a really good example of where the government has been able to hear from our community service partners, particularly the Women's Centre for Health Matters, about how we can make Canberra feel and be a better and safer place for individuals. The question you have asked, Mr Cain, is not a question for us; it is probably a question for the Women's Centre for Health Matters.

MR CAIN: Is that in regard to anything to do with that safety map; is that correct?

Ms Berry: As I said the map is done by the Women's Centre for Health Matters, and it is a survey—

MR CAIN: Thank you, Minister.

Ms Berry: It is a survey that is done each year and over a period of time. But their information is really important regarding how the government responds to women's safety.

MR CAIN: I have finished my query; thank you, Chair.

MS LAWDER: Minister, I can tell you that my understanding is that there were zero complaints. I am unsure why the improvements to the Beltana and Kallaroo roads are therefore listed in the women's budget statement as a safety measure benefiting women. Why do we have that specifically as an urban infrastructure measure benefiting women as opposed to other items that were identified on the women's safety map?

Ms Berry: Ms Lawder, it is good that you knew the answer to Mr Cain's question. We can talk a bit about what you are getting to; but, of course, if that is the outcome that is achieved, that women feel safe in that area, that has to be a good thing as well. I will ask Ms Murray to provide a bit more detail.

Ms Murray: I think the answer is around the breadth of information that we draw and how we work with EPSDD and TCCS in responding to that. Things are not necessarily drawn purely from the map as the only point of inference. There is a broader set of work that we do with both the Women's Centre for Health Matters and the broader community which feeds into that.

I would like to encourage more people to utilise the tool and see that flow through from the genuine reporting of issues that make women feel unsafe, and pop it on the map. We work with TCCS and EPSDD; also, the minister is in contact with her colleagues in relation to promoting that as a source of information in relation to where women might feel unsafe. I take that short opportunity to promote that tool as a useful tool, but it is certainly not the only source of information that we draw from.

MS LAWDER: I am still a little confused as to why that infrastructure upgrade is the only one listed in the women's budget statement.

Ms Berry: We will take that on notice so that we can understand exactly what your question is and the answer that you are after.

MS CLAY: Minister, I am pleased to see the women's budget statement, but it does list a broad range of items, some of which are of great benefit to women and some of which are of more benefit to the general population. The statement sort of comes as an add-on at the end of the budget listing individual things. How is this women's budget statement putting a gendered lens on our budgeting decisions at the front end?

Ms Berry: As you know, the ACT government and the Office for Women have been working on a gender budget statement. That work is occurring with the Treasury office as part of our wellbeing indicators. It is an important piece of work. That is why we are working closely with Treasury, so that we can embed this kind of gender lens across all of government. It is quite a bit of work to be able to do that across every directorate in the government. I know that some while ago the Office for Women

started having these conversations with researchers and academics to get some information about what might be the best model to apply here in the ACT when we do a budget statement that has a gender lens around it. I can ask Mrs Summerrell to provide a bit more detail on that. It is not at a place where it is being implemented yet, but there is definitely work that has been happening with the Office for Women in that space.

MS CLAY: Given that this is a budgeting tool and you are working quite closely with Treasury, would it be better if it sat in Treasury and was actually something that was integrated into the budget decisions at the front end?

Ms Berry: We are working closely with Treasury. Actually, I think it is well suited for the Office for Women to represent women's interests and the gendered lens across the whole of the ACT government, with Treasury's input. They will definitely be a partner in this. They will have views and ideas as well from a Treasury lens, if you like, and it will be our job to hold them true to the gendered lens.

Mrs Summerrell: Would you like me to give an update on some of the work that has happened around gender budgeting?

THE CHAIR: If we can make it somewhat brief.

Mrs Summerrell: There has been quite a lot of work around gender responsive budgeting. We have engaged some academics who are experts in this field to look at what international examples of best practice look like and to guide the discussions across government. We are excited to be working with our CMTEDD and Treasury colleagues. Within the budget there is funding to support the development of an evidence base of wellbeing data in the ACT, which will enable more effective targeting of policies, including through reporting on the wellbeing of specific groups, and will work towards progressing gender responsive budgeting.

