



# Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**TENTH ASSEMBLY**

**2 JUNE 2021**

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**Wednesday, 2 June 2021**

**MADAM SPEAKER** (Ms Burch) (10.01): Members:

Dhawura nguna, dhawura Ngunnawal.  
Yanggu ngalawiri, dhunimanyin Ngunnawalwari dhawurawari.  
Nginggada Dindi dhawura Ngunnaawalbun yindjumaralidjinyin.

The words I have just spoken are in the language of the traditional custodians and translate to:

This is Ngunnawal country.  
Today we are gathering on Ngunnawal country.  
We always pay respect to Elders, female and male, and Ngunnawal country.

Members, I ask you to stand in silence and pray or reflect on our responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

## **Petitions**

*The following petitions were lodged for presentation:*

### **Planning—diversity—petition 6-21**

*By Ms Orr, from 223 residents:*

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

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly:

Of the public statues that dot the ACT, the overwhelming majority are of men;  
Of the suburbs and streets named after people, overwhelming majority are named after men; and

It is important for women and girls to have women role models present and celebrated in the public space after whom to model themselves, as they cannot be what they cannot see.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call on the ACT Government to:

Look to promote equality and diversity in the people we recognize through public commemoration;

Increase the prominence of women in place naming conventions across the territory; and

Identify opportunities to increase the representation of women, especially of diverse backgrounds and First Nations leaders in our public statues.

### **Gordon—traffic management—petition 13-21**

*By Mr Davis, from 52 residents:*

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

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the ACT Assembly:

- Dangerous and anti-social driving has been an ongoing safety concern for the residents of Gordon, in particular the residents of Harry Hopman Circuit, Schofield Place, Leahy Place, Hindle Place, Pails Place, McVilly Close, Thurgood Court, Shean Place, Robert Lewis Court, Violet Grover Place, McGrowdie Place, Chipperfield Circuit and Knoke Avenue.
- Residents have made representations to Access Canberra & ACT Policing on a number of occasions.
- Burnouts, speeding and anti-social behaviour are commonplace and noted by a substantial number of burnout marks on the above-mentioned streets.
- The health and safety of residents and visitors, in particular children, remains an ongoing concern.
- In addition, the establishment of a new childcare centre in the area will increase traffic on the above-mentioned streets and adjoining areas.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call on the ACT Government to:

- Develop a traffic management plan for the southern streets of Gordon, the above-mentioned streets in particular in consultation with residents.
- Consult with ACT Policing to identify and manage dangerous and anti-social driving in the southern streets of Gordon, the above-mentioned streets in particular.
- Consult with the proprietor of the new childcare centre to gauge and account for future traffic demands.
- Report back to residents in the southern streets of Gordon, the above-mentioned streets in particular upon the completion of a traffic management plan.
- Implement the findings of a traffic management plan as soon as possible.

**Fisher—footpaths—petition 18-21**

*By Dr Paterson, from 155 residents:*

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that:

**Ballarat Street in Fisher does not have adequate footpaths given the amount of vehicle traffic and the frequent areas of poor visibility for drivers.**

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to:

**Direct the relevant ACT Government Directorate to construct a footpath along the length of Ballarat St, so that residents of Fisher can safely walk the length of the street without walking on the road.**

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

### **Ministerial response**

The following response to petitions has been lodged:

#### **Health—drug and alcohol treatment services—petition 25-20** **Health—drug and alcohol treatment services—petition 3-21**

By **Ms Stephen-Smith**, Minister for Health, dated 6 May 2021, in response to petitions lodged by Mrs Kikkert on Tuesday, 9 February 2021 concerning alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment services.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 10 February 2021 regarding the e-petitions 25-20 and 3-21, lodged by Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA, regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drug policy and programs in the ACT.

The Government continues to be committed to a harm minimisation approach to alcohol and other drug policy and to providing evidence-based alcohol and other drug treatment services and programs for the people of Canberra.

Following the receipt of the e-petitions, the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing was set to hold an inquiry into the issues raised in the e-petitions and other related matters. This Inquiry has now been discontinued, however, many of the issues included in the terms of reference for the discontinued Inquiry will be considered by the Select Committee on the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021 (the Select Committee).

The Government is intending to provide a submission detailing an initial position on the broad range of issues being considered by the Select Committee. The Government welcomes this Inquiry and will respond to its recommendations in due course, noting that the Select Committee is due to report by the last sitting day in October 2021.

### **Motion to take note of petitions**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Pursuant to standing order 98A, I propose the question:

That the petitions and response so lodged be noted.

### **Planning—diversity—petition 6-21**

**MS ORR (Yerrabi) (10.03):** I rise to speak on the petition I have presented from Jasiri Australia regarding statues of women in the territory. I have spoken previously in this

place about a lack of representation of historical women in the territory in comparison to historical men. This petition was started by a group of young women from Jasiri Australia who are deeply committed to advancing the opportunities for and representation of women in politics.

You cannot be what you cannot see, Madam Speaker. As I have noted previously, the ratio of men to women represented in public art in the territory is one to 10. Of the 11 representations of historical or political figures in our public art, only one is of a woman.

There are 30 gendered sculptures listed on the artsACT website, 16 men and 11 women. When one looks at this breakdown, it is not quite so stark. However, 10 of the 11 representations of women are abstract, including those representing shopping, being a sister, dreaming in the nude, separation, being a mythical serpent queen, civic pride, whimsy, naivety, driving, stepping out of the house, and celebrating place. Of the representations of men, 10 are historical figures and six are abstract. The abstract sculptures represent being a father, being a son, flying too close to the sun, separation, being a cadet, being a soccer player and, finally, being large and small at the same time.

The difference in representation is glaringly obvious. As such, I agreed to support the petition started by Jasiri Australia. Additionally, I have written to the Chief Minister about the issue, with my letter having been referred to the Minister for the Arts. The minister has let me know that she has asked artsACT to review the public art guidelines to figure out the most effective way to embed inclusion and diversity considerations in the artist commissioning process in the ACT. I thank the minister for her response, and I look forward to hearing about the findings.