I think that will allow us to do some foundational work now to look at what is happening internationally, what that best practice looks like and how we can respond to that and have a really sustainable solution and approach to gender responsive budgeting. I guess it is a bit like some of the actions under the second action plan. We could rush out and get something done and get something out there, but it would not necessarily be a model that is sustainable and is best practice. We are excited to work with our Treasury and CMTEDD colleagues within that wellbeing framework to look at how we underpin that and how we work towards developing something that is sustainable and ongoing.

MS LAWDER: With regard to what Mrs Summerrell was just saying about a sustainable, well-measured women's gendered lens for the budget, why then did we have in the women's budget statement what is, I guess, a bit of a lazy and careless example, the Pialligo upgrade, rather than putting all of that effort into a gendered lens on the budget, as Canada do, which I am sure your academics are referring to?

Ms Berry: Thanks Ms Lawder, and for your views as well. This is a significant piece of work for the ACT government in shifting to this model of providing these gender budget statements. Every government in the country should be looking at how they

can do this better. As a nation, we definitely need to be better at providing these kinds of statements that reflect the gendered nature of budget announcements and where they can support women and girls and others in our community.

All of those countries that have budget statements which have a gender lens around them, like Canada, New Zealand and others, are the kinds of governments that we are looking to and getting advice from various academics on to find the model that works for us here in the ACT. As Mrs Summerrell rightly pointed out, we want to get this right. We do not want to have to keep tinkering around the edges all the time, knowing that things change over time and you want to improve it as you can. Finding the right model for us here in the ACT is what we want to do and we want to get it right.

Mrs Summerrell: I would say that the statement is our progress step of how we have gotten here so far. It has been an important tool in working with other directorates as well to really think about that gendered lens. There are tools that go along with that to assist directorates. It is part of our journey, it is part of our progress, and it is good to have that as a foundation as we move forward and look at how we can take that further.

THE CHAIR: The committee will now turn its questioning to inclusion and participation for youth. Minister, I was hoping you could provide the committee with some information regarding the work of the youth advisory committee.

Ms Berry: As you would understand, the Youth Advisory Council are a very active group. They are a very passionate and engaged group of young people in our community who provide really good advice to the government on a range of things. In fact, I would say they are probably one of the most consulted groups, or the group that most asks for consultations around various projects that the ACT government puts in place.

They are a very hardworking committee. We very much appreciate their time, particularly over COVID. They have not stopped and taken a breath. I have certainly had very good and welcome conversations with them about how they have been feeling through COVID and the kinds of supports that young people are telling them they need moving forward, as well as how they have felt supported within their community, within their schools and within the work that the ACT government has been doing as well. Ms Murray can provide a bit more detail on some of the work that they have been doing and some of the work that they have been involved in. They are definitely a highly consulted group of young people and they provide excellent advice to the government.

Ms Murray: The Youth Advisory Council are absolutely a fantastic group. As the minister says, they have commenced doing some great work with the student congress the minister is also responsible for, which has created a really strong network of young people who are working on a broad range of issues. One of the major things was the youth congress that was held. The Youth Advisory Council did some great work in terms of planning and working with particular leads from around ACT government and ACT leaders, such as Justin Barker, to lead forward what will be our work plan over the next period. I will ask Mrs Summerrell to talk about that.

The work has been slightly readjusted over the last period, obviously, due to COVID. The Youth Advisory Council has been absolutely critical to us because we know from the previous lockdown that there has been a significant impact on young people as a result of COVID. We know it has impacted on their study. It has impacted on the hospitality industry, which draws a huge number of casual employees who are under 25. We know that it has impacted on a variety of things in terms of mental health, their connection, their social cohorts and resilience.

We have previously spent some time having a conversation with the Youth Advisory Council on all of the supports that we have put in place as an ACT government to have conversations and support through COVID. Some great advice has come forward on where we can do things better, where things hit the mark. My favourite response was when the Youth Advisory Council said, “Can middle-age public servants stop pretending to be young and hip, even on social media?” I absconded from my social media account immediately. They are a really dynamic team. In terms of their forward work plan and the engagements that they are involved in, they have a really active plan. I will ask Jess to quickly run through some of that.

Mrs Summerrell: The Youth Advisory Council have participated in a whopping 22 consultative processes across government in 2021, which is massive and does show the enormous value that they provide, but also the community’s commitment to really understand the views of young people.