I am glad to be able to present this petition to the Assembly today and I commend Jasiri Australia for setting it up.

**MS CLAY** (Ginninderra) (10.05): The Greens wholeheartedly support this petition. Too often, new statues in this city, as in most cities, have celebrated yet another old white man. We have more than enough old white men on pedestals in this town; what we need is a bit more yoniconography. We need to achieve better representation of our community; we need to publicly honour the full range of diversity in our community. Having more statues of women is one way to do it. As Ms Orr has said, if you see it, you can be it.

This is why the Greens took a women's walk of artwork into the election. I am pleased to say that initiative made it into the parliamentary and governing agreement. The women's walk would be a co-designed artwork by, for and about women at the West Basin precinct. It would be a really good way to support and properly recognise the women who have contributed to this city and to this country. I am pleased to see that Labor are throwing their support behind this idea, and I cannot wait to see more monumental women in Canberra.

This petition also touches on place naming. The ACT has made some really great strides in that area. I love some of the conventions we have in place across the ACT

that look to increase the diversity of our place names to better reflect our vibrant community. We have streets in Cook and Chisholm that are named after notable women. In Franklin, Richardson and Gilmore, we have street names that focus on women writers. But a lot of our streets that are named after people are still primarily named after men; we are nowhere near the 50 per cent population make-up.

There is plenty of room to increase female representation in our arts and in all walks of life. I am really pleased to see this petition.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee Reference**

**MR DAVIS** (Brindabella) (10.07): Pursuant to standing order 99, I move:

That the petition relating to increasing the prominence of women in place naming conventions and public statues be referred to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality.

The petition to increase the number of monuments to women received 223 signatures requesting the Assembly to call on the ACT government to:

Look to promote equality and diversity in the people we recognize through public commemoration;  
Increase the prominence of women in place naming conventions across the territory; and  
Identify opportunities to increase the representation of women, especially of diverse backgrounds and First Nations leaders in our public statues.

The Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality is in the best position to consider, on behalf of the Assembly, the particulars of the petition and its request. The petition should, therefore, be referred to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality, for that committee to consider the petition and, in due course, report back to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Petitions Gordon—traffic management—petition 13-21**

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (10.08): I seek leave to speak briefly on the petition about traffic issues in Gordon.

Leave granted.

**MS LAWDER:** I thank Mr Davis for bringing this petition to the Assembly. There are no shortage of traffic issues in Gordon. A very quick search through my own



records since 2020 has demonstrated how eager residents of Gordon are for something to be done in their area.

I have made countless representations to ministers on behalf of residents, advocating for road improvements and other improvements to make their neighbourhoods safe. For example, a resident wanted parking signs erected to avoid people parking illegally near her house. Melanie was concerned about speeding on Jim Pike Avenue and worried about the safety of local children. Maria, a local resident, told me that Scarfe Close was insufficiently lit at night and needed more streetlights. Lynette, an older woman, told me about burnouts on Knoke Avenue. Margaret talked about speeding on Clare Dennis Avenue. I have heard about that from many other residents as well; they are concerned about families trying to cross the road to get to their local park.

That is not to mention the residents of Callaway Crescent, a group I have been working with over the past year to try to get traffic calming measures introduced in their street—something that has been refused to this date. I have visited the area myself and seen where on, I think, four occasions cars have crashed into one local resident's front retaining wall. Cars have mounted the kerb, gone across the footpath area, and crashed into the retaining wall. Tracey told me that, while the police do an excellent job in regard to speeding, she believes more needs to be done about speeding on Woodcock Drive. Florence, a local resident, is concerned about speeding on Sid Barnes Crescent and believes it is only a matter of time before someone gets hurt.

This is just a small snapshot of the residents who have raised these traffic issues with me in Gordon. Now that a member of their own government has raised the issues, perhaps the minister might finally start to take the issue seriously, though I will not hold my breath.

## **Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee Reference**

**MR DAVIS** (Brindabella) (10.11): Pursuant to standing order 99, I move:

That the petition relating to traffic management in Gordon be referred to the Standing Committee on Transport, Planning and City Services.

On behalf of all the petitioners, including Ms Lawder's constituents who have made representations to her over time on concerns about traffic management in Gordon, I want to say that I believe that the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services is best placed to look into this issue in more detail and provide recommendations to government.

Eight months ago, I was elected to this Assembly. I was quite dismayed to hear from my constituents in Gordon about just how long they have been campaigning on this issue, how many members of this place over time they have spoken to, and the conversations they have had with ACT Policing and Access Canberra regarding this ongoing issue, particularly as it pertains to Harry Hopman Circuit. I am hopeful and optimistic that a referral to the planning, transport and city services standing committee would ensure some activity and action for these constituents.

I should stress that these constituents are agnostic about exactly what remedies are best to solve the issue of traffic management in the area. That is why this petition purposely has a broad scope. The solution may be traffic calming measures, a speed bump or further investment in ACT Policing in the area. But what we need first is a plan. We know there is a problem; we know there has been a problem for some time. We know that constituents in Gordon have been campaigning actively on this issue for some time and have not yet received an adequate response from government.

I am hopeful that this Assembly will resolve to refer the petition to the standing committee and that the constituents that Ms Lawder and I share may see some activity in the area.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Petitions**

### **Fisher—footpaths—petition 18-21**

**DR PATERSON** (Murrumbidgee) (10.13): I seek leave to speak to the petition on footpaths in Fisher.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I remind members that the opportunity for people to talk to petitions occurs when we table petitions and responses. We have granted leave to Ms Lawder and we will grant leave to you, but I remind members that that is the time to talk on petitions. Leave is granted.

**DR PATERSON:** As a local member for Murrumbidgee, I am pleased to support this petition from residents of Fisher in Weston Creek. This is a petition calling on the ACT government to construct a footpath along Ballarat Street in the suburb of Fisher, in the electorate of Murrumbidgee.

The petition has 155 signatures, with signatories noting that Ballarat Street in Fisher does not have adequate footpaths given the amount of vehicle traffic and frequent areas of poor visibility for drivers. The petitioners request that the Assembly direct the relevant ACT government directorate to construct a footpath along the length of Ballarat Street so that residents of Fisher can safely walk the length of the street without walking on the road.

I note that many suburbs in the ACT do not have footpaths, particularly the older suburbs and neighbourhoods. For some quiet streets where there are low levels of vehicles and foot traffic, this may not be a concern. In some instances, this can even be advantageous through the notion of shared streets and safe active streets.

There are concepts that are being promoted and encouraged to create street environments in suburban areas which favour active modes of travel such as walking, combined with traffic calming measures for motorised vehicles. Benefits include a sense of community and social activity as well as passive surveillance, and a myriad of health and environmental benefits from active travel.

However, other streets, such as Ballarat Street in Fisher, receive relatively high volumes of vehicle and foot traffic and require separation between the different modes of travel to ensure safety for all. Ballarat Street is a connector and transit street which runs through Fisher and has many streets coming off it. To walk along Ballarat Street requires a person to walk on a sloped verge of varying quality and then onto the road itself. Either option poses safety concerns, including trip hazards and car accidents. This is exacerbated for those in our community who are elderly, pregnant, disabled or pushing a pram, and those who have any form of mobility impairment.

In line with the government's commitment to active forms of travel, including walking and cycling, I support this petition of the residents of Fisher to request that a footpath be constructed along Ballarat Street to provide safety for all users.

Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure contributes to several national and ACT government policy directions, including the Healthy Weight Initiative, the ACT Climate Change Strategy, the ACT Planning Strategy, and the Active Travel Framework.

I understand that Roads ACT manages over 3,000 kilometres of community paths across the ACT, with capital funding allocated to path asset upgrades on a site-by-site basis. I commend the ACT government on its program to progressively upgrade and enhance the community path network on a prioritised basis, to fulfil government policies to encourage active travel, reduce carbon emissions and improve health in our community.

I hope this petition will be considered and prioritised accordingly to meet the needs of Weston Creek residents and contribute to ACT government policy and ambition.

## **Leave of absence**

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

That leave of absence be granted to Ms Berry for today to attend a COVID-19 test and self-isolate as appropriate.

## **Planning—Infrastructure Plan Ministerial statement**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (10.17): The ACT government is investing in the infrastructure that Canberra needs to ensure that we continue to be one of the world's most liveable and sustainable cities.

Members may recall that, in October 2019, the government released an ambitious and comprehensive 10-year infrastructure plan, to provide certainty and to advise the community, business and the construction sector of the territory's infrastructure priorities. The ACT Infrastructure Plan is a blueprint for our city's development and a vision for the future, outlining a pipeline of infrastructure, estimated at around

\$14 billion, and covering areas as diverse as health, education, transport and community services.

As I said when I launched the plan in October 2019, the government's goal was to take a longer term view of our community's infrastructure needs—to map out a program beyond a single parliamentary term and to look at the physical, social and digital infrastructure necessary to meet those medium and longer term community needs.

We do this because good infrastructure supports a productive economy—but it can do much more than that. Infrastructure that is well planned and thoughtfully delivered improves people's quality of life, strengthens effective service delivery, supports adaptation to a changing climate, and breaks down barriers to social inclusion. Strategically investing in infrastructure that improves wellbeing and supports economic growth is a key element of the government's fiscal strategy.

The Infrastructure Plan outlines priority infrastructure projects, like the Canberra Hospital expansion, which will create 500 jobs during the construction phase and contribute to our commitment to employ 400 new healthcare professionals in this parliamentary term. It outlines our aim to build and expand schools across Canberra's suburbs, and to invest in vocational training and education through the new CIT Woden campus. It outlines the process of extending public transport infrastructure in the territory, through the next phase of the light rail network, initially to Commonwealth Park, then on to Woden.

The Infrastructure Plan's key objective, to provide the ACT community, construction sector and business with confidence in the focus and a clear pipeline of ACT government infrastructure projects, has proven to be incredibly valuable over the past two years.

We need to acknowledge that, since the release of the plan in 2019, the world has shifted significantly. The COVID pandemic has devastated global economies and, at its peak, led to a sharp spike in national and global unemployment. Having a clear infrastructure plan already laid out allowed the ACT to move quickly to reconfirm major projects and to fast-track the rollout of a number of smaller, shovel-ready or screwdriver-ready projects. I am pleased to be able to advise the Assembly that having that pipeline of projects—small, medium and large—has saved, directly, thousands of jobs, those directly associated with the construction of those infrastructure projects, and many ancillary jobs in the ACT economy through the worst economic downturn that many Canberrans have experienced in their lifetimes.

Over the past two years we have seen even greater community awareness of the climate emergency that we face. The ACT has acted on the urgent need to build the renewable infrastructure necessary to get cities and economic sectors to zero emissions as soon as possible, whilst also ensuring that vulnerable members of our community are not disadvantaged by this rapid change.

The territory has always been a national leader on climate action, and we continue to take the leading role in our nation, and certainly in our region. In October, we took an

ambitious plan for the big Canberra battery to the people of the ACT—a distributed large-scale battery storage system harnessing an emerging technology that varies in size and use. Now, in this first six months of the parliamentary term, we are getting on with the job of delivering this project. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that industry engagement has been incredibly strong and encouraging, and there are many reputable companies that have expressed interest in being involved in this very significant project for Canberra.

We are also helping Canberra households to invest in renewable energy upgrades at a household level through the Sustainable Household Scheme, creating up to 2,000 sustainable jobs, helping families to save hundreds and hundreds of dollars each year in their energy bills, and lowering overall energy consumption in the territory.