Christine just mentioned the youth assembly, which was held in June this year, so June 2021. There were four topics for that assembly which were discussed. They included inclusive society, resilience, rights and respectful relationships, youth employment and environment and sustainability. The way they developed that this year was to have a group of experts for each topic and then they had breakout groups. Christine mentioned Justin Barker, who provided the context and the information to really enable a productive discussion through that working group to inform the final report that they will produce for the youth assembly.

They are an incredibly strong and committed group of individuals who have provided, as Christine mentioned, some really valuable information for us in relation to COVID as well and how we can best support them, recognising that young people have been impacted significantly through changes to their learning environment. Many of them are in our casual workforce and there have been changes to their workforce. It is about how we can best support their mental health and wellbeing, noting that, when we take away the school environment, we often take away some of the support networks that exist for young people. The Youth Advisory Council have been invaluable in that experience and process always, but specifically over the last 12 to 18 months.

THE CHAIR: Is the government considering any new or innovative ways to engage with young people?

Ms Berry: I was going to say that not putting up middle-age white men to be uncool on various social media channels is probably not going to be a game changer for young people. One of the things that we have asked them is this: how do they best hear about what the government is doing and where do they want to get the

information from?

Mrs Summerrell: That is absolutely right. The approach that we like to take in these situations is to ask and not do; so asking the Youth Advisory Council to tell us how they would best like to be engaged and what works for them. We also like to be led by that information and then tailor our consultations around them. We know that there is a little bit of consultation fatigue across not just our young people but in all areas. One of the things that we are doing internally is looking at how we better utilise our stakeholders so that we are not going to the same stakeholders all of the time at different periods and asking, essentially, some of the same questions. That is a piece of work that we are doing internally to make sure that we really capitalise on how we consult and making sure that we tailor our consultation processes for young people.

I probably sound very old calling them “young people”, but young people are telling us that peer-to-peer communication and consultation is what is effective for them. We have done this with lots of our communities recently, where we have empowered and enabled people to take that conversation forward, infiltrate messaging and information, and then bring it back to us. In some areas we call them community leaders, but in others, like our young people, it is just about how do we engage with a range of young people from a whole spectrum of backgrounds and empower them to take that information, have the conversation their way and then bring the information back to us. I think that that is a valuable way for us to continue to connect with young people.

We have a range of youth grants as well that support young people to engage. That is another mechanism for them to be able to stay connected, particularly through our Youth Week grants and the activities that we have to support the participation of young people in our community, and the grants that we run. One of the focuses is on connection following COVID, but also connection in communities and looking at where we have high populations of young people and how we can better activate an engagement mechanism with them. We use our grants process to help bring young people together and the activities that they have within communities. Again, we use that as a tool to infiltrate messaging but, ultimately, the best way is for them to tell us what works for them and for us to listen and respond.

MR DAVIS: Can you confirm how many young people are on the advisory council?

Mrs Summerrell: Let me see whether I have that number. I believe it is 15, and aged between 12 and 25 years.

MR DAVIS: You said there were 22 issues on which they were consulted just in the last year. I want to better understand the process by which the issues on which they are consulted are determined. Can any minister of the cabinet put any issue related to their work area that they think has relevance to young people directly to the Youth Advisory Council? Does it go through the directorate? Is the minister the ultimate arbiter of what issues are considered by the advisory council? That process is a little unclear.

Mrs Summerrell: Minister, would you like me to answer that?

Ms Berry: Before you do, Mrs Summerrell, just to be clear, the Youth Advisory

Council are, as we said, a very intelligent and very active group of young people who also ask for consultation not only with various directorates but with individuals in the community—more recently, with Jodie Griffiths-Cook, the Children and Young People Commissioner, and various others. They probably ask as much of us as we do of them.

MR DAVIS: That sounds great, Minister. You might want to take this on notice: of the 22 over the last year, it would be great to get a breakdown of how many of those involved the Youth Advisory Council coming to government and saying, “We want to give opinions on X,” versus how many involved the government going to the group and saying, “We’d like your opinion on X.” I do not expect you to have that today, but that breakdown, on notice, would be really useful.

Ms Berry: Yes, that is not a problem. Almost every single council meeting that the Youth Advisory Council has involves a consultation requested by the Youth Advisory Council on anything that they are interested in. It could be a whole range of things.