Another significant change since the release of the 2019 Infrastructure Plan, and one that I warmly welcome, is a long overdue recognition from the commonwealth government that, as a growing and essential regional hub in this part of Australia, the ACT deserves a fairer proportion of national infrastructure spending. I do not think it is unreasonable to ask for our population share of the national infrastructure spend. It would seem, at least in recent budgets, that we are starting to edge back towards that population share. The commonwealth public service, who are our partners in the delivery of many infrastructure projects, have recognised that the ACT government is a good partner to work with, and it is a step in the right direction that we have been able to work closely with various commonwealth agencies on the development and delivery of a number of key infrastructure priorities.

Given all of these major changes, 2021 is an opportune time to update the territory's Infrastructure Plan to reflect the new global, national and local context of our infrastructure priorities, to recognise that a number of projects that were outlined in the 2019 plan are now either delivered or underway, and that there will be a need to add to the pipeline, to ensure that we continue to have a rolling 10-year infrastructure plan. Today I can confirm that the government will be undertaking the task of consultation, development and release of an update to the ACT Infrastructure Plan by the end of this calendar year.

As I have mentioned, good construction projects are about more than just construction industry jobs; they are also about improving productivity, connections, educational opportunities and health outcomes. The past year has demonstrated why an infrastructure plan is essential to business and economic confidence, and for keeping Canberrans in work.

The 2020-21 ACT budget continued to prioritise the development of critical infrastructure while keeping Canberrans employed. It included an infrastructure investment program, the largest in the territory's history, which committed \$4.3 billion over the next four years across a range of important infrastructure projects. The bulk of these projects, around \$2.8 billion, are in health, education and transport infrastructure. This includes the capital provisions that have been set aside for projects that will go through the tendering process, and where we would not be revealing to the market ahead of that competitive process the full extent of government capital provisioning. This is standard budget practice for Australian states and territories, and

the commonwealth, and it is best practice procurement methodology, particularly for expensive, large-scale infrastructure projects.

Beyond health, education and transport infrastructure, I want to highlight this morning how important public housing has been as an element of the territory's infrastructure program and as an integral component of the government's urban renewal program. The 2020-21 budget allocated \$105 million over four years to further boost public housing infrastructure. Together with an investment of more than \$500 million over six years through Housing ACT, the 10-year period 2015 to 2025 will see more than \$1 billion invested in new public housing across the ACT—on a per capita basis, the largest investment in public housing of any state or territory in Australia.

The 2020-21 budget also funds a range of minor capital upgrades and, importantly, maintenance of existing infrastructure, including \$277 million set aside over four years through the Better Infrastructure Fund. It is also timely to remind the Assembly that the government has established the capital works reserve, a fund that gives building and civil works companies confidence that they can keep workers on the job if projects are running ahead of schedule. It is an important budgeting tool to assist in the delivery of a rolling infrastructure program.

As I mentioned earlier, the commonwealth government has recognised that Canberra is a growing and critical regional hub in its own right, and one that hundreds of thousands of New South Wales residents rely on for their economic, education and health needs. This fact, combined with our strong track record of transport project delivery, means the commonwealth has shown an increasing willingness to partner with the territory government on a range of major infrastructure projects.

Light rail stage 2A is the first example that comes to mind, Madam Speaker. In light of the history associated with that project, the press conference with the Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Seselja, Minister Steel and me was one of those moments in political life when you realise that every good idea has its moment in the sun. While some can bitterly oppose, and lose three elections over such projects, eventually there comes a time when even the most stubborn, even the most bitterly opposed, have to concede defeat. That moment occurred in that press conference. I was delighted by the enthusiasm of the Deputy Prime Minister, who perhaps did not have as much emotional baggage invested in opposing light rail, in talking up the project and how important it would be for the next stage of Canberra's development.

Our partnership with the commonwealth extends beyond light rail and also includes a number of important road infrastructure improvements, including those that are tied to land release and the ability to supply more housing to our growing city. This includes the duplications of William Hovell Drive and Gundaroo Drive, the Molonglo River bridge crossing, a project that we are now delivering in partnership with the commonwealth, and what has been discussed many times in this place—the upgrades to the Monaro Highway and Tuggeranong Parkway.

Commonwealth investment in the ACT, through these various national partnership agreements that were outlined in the commonwealth's 2021-22 budget, totals \$629 million over five years, from 2020-21. That is a welcome investment in

infrastructure in the territory. As I have said on many occasions, when the two governments are able to align priorities and work together, we are able to deliver some important infrastructure projects for our city. I again thank the Deputy Prime Minister, in his role as minister for infrastructure, and Treasurer Frydenberg, for his engagement on these and a number of other projects.

As I reiterated in the last sitting, it is about time that the commonwealth stepped up. They have; I acknowledge it and welcome it. We do not have marginal federal electorates inside the ACT at this point in time, so we have tended to be overlooked for significant commonwealth investment. But the commonwealth government are the major anchor of this city, so it is pleasing to see their involvement now in our city's infrastructure future.

The pipeline of infrastructure is a critical element of the ACT government's Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan, as we emerge from the pandemic with a desire for a stronger and more resilient economy and employment base. Infrastructure, and all that it enables, not just the construction jobs during construction but the productivity benefits and the service delivery benefits, all contribute to the ACT's medium-term employment goal, which is to grow our employment base to over 250,000 jobs by 2025.

The ACT continues to have the strongest labour market in the country. It is clear that the short-term challenges, whilst international migration remains closed, will be skill shortages in particular industry sectors. That will, of course, mean that labour will be more mobile around Australia, to move to where the jobs are. There will be jobs in the ACT economy in a diverse range of sectors, and we will be able to offer those Australians, those people who are already here, fantastic jobs and the best, most liveable city in Australia to come to.

It will, of course, require some firms to pay more than they have previously. But some wage price inflation in our economy, locally and nationally, is needed after nearly a decade of wage stagnation. This is the approach that the Reserve Bank of Australia and federal Treasury are advising. It is certainly the approach that the ACT government is seeking to pursue—that a tighter labour market will mean that we will see more interstate migration, but it will also put some upward pressure on wages in our economy. That is what we need at this point in the economic cycle.

Looking particularly at the construction industry, payroll jobs fell by about 2.6 per cent between March and April 2020, during the peak of the pandemic, when certain industry sectors were shut down or severely limited in terms of their operations. It is pleasing to see that about 60 per cent of the jobs that were lost in that period have been recovered as of the May data last month. There is still room for some further recovery in construction sector employment. The infrastructure pipeline that the government has outlined should give great confidence to those firms, local and national, that operate in our market.

The Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan sends a clear message around our desire to invest in the city's infrastructure, to invest in the city's future, to give business the confidence to co-invest with us and to keep Canberrans in work. This extends to the

Infrastructure Plan, which is central to continued community, business and industry confidence in our infrastructure pipeline of projects—small, medium and large.

It is important that we continue the delivery of our significantly advanced major projects without unnecessary delays. Any major changes to proposals simply to differentiate oneself, as we have seen in some jurisdictions around the country, does nothing but waste time, create sovereign risk and jeopardise business confidence. We will not go down that path.

In closing, I look forward to keeping the Assembly and the community updated on the Infrastructure Plan. We will provide that further update by the end of calendar year 2021. We will continue to work with our infrastructure partners to ensure that Canberra emerges stronger, together, after the pandemic. I present the following paper:

ACT Infrastructure Plan—Update—Ministerial statement, 2 June 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Stephen-Smith**) adjourned to the next sitting.

## **COVID-19 pandemic response—update Ministerial statement**

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH** (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (10.38): I rise to provide another update on the COVID-19 situation in the ACT and the plans, preparations and actions that the government continues to take to protect the health and wellbeing of Canberrans.

I am pleased to report that the ACT continues to do well with our response to COVID-19 and we are seeing an increasing number of eligible Canberrans booking their appointment to be vaccinated against COVID-19. I would like to thank the Canberra community once again for following the public health directions and advice that are critical to our continued efforts to stop the spread of the virus, particularly given the current situation in Victoria. I want to acknowledge the continued hard work of our frontline hospital staff, staff at testing and vaccination centres and our entire public health team in helping to keep the community safe.

The COVID-19 outbreak unfolding in Victoria serves as another reminder of just how quickly the COVID-19 situation can change and why we must all continue to be vigilant. On 24 May 2021, two new positive cases were identified in the City of Whittlesea. Genome sequencing results confirmed that these infections were linked to an individual who completed hotel quarantine in South Australia and subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 following exit from quarantine. Of the two initial cases, one had symptoms and was deemed infectious from 20 May and the second case was



infectious from 23 May. Several close contacts subsequently tested positive and had visited locations in the community while infectious.

As of 1 June 2021, the outbreak in Victoria had grown to a total of 54 cases, with one person being treated in the ICU. Victorian health authorities have expressed concern about the types of exposure locations that have been identified. There are more than 300 exposure sites in Victoria, including some regional locations outside metropolitan Melbourne, and a very large number of close contacts identified. In the ACT, as of 9 am, 1 June, a total of seven close contacts and 13 casual contacts have come forward and are following the health advice to quarantine or to test and isolate until they receive a negative test result.

On 27 May 2021, the Victorian government announced the introduction of a lockdown for all of Victoria for a period of seven days, commencing from 11.59 pm on 27 May. In response to this announcement, the ACT Chief Health Officer declared a stay-at-home requirement for anyone who left Victoria after 11.59 pm on 27 May 2021 and then entered the ACT. Additionally, the Chief Health Officer has declared the City of Whittlesea in greater Melbourne as a COVID-19 place of concern due to concern about undetected community transmission in this local government area.

From 11.59 pm on 27 May, anyone who has been to the City of Whittlesea in the past 14 days must get tested and isolate until they receive a negative result. If subject to a stay-at-home requirement, of course, those people must abide by this until the requirement is lifted. ACT residents may return home but must complete a declaration form within 24 hours prior to arriving in the ACT. Stay-at-home requirements mean that anyone arriving from Victoria after 11.59 pm on 27 May must travel directly to their residence to complete the stay-at-home period. At this stage, the stay-at-home requirement will remain in place until at least 11.59 pm on 3 June, to mirror the Victorian restrictions.

Those subject to the stay-at-home requirement may only leave their residence for an approved essential purpose. These are: to undertake essential work if you cannot work from home or remotely; to shop for essentials like groceries, medicine and necessary supplies; to attend to medical or healthcare needs including compassionate requirements, looking after the vulnerable; to attend a facility to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, where eligible for a vaccination in the ACT and an appointment has been booked, and the individual is not in isolation or in quarantine; to exercise outdoors, limited to one hour per day; and for essential animal welfare purposes, for example, to feed pets or livestock that live elsewhere. In addition, all individuals aged 12 years and over must wear a mask at all times upon leaving their premises for the approved reasons, except when individuals are undertaking vigorous exercise outdoors.

While these restrictions are in place, non-ACT residents who have been in Victoria are not able to enter the ACT without an approved exemption from ACT Health prior to arrival. Even if an exemption is approved, individuals will still be required to follow the stay-at-home order in the ACT. The declaration form and exemption form are available on the COVID-19 website at [www.covid19.act.gov.au](http://www.covid19.act.gov.au).

Anyone who has been to a close contact exposure location must not enter the ACT unless they obtain an exemption before arriving. If individuals have already arrived in the ACT and are identified as close contacts, they must contact ACT Health, get tested for COVID-19 and quarantine immediately for 14 days from the date they were last in the exposure location, even if returning a negative test result.

Anyone who has attended a casual contact exposure location must: complete a self-declaration form within 24 hours prior to arriving in the ACT or within 24 hours from the commencement of a COVID-19 areas of concern notice; undergo appropriate testing for COVID-19, regardless of whether symptoms are present, as advised by an authorised person within ACT Health and isolate until receiving a negative test result; continue to monitor for symptoms for 14 days from the date last in the location, and get retested if symptoms develop, no matter how mild. Individuals must also comply with stay-at-home requirements if they have entered the ACT after 11.59 pm on 27 May.