MR DAVIS: This is probably a cheeky one, but I will ask it, anyway: with the Youth Advisory Council, you have really sold them today as quite an expert panel of very aware and attentive young people. Certainly, as a member of the Assembly, that kind of brains trust—I will not speak for other members—would be something I would find invaluable to tap into, to help direct or provide input on my work. Is that within the scope of the advisory council or do they simply work to give advice to the government, being the executive?

Ms Berry: Yes, that is correct, Mr Davis; they work to provide advice for the executive.

MR DAVIS: Leading on from that, one of my reservations about the Youth Advisory Council, even though they are absolutely tremendous, and I agree with everything that has been said before, is that it seems to be a quality over quantity consultation with young people in Canberra. These seem to be very aware, very engaged young people that we can rely on to give us really good opinions on a whole range of things. But it is ultimately a group of 15 people, so I want to get a bit more of an understanding about what we are doing on a whole-of-government basis—maybe through the YourSay panel et cetera—to ensure we are getting a quantity of perspective on young people, not just quality.

Ms Berry: That is a good question, Mr Davis. Mrs Summerrell talked about how we engage with these young people, where they hear this information and how we get feedback from them after they have heard from the government or about issues in the community. Across a range of areas in government there are various means of communication with young people, and consultation and information are fed back to the government about what we are hearing from young people as well. The Youth Advisory Council conducted a survey last year, in about the same way as the Mission Australia survey—similar results came back—that they were able to do through their networks. That is the strength that they bring to the council as well. It is not necessarily their own personal expertise; it is about the networks that they bring with them to advise the government on various things.

Like any new person to a council, they come to it with a wide variety and diversity of experiences. Learning how to be on an advisory group, as a member of the Youth Advisory Council, is a process in itself. The staggered approach to filling the positions on the advisory council means that we have mentors there who can mentor new people who come onto the council about the role and what they can bring to it. I will ask Ms Murray to provide a bit more detail around some of the other consultations that we have. Of course, in the Education Directorate we have my minister's student congress, which comprises incredibly powerful and useful information being fed back from our school students.

Ms Murray: It is important to understand the diversity of people who are on the committee. They represent certain cohorts. We have people who are really strongly connected with the arts community, and people who are connected with university student organisations. We have connections and conversations that we have started through our youth justice programs, to feed in information from those people who come from a different walk of life and a different background.

Through all of the conversations and all of the processes, we are really conscious of making sure that we reach a broad range of views of young people. We are seeing the fruits of that in terms of the quality of the engagement, the feedback that we are getting back, the work plan, and the participation in the youth assembly. We deliberately targeted and worked with Education to make sure that there was a broad range of views brought to the table through the youth assembly, and it was not just those people who were highly engaged and highly capable of participating.

There is the breadth of what we do in the youth engagement space, as well as the coming together, as I said earlier, of education through a variety of sectors, the youth engagement team, and people who work with people who might not be engaged in formal education or university education. It is about making sure that we work with our amazing sector colleagues in the youth space to make sure that we are bringing to the table the views of those people who do not often get a seat at the table.

There is a breadth of consultation, and we are focused on making sure we are getting the views of people with diverse backgrounds and diverse experiences, and bringing them to the table and to the ears of those people who are policymakers.

MR DAVIS: I have a cheeky question with respect to representing young people. Minister, the city has had a conversation for some time—it percolates every couple of years—about extending the right to vote to 17 and 16-year-olds. As the minister for youth affairs, do you have a position on that?

Ms Berry: I know that it has been a conversation that the government in the ACT has had over a number of years, as you say, Mr Davis, and it is a cheeky question. In my conversations with young people, there is a feeling of conflict about whether or not it should be compulsory or voluntary—that young people cannot necessarily be fined because they do not work, and how the ACT jurisdiction would be able to implement that kind of legislation. There are a number of conflicts that would have to be worked through, and I hear from young people that they want to be engaged in government in different kinds of ways. That is what we are doing in the office for youth, as well as within the government itself—finding different ways to make sure young people are

getting the chance to have a say in government and to be able to shape a future for this city that meets their needs as well. I have not given you a yes or no answer, Mr Davis, but it is not a question to which I could give a yes or no answer.

MR DAVIS: Would you consider putting that question to the advisory council, to inform the government's thinking on the question?

Ms Murray: We have; previously, they have indicated that they would not be supportive of it being compulsory.