Due to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation in Victoria, ACT Health advises against travel to Victoria at this time unless for essential reasons. However, if individuals choose to travel to Victoria, they must abide by all public health restrictions put in place by the Victorian government. All travellers should be prepared to change their travel plans at short notice as the situation in Victoria continues to develop and must also be prepared to follow all ACT public health directions upon their return.

The COVID-19 vaccination program rollout is progressing well in the ACT. We are ensuring that the rollout continues in an efficient and, above all, safe manner. I am pleased to say that, as of 31 May, 49,508 doses of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines have been administered through ACT government clinics.

The ACT government vaccination clinics are now live on the Australian government's vaccine eligibility checker. Eligible Canberrans, those in phases 1a and 1b and people over 50 years of age, can make a booking online. The eligibility checker links people directly to the MyDHR digital health record platform for online bookings. The ACT government COVID-19 vaccination phone booking line is also available for those who are unable to register for MyDHR or who prefer to speak with someone to make a booking.

We recognise that these systems can always be enhanced. The ACT Health Directorate is continuing to make improvements to the online booking system to make it an easier and more streamlined process for users. This includes lowering the threshold for a patient match on Medicare card details so that numbers do not have to be a 100 per cent match for people to create an account. The directorate is also working with Services Australia to prospectively update Medicare details for all patients who are currently in the ACT patient record system.

However, not everyone will be able to book online. Given the demand we have seen for telephone bookings, which currently account for about 57 per cent of all vaccination appointments, we are increasing staffing and working to better align the

two systems. From Thursday, 3 June we are also expanding the hours of operation for the phone booking line to be available from 7 am to 7 pm, seven days a week.

Canberrans can also contact participating general practices and GP-led respiratory clinics to book their appointment. Participating GP clinics have commenced administering AstraZeneca to eligible persons aged 50 years and over, including the cohort brought forward under phase 2a. More than 70 ACT general practices and respiratory assessment clinics are supporting the rollout.

The ACT government's Garran COVID-19 mass vaccination clinic continues to deliver Pfizer vaccinations for those eligible. Our new vaccination clinic at Calvary hospital is delivering the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Over the last few weeks, we have worked with the commonwealth to support and expedite the vaccination of people living in disability residential care, as well as their carers and other vulnerable people with a disability. We have established an additional access and sensory clinic, co-located with the Garran mass vaccination clinic. The access and sensory clinic provides those living with disability a further option for accessing their immunisation. The Garran COVID-19 mass vaccination clinic also continues to be available for all those currently eligible. Vaccination staff will continue to meet individual needs that are communicated at the time of the appointment booking.

The current COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria, which includes cases identified in staff and residents at residential aged-care facilities in Melbourne, is of great concern. This situation underlines the importance of maximising COVID-19 vaccination coverage in staff and residents in high-risk settings, like residential aged care. Getting vaccinated provides protection to recipients of the vaccine, helps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to vulnerable residents and the impact of a COVID-19 outbreak in a residential aged-care facility.

Although COVID-19 vaccination is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended, and we expect residential aged-care and disability residential facilities to support staff to access the vaccine. The ACT government also remains ready to supplement the general practice and commonwealth-managed rollout, if required. Indeed, the latest outbreak in Victoria is an important reminder for everyone to get vaccinated against COVID-19 if you are in phase 1a or 1b or aged 50 years and over. Getting vaccinated is an important defence against the serious effects of COVID-19 and can help protect you, your family and the community. I would like to thank all staff assisting with the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccinations in the territory.

Madam Speaker, the events of the last week provide a timely reminder that we cannot become complacent. We are seeing how quickly the situation can change with the current outbreak in Victoria. If we look beyond Australia's shores, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have serious impacts for many countries, regions and communities abroad. We are very fortunate in the ACT to be in the position we are in, which is testament to our response and the community's united efforts to stop the spread.

But with the situation continuing to evolve and the risk still high, we need to be able to respond by implementing and enforcing public health directions to continue to protect the community. As members will be aware, the Chief Health Officer regularly provides the government with advice on the status of the COVID-19 emergency and the ACT's public health situation. The Chief Health Officer provided her latest report to me on 11 May 2021, updating me on the ACT's public health emergency declaration, and I will now table the Chief Health Officer's report.

The report outlined the Chief Health Officer's recommendations to extend the public health emergency declaration for a further 90 days to enable the ACT to continue to respond to the risk associated with COVID-19 through public health directions. The ACT's public health directions reduce threats to public health, including the critical requirement that confirmed cases of COVID-19 and their close contacts self-isolate, and the public health direction for returned international travellers to undertake 14 days of mandatory quarantine upon their arrival.

Based on the Chief Health Officer's advice outlining the level of risk we currently face, I extended the public health emergency declaration for a further 90 days, effective from 18 May until 16 August 2021. The Chief Health Officer will continue to formally report to me every 30 days about the status of the emergency.

Given the global situation, I expect the requirement for mandatory quarantine for returning international travellers to remain for some time to come. However, the national cabinet is exploring alternative options for quarantine into the future. Our approach will continue to be guided by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee advice and careful assessment of the risk to our community.

The ACT's extension of the emergency declaration is consistent with that of all other Australian jurisdictions. The Australian government extended the Australian biosecurity declaration for a further three months until 17 September 2021 and each state and territory continues to maintain similar emergency status to uphold critical public health control measures. Fortunately, given Australia's successful suppression to date, we can continue with baseline capacity and density restrictions at this stage of our recovery, knowing we have strong outbreak response plans to respond to and contain any new outbreaks.

AHPPC advises that we will likely see further COVID-19 outbreaks, as we are currently seeing in Melbourne, and we expect to continue to see instances of community transmission linked to hotel quarantine. We have also seen new community cases that appear not to be directly linked to international travellers in quarantine, demonstrating the ongoing risk of community transmission and the continuing challenge in our suppression efforts.

Our COVID-19 vaccination program is critical to providing protection against the virus and, once again, I encourage Canberrans to please book an appointment for their COVID-19 vaccination when they are eligible. These recent developments show that COVID-19 is still with us. If you are travelling anywhere in Australia, please remember that things can change quickly. Regularly check the public health advice of

the place you are visiting, follow regular COVID-safe practices and check in at venues to support contact tracing.

We must all continue to keep Canberra safe and strong by staying home if unwell; getting tested for COVID-19 if experiencing COVID-like symptoms; physically distancing from people you do not know; practising careful hand and respiratory hygiene; and using the Check In CBR app when out and about for contact tracing purposes. I am pleased that we are doing well in the ACT and congratulate every Canberran for contributing to these efforts.

Madam Speaker, I will just add a postscript in relation to the current situation with exposure sites identified in Jervis Bay and Goulburn and just encourage people to also keep an eye on New South Wales Health and ACT Health websites and follow the directions if you have recently been in Goulburn or Jervis Bay, and indeed if you have been travelling at all, because there is a chance that those exposure locations will be increased as the New South Wales and Victorian governments continue their work in relation to that. Obviously we are keeping a very close eye on those sites in our local region. I present the following paper:

COVID-19 Emergency Response Act—pursuant to subsection 3(3)—COVID-19 Measures—Report No 14, dated 11 May 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Environment—lead remediation Ministerial statement**

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra—Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.54): I am pleased to give this statement today to update the Assembly on the important work being carried out at the Former Transport Depot in Kingston. Known to many Canberrans as the site of the beloved Old Bus Depot Markets, the depot has, unfortunately, had its scheduled reopening delayed. Before I get to the current status of the works, it is worth briefly outlining to the Assembly what exactly has been going at the markets over the last 18 months or so, because I know that stallholders and patrons alike are missing their markets.

In the 2019-20 budget, the government committed \$6.5 million over three years for roof replacement works, electrical system upgrades and upgrades to the accessibility of the depot. Prior to these works commencing, the site suffered significant damage from the January 2020 hailstorms. Then, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the closure of the markets from March 2020.

The planned works commenced in June 2020, and they were on track for completion in around March this year. However, in January this year dust containing lead particles was found at the depot. The first, and the most important, thing to say about this is that no-one working at the site has tested for lead exposure levels above the level deemed safe. It is also important that the background to the finding of lead dust is clear.

The heritage-listed depot was first used in the 1920s, with its current frame being constructed in the 1940s. An unfortunate legacy of building and construction in decades past is the use of lead paint. In addition, as a former transport depot, the building may well have been contaminated by lead petrol fumes. Prior to 1965, paint could contain up to 50 per cent lead content by weight. This reduced to one per cent in 1992, and 0.1 per cent in 1997.

The overwhelming likelihood is that the depot has contained lead dust for decades. Over time, lead paint can deteriorate and flake into dust. But what is crucial is that, left undisturbed, the lead dust in the depot would have been highly unlikely to pose a risk to stallholders or visitors to the markets. It was during the roof works—when the markets were closed to the general public and to stallholders—that the lead dust was disturbed. While none of the 28 workers tested had a reading above the safe threshold, fully cleaning and remediating is the best approach in this case now that the dust has been disturbed.

An environmental expert conducted an assessment of suspected lead dust at the depot on behalf of the building company on Monday, 1 February 2021. The scope consisted of the collection of representative dust samples from surfaces; assessment of potential health exposure risk; and preparation of a report summarising findings and providing recommendations. After receiving the report on Monday, 8 February, the directorate reviewed the document and updated the market operators on Wednesday, 10 February. The directorate then worked with them to prepare a letter informing stallholders that lead particulates had been found in dust samples, distributed on Thursday, 11 February. A media release was also issued on Thursday, 11 February, once stallholders had been informed. Since then, artsACT has been meeting regularly, most often weekly, with the market operators, and there have been several communications to all stallholders regarding the progress of the works.

In terms of the cleaning and remediation itself, in April this year a specialist cleaning contractor commenced work. Progressive clearance testing is being undertaken during each stage of work. This will inform the need for additional remediation activities which may be required in order to meet the adopted clearance thresholds. The specialist cleaning subcontractor workers undertake a blood test prior to commencing work at the Former Transport Depot and repeat the process at conclusion. Workers use personal protective equipment, including suits, respirators and gloves, while performing cleaning.

It is difficult to provide an exact completion date for the cleaning and remediation, because the extent of works in each area depends on test results returned after initial cleaning. However, current expectations are for completion in around July this year.

We will continue to update the community. The hazardous materials management plan for the Former Transport Depot will be updated following completion of remediation works to reflect the extent of works undertaken and to ensure ongoing active management of the site into the future.

Madam Speaker, we acknowledge that, unfortunately, not all the stock and equipment that has been stored in the building can be cleaned for safe use. Stallholders and the market operators will be reimbursed by the ACT government for property that has to be disposed of. Last week, artsACT—through the market operator—contacted stallholders to outline the process for the return or reimbursement of items affected by the disturbed dust. The communication acknowledged that, while artsACT’s general preference is for reimbursement, many items are bespoke. It may be the preference of stallholders for those bespoke items to be cleaned and restored, and we will attempt to do that where possible.

As part of this process, artsACT is working with the market operator and stallholders to prepare an inventory of all privately owned property in the building, and determining what items can be cleaned, depending on their suitability for reuse. Generally, children’s items, items made from or incorporating porous materials, fabric, food products, food and drink preparation items and catering equipment like fridges cannot be cleaned and must be disposed of. On the other hand, hard surfaces that are well sealed can generally be cleaned, including metal, plastic and well-varnished wood.

Madam Speaker, we acknowledge that the uncertainty in time frames has been difficult for the operators of the markets and for stallholders. This is particularly the case for stallholders whose stock or equipment has been stored in the building and may have been impacted by lead dust disturbed in the recent works, but it is also the case for stallholders whose business has been interrupted for longer than planned and whose customers have been waiting to get back to the shopping they love.