MR CAIN: Minister, I make reference to page 77 of the budget outlook, which states:

The ACT government aims to ensure that the youth sector is equipped to meet the needs of young people, families and the community.

Related to that commitment, the Canberra PCYC used to have a presence on the north side but now delivers most of its programs out of Erindale. My understanding is that staffing was not the issue; the issue was space. Has the ACT government been in discussions with PCYC or a similar provider about what could be done to have facilities for at-risk youth on the north side of Canberra?

Ms Berry: I cannot recall having a conversation with organisations like PCYC or others around an office presence, if you like, on the north side. The question might be better suited to Property Group or Mr Steel's area, about capacity in those spaces. I have not been approached, in the time that I have been in this space. I understand that these days they are fairly mobile, anyway. PCYC has a youth connection barbecue truck that they run across the city. They are generally working across the city, anyway. As I said I have not heard from organisations around that. It might be something better directed to Property Group.

MR CAIN: Given your role as minister for youth affairs, I would encourage you to initiate that. Minister, I note that a drop-in youth centre finally opened earlier this year in the Gungahlin marketplace. My understanding is that this is temporary and that a bigger, more permanent location appears to be needed. What are the plans to ensure that this community-run drop-in centre for youth, and others like it, can be properly accommodated as Canberra's population increases, particularly on the north side?

Ms Berry: I will have to take that on notice, and probably take your advice and initiate a conversation with those groups; thank you very much.

MR CAIN: I have a clarification question: are community spaces for youth part of planning and development? I am trying to work out where that would sit, in particular.

Ms Berry: There is probably a little bit to it. A community service organisation is funded to provide support services to young people; then those community organisations will want to try and access property across a range of different areas in the ACT, whether that is a privately rented property or a property that is rented from the ACT government, depending on what suits the needs of that particular organisation. For example, the Youth Coalition has their space in O'Connor or Lyneham, in the inner north. That is where they set up their office, but it is not

necessarily the place where they offer supports to young people across the community.

MR CAIN: My question touches on a broad governance issue. Shouldn't community spaces for youth be dealt with broadly under the planning directorate? Take that as a recommendation, if you like.

Ms Berry: Okay; we will take it as a recommendation. I am not quite sure whether we are the right ones to answer the question.

MR CAIN: You have a role in cabinet, Minister, so I am sure you can bring up many things.

Ms Berry: Yes, but this committee hearing is on a specific part of the budget papers that I am responsible for, Mr Cain. I am trying to help here, but your questions are sometimes a little bit confusing for us. Thank you; we will take the recommendation on notice and we will go from there.

MR CAIN: I do not accept that my questions are confusing; thank you, Chair.

THE CHAIR: It is time for us to ask questions on the next output classes. Do you need to change officials, Minister?

Ms Berry: Yes, I do.

THE CHAIR: The committee will suspend for five minutes.

Short suspension.

Appearances

Berry, Ms Yvette, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Tanton, Mr Graham, Executive Group Manager, Shared Services and Property
Kelley, Ms Rebecca, Executive Branch Manager, Sport and Recreation/Economic Development
Miners, Mr Stephen, Acting Under Treasurer

THE CHAIR: Welcome back, everyone, after that brief suspension. We now turn to output class 3, economic development; and output class 8, property services in relation to aquatic facilities management. On that note, minister, I was wondering if you could provide the committee with an update on Gungahlin pool.

Ms Berry: Thank you, Mr Pettersson, for the question. I know that as one of the local members in Yerrabi you have been quite focused on and interested in the process of the Gungahlin pool, which, sadly, had to be closed because of some issues with regard to the tiling and leakage in the pool. We have been on quite the journey since then and have tried as much as we can to keep the community and yourselves really up to date on everything that has been happening within the pool, because we know that everybody wants to see it open again and operating—hopefully, better than it ever has, which is definitely the plan from the government’s perspective.

I might ask one of my officials to provide a little bit of an update of where things are at over the last couple of weeks. And if there are questions about things in the past, we can respond to those as well.

Mr Tanton: I am Graham Tanton, Executive Group Manager, Shared Services and Property Group. I acknowledge the privilege statement.

Just following on from the minister’s comments, I can say that most construction projects over the past six months have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and the related delays and associated health shut-downs to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. They occurred not just within the ACT but also within New South Wales. The Sydney shutdown commenced earlier, before the ACT, but then, obviously, we had to manage through the ACT shutdown as well. I am pleased to report that on the 18th of this month, work commenced back on site at the Gungahlin Leisure Centre, with the contracted tiler and also the project manager, the lead contractor and the builder, who will continue starting the works.

That work commenced last week, and that work is continuing. We will see that work ramp up over the next few weeks as they start preparing the pool shell for water testing, hydrostatic testing, in the coming weeks. We will move to the process of carrying out the remedial work that needs to be done to the pool shell and also the expansion joints. Once that work is done, we will go through a process of testing the waterproof of that shell. It will take a month to do the water testing—to actually do

the hydrostatic testing—and that will kick off in December and go over the December-January period. The tiling will commence after that. So work is continuing, and we have been managing closely the different contractors to get them on site as soon as possible, noting that there have been a number of hurdles to manage over this difficult period.

THE CHAIR: I have a supplementary question. I get my information from the most verifiable sources, but Gungahlin Leisure Centre put up a post on Facebook saying that there are going to be some upgrades to the acoustics and lighting at the centre. Could you expand on what those will be?

Ms Berry: This is ensuring that the operation of the pool is even better than it was previously. Just prior to the issues that were raised around the Gungahlin pool, I was approached by a number of pool user groups about the pool and the use of the pool, but also some of the issues that they had with regard to their use. They were groups like water polo people and some of the swim squad members.

It is quite a loud environment. Pools generally are, but you can make some adjustments to the acoustics that make them a little bit less rowdy. The lighting was really dim lighting and not play lighting. When water polo is conducting a match, the lighting needs to be appropriate so they can play their sport in a well-lit and good-quality environment. I will ask Mr Tanton to provide a little bit more detail on that.

Mr Tanton: As the minister mentioned, there were two elements. The first is that \$360,000 has been provided in the budget to look at improving the acoustics within that pool area, that space. As most people who have been into public pools would know, the noise does tend to reverberate off the water and off the concrete structures and tiling. So it will look to dampen the facility, which will enhance the ambience around the pool. With respect to the lighting, we will be bringing the lighting up to a greater spec so that different organisations who utilise the pool have the appropriate lighting to be able to carry out their range of sports and the functions that they carry out.

The work has been extensive just to do the scoping around the design and the documentation of the requirements to make sure that the lighting and the acoustics that are being put in meet relevant standards, lux standards and the likes. That has actually been put through, so they are securing the stock of both acoustic panels and also the lighting. That will be installed in the coming weeks and months.

MR MILLIGAN: My supplementary question is probably a quick one. I am just wondering if the operators of the Gungahlin Leisure Centre are being compensated for pool facility not operating.

Mr Tanton: Yes, they are.

MR MILLIGAN: To what extent? Can you give any detail in terms of the compensation that they are receiving?

Mr Tanton: Just on the history of that, I am not sure of the commercial-in-confidence

nature of that agreement so I might take that one on notice. Noting that I am coming on board with the project and the likes, I am just making sure that I am not breaching any of the commercial-in-confidence aspects, if there are any. But I think we are happy to take that on notice and provide that to you.

MR MILLIGAN: Okay, that is fair. Yes, no worries.

THE CHAIR: You have inspired a supplementary question from me, Mr Milligan. Why do we outsource facilities management of our aquatic centres?

Mr Tanton: One of the reasons, generally, for outsourcing the management of them is the amount of expertise that you need to manage those aquatic centres. If you look at it, the majority of our centres are managed by operators who have a large amount of experience in managing such things. They also look after the health and safety, making sure that their employees have the correct training from the lifesaving and safety aspects. Also in managing pools you have certain chemicals and on a daily basis—sometimes, multiple times a day—you have maintenance regimes that are very rigorous, just making sure of water levels and the like.

You have gym management as well. They are not just pools, as such. They are actually major community facilities, and many different user groups—from sports clubs to mothers' groups and things like that—utilise them. And then you have the day to day. So they have very broad functions, and realistically, the territory at this stage would not have the experience to be able to manage them on our own.

MR DAVIS: Minister, I will take you from Gungahlin to Tuggeranong. Mine is a credit-where-it-is-due question, because not everything has to be so partisan. ACT Labor made a generous commitment to build an ice-skating rink in Tuggeranong, and I would like an update on that.

Ms Berry: Yes, and I am very excited about that announcement. When we worked with the ice skating and sports community about a proposal and a vision for a sporting establishment, it really lifted the aspirations of all the young people and others who participate in ice sports and skating in the ACT. Having a twin Olympic-size ring skate centre was the dream of these organisations for many years before the commitment was made by the ACT government. But it is moving along, and we have been keeping engaged with the ice sports and skating communities every step of the way. They have been really integral in providing advice to the government about what is going to work for those communities. I will ask officials to provide a little bit more detail on where those projects are up to.

Ms Kelley: I am Rebecca Kelley, Executive Branch Manager of Sport and Recreation. I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. A fair bit of work has progressed in relation to this proposal since our last update. There were fairly significant site investigations required on the identified site down in Greenway. So following the completion of that report we were able to engage with the identified proponent through the expression-of-interest process, which was Cruachan Investments Pty Limited. They have now been invited to submit a detailed proposal to government, and we are expecting that in December. The scope that they are working towards, as the minister said, is for a twin sheet rink and facility, and we

look forward to what they will be presenting to us for consideration in due course.

MR DAVIS: Minister, as my party's spokesperson for sport, I hear from sports groups all the time that the demand for facilities outstrips supply, and I am sure as the minister you hear that all the time as well. Has any work been done to explore the potential for efficiencies in building and co-locating other sports facilities at or around this Greenway site to meet some of the increasing demand in that community?

Ms Berry: The issue with building the ice rink—it does need a significant size of land to build that sort of twin ice rink—was in having a piece of land that fitted the need. That was a challenge anywhere in the city, and that is why, even though the ice sports and the skaters had a preference for it to be on the south side, when we identified this piece of land, it was probably the only piece of land that was big enough and met the actual specifications for building a facility like this. I do not think there is much room for anything else near that. But, of course, the archery centre, the table tennis centre and the rugby union club are nearby. The Southern Cross Club has that sort of area covered with sporting facilities as well, so it already is a little bit of a precinct. But there is probably no space next to it.

Ms Kelley: The site itself also has some restrictions with respect to bushfire zoning and the like, so that has all been detailed as part of the site investigation. So we will await what the proposal might look like. It is not to say that the proponent might not come back with some other suggestions that they might like to see included in the centre, but we need to wait to see that detail.

MR DAVIS: It is always good when an answer to a question leads me to another supplementary. This proponent—the group the government is working with—does not just do ice skating centres; may it have the capacity to bring a proposal to government that would see a facility with greater capacity than just an ice-skating rink? I should not say “just”; I mean could it build more than an ice-skating rink.

Ms Kelley: What they have been asked for as part of this proposal is to come back to the government on this specific piece of work, but they might see an opportunity for something else and provide that proposal to government. If it is within the budget and meets the specifications that we have put forward to them, informed by the ice skating and sports community specifically—because that is what this project is about—then we could definitely consider it.

We will wait and see what they bring back for us, but really on the table is the twin sheet ice sports and skating facility, and then if they have some other ideas and it is within the budget possibilities, then we can consider it. But that is what we have asked them to do, anyway.

MR DAVIS: That sounds great. Thank you.

MR CAIN: Minister, I have got a few questions about the Civic Pool. It appears there is only \$1.3 million allocated to continue operations of the pool, even though it is in desperate need of upgrades. Can you declare whether the pool is going to remain where it is or not? Where will Canberra's dive pool facilities be if there is no Civic Pool?

Ms Berry: There has been quite a bit of conversation in the community, and I know that the dive pool has been a rite of passage for a lot of young people in the ACT for many decades. People are quite fond of their memories and their experiences at the Civic Pool. More recently, of course, we have built the pool at Stromlo, a world-class pool which has capacity for a dive pool to be built alongside it in the future. That is not a commitment I am making or a time frame that I am making today, but that is not a secret. That is public knowledge. We have talked about that facility being able to have a dive pool in a future government's decision-making.

Of course, with regard to the Civic Pool, we have had a number of conversations about whether or not there would be a stadium on that site or something else, roads moving and whether or not the pool could actually stay there. In the meantime ANU has also built another pool and sports facility on their site. So there are lots of options for people in this part of the city to be able to access pools.

Yes, it is an old pool and, as old pools do, they get issues and maintenance does become a bit more expensive as time goes on and as those needs are identified into the future. That is not a secret either. We have talked about this pool at length for many, many years. But I might ask Mr Tanton just to provide a little detail about the actual pool, the funding and where that funding has been put.

Mr Tanton: Again, as the minister mentions, for a lot of people like me who grew up in Canberra in the 1980s, I spent a lot of time at that pool and it is dear to my heart. I spent too many summers there jumping off the top tower. It is something I look back on, and that was many years ago.

Just coming back to your question on the pool, it was originally built in 1955. It is very much an ageing facility. For those folks who have actually been there in the past year the facility has started to deteriorate. There are a number of areas where the operational losses around that budget funding comes into. One is looking at the operational losses.

The patronage of that site has been continually dropping over the years. As I do look over it in the summer, there are fewer people lining up on the tower, the top tower or the second tower, to jump in there. I think, with the increasing facilities and access to pools such as the Stromlo Leisure Centre, the Gungahlin Leisure Centre and the likes, the Tuggeranong Leisure Centre, patronage of that facility has been considerably falling.

Again, in the middle of winter, when you are walking from the change rooms under the bubble there, it is not like the new facilities, which are all-encompassing, where you have got gyms and you have got the whole aspects in there as well.

The \$1.1 million is to cover operational losses, and that is generally around the cost of heating the pool versus the tenure, people attending the pool and paying fees in that space. Then you have got the ongoing maintenance cost and repairs. That, again, can be anywhere from maintaining the plant and equipment to upgrading the tiles and the like. So it does take a fair bit to upkeep that facility, noting its age.

MR MILLIGAN: Looking at the budget, we have got \$1.3 million for 2021-2022. Is this suggesting that you are spelling the end of the Civil Pool post that, that it will be closed pretty much within 12 months?

Ms Berry: No.

MR MILLIGAN: Why have you not allocated any forward estimates to go towards the Civil Pool for the following three years?

Mr Tanton: I think it reflects that there is a body of work underway and the government is looking at the multiple factors that need to go into any further decision around the pool. It basically sets it year by year. Funding will be allocated on a year-by-year basis, subject to the work and the considerations from the different various user groups, in line with the infrastructure plan and the like.

Mr Miners: Sorry, can I jump in. I acknowledge the statement. Civic Pool has been funded on a one-year basis for a period of time now—it is not an unusual thing—and it depends on the losses each year. It needs to be assessed each year and decided how much funding is actually required. This is consistent with what has certainly been the practice for the last couple of years.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, we have got the home of football proposal. Originally \$20 million is what the ACT government is injecting, and \$4½ million from Capital Football. However, just recently it has been indicated that \$9 million needs to go towards the water course issues there in Throsby. My question is—and I know we are fairly short of time—was the government aware originally of water course issues there? Is the government covering that cost of the extra \$9 million to remedy the land?

Ms Berry: The complexities of the site that came to bear really were unveiled through the process of the site investigations and the initial works that we undertook with the detailed designing for that site. In most cases, once we undertake that process, it is at that point—where those complexities and the value management process that we undertake within the allocated budget that we have—where the challenges start to emerge.

That is where the government's consideration of additional funding for that site, which is being covered by the government, has been worked through in this most recent budget to ensure that we can deliver the full expectations of the home of football, being the indoor futsal centre, the enclosed oval, the grandstand, the multiple outdoor football pitches and associated car parking, pavilion et cetera.

MR MILLIGAN: This is drawing a bit of a bow between the home of football location and tennis in Amaroo. Do you see the connection?

THE CHAIR: I see the connection. I will allow it.

MR MILLIGAN: The land there is, you would think, geographically very similar to the position of the land in Throsby, with water course issues. Do you see foresee that something similar will happen with the proposed tennis facility in Amaroo?

Ms Berry: I think that is where all the due diligence work comes into place during the planning process for these works. This happens all over the city. Canberra was a flood plain before houses were built on it. In more recent times, as lands developed, sometimes there are different issues that the government needs to get over to develop the facilities that the community needs, One of them is water courses. But we have incredible architects and designers who are able to overcome a lot of those issues to be able to build many great sports facilities and other facilities across the ACT.

THE CHAIR: The time being 3.46, the committee will adjourn.

The committee adjourned at 3.46 pm.