I want to thank the many Canberrans whose patience and understanding we are relying on while we ensure that the cleaning, remediation and reimbursement work is carried out. I want to especially recognise and thank the stallholders. Your patience and understanding is greatly, greatly appreciated.

I know that these delays are frustrating and I want to assure the community that the Old Bus Depot Markets will reopen as soon as possible following the completion of the building remediation. Like many in this Assembly, and across the community, I am looking forward to when the doors of the Old Bus Depot Markets are open and we can enjoy the craft, clothing, art and food on offer at this beloved Canberra institution. I present a copy of the following paper:

Former transport depot lead remediation—Ministerial statement, 2 June 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 5**

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (11.05): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 5, dated 26 May 2021, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

**MR HANSON**: Scrutiny report No 5 contains the committee's comments on two bills, two pieces of subordinate legislation and two government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

## **Statute Law Amendment Bill 2021**

Debate resumed from 20 April 2021, on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR CAIN** (Ginninderra) (11.06): On behalf of the Canberra Liberals, I rise in support of this bill, which in the main corrects errors, updates language and removes references to approved forms where the legislation is no longer administered by their use. The bill reflects, of course, the ongoing editorial revision of ACT legislation, noting that a small number of substantive changes have been made. The scrutiny of bills committee drew some of these to the minister's attention, but no response was required.

I mention a couple of perhaps less than minor or technical amendments—and that is, under the Controlled Sports Act, the registrar will be allowed to receive advice from an advisory committee. It is currently the case that that council can only advise the minister.

I note that, under the Mental Health Act 2015, the bill will allow a registered affected person, someone who has suffered harm or alleges harm, to attend and give evidence during the relevant ACAT proceeding involving a person subject to a mental health order. This was overlooked when the act was amended in 2020, whereby the Victims of Crime Commissioner was given the right to attend. I thank the minister for providing officers from his department and his office for a briefing recently on this bill and others before the Assembly this week and later in the month. We will be supporting this bill.

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for



Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11.07): I would like to express my appreciation for members' support for the government's technical amendments program. The technical amendments program began in 2002 when the then government agreed to the maintenance of a technical amendments program for minor, non-controversial and technical amendments of ACT legislation. It was agreed that the program be implemented by the drafting of statute law amendment bills, such as the bill that we are debating today.

The program operates under approved guidelines that set out the nature of amendments that may be made and a practice note that helps agencies decide whether an amendment is suitable for inclusion and sets out the procedure to be followed. The technical amendments program is managed by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office and the guidelines and practice note are publicly available on their website.

Statute law amendment bills usually have three or four schedules. Schedule 1 contains minor policy changes proposed by government agencies. Amendments will be included in this schedule only if the Chief Minister has given drafting approval for the amendments and they are not controversial and not important enough to justify the introduction of a separate amending bill.

Schedule 2 contains amendments proposed by the Parliamentary Counsel to ensure the overall structure of the statute book is developed to reflect best practice. These amendments generally relate to acts of general application, such as the Legislation Act 2001, and are directed at avoiding unnecessary duplication of provisions and ensuring the maximum degree of standardisation of provisions.

Schedule 3 contains technical amendments proposed by the Parliamentary Counsel. These amendments may correct minor typographical or clerical errors, improve grammar or syntax, omit redundant provisions, remove gender-specific references or otherwise update or improve the form of the legislation. Amendments are included in this schedule only if they are technical—that is, they do not change the effect of the law in a significant respect and, again, are not controversial.

For instance, in my own portfolio, schedule 3 of the bill that we are debating today amends the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005 to omit a term that is defined in the dictionary but only used in one section of the act. The term in the section is replaced with the substance of the definition and the definition is consequentially omitted from the dictionary.

Schedule 4 is included if the bill is to include repeals of obsolete or unnecessary legislation. There is no schedule 4 in this bill.

In 2017 the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure concluded an inquiry into omnibus amendment bills such as statute law amendment bills. The committee was asked to examine the general basis and use of omnibus amendment bills in making minor and technical amendments to the ACT's statute book. The committee was also asked to provide some guidance or principles as to what constitutes minor or technical changes, as opposed to substantive change. The concern

was that, while an amendment may seem minor or technical, there could be significant impacts on the relevant sector and on the public.

In a submission to the committee, the Parliamentary Counsel explained that the suitability of each amendment proposed to be included in the Statute Law Amendment Bill is assessed against the criteria in the technical amendments program to ensure the amendment is non-controversial and minor or technical. Amendments that have significant policy implications or are controversial are not included.

The guidelines set out examples of amendments that would not be made as technical amendments—for instance, amendments that create or abolish offences or increase or reduce penalties for offences, amendments of acts that deal with a controversial subject matter, amendments that prejudice the rights of anyone and amendments that impose or change a person’s liability to tax.

In its report, the committee recognised the role of the guidelines and practice note in developing statute law amendment bills, particularly the minor or technical test set out in the guidelines. The committee recommended that the guidelines and practice note continue to be used in the development of statute law amendment bills. In my view, statute law amendment bills have been, and remain, a very useful vehicle for minor and technical amendments to be dealt with in an effective and timely way. A range of minor, non-controversial matters can be addressed in a single bill, saving time and resources that would be spent if the amendments were brought individually before the Assembly.

The technical amendments program has enabled a significant amount of cleaning up and updating of the ACT statute book. It has been useful in repealing a large amount of redundant legislation and, over time, much modernisation and consistency across the statute book has been achieved. The Statute Law Amendment Bill 2021 is another example of the ongoing value of the technical amendments program.

There are two elements of this bill that fall under my industrial relations and workplace safety responsibilities. Schedule 1 amends the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and the Workers Compensation Act 1951. The public sector management standards that sit under the Public Sector Management Act incorporate the terms of ACT enterprise agreements in relation to superannuation and other entitlements of certain public servants and statutory office holders.

Amending the act will ensure that enterprise agreements and any relevant commonwealth laws apply as enforced from time to time. This means that any reference to any enterprise agreement or relevant commonwealth workplace law will be to the current version, even if the reference in this legislation is not current. This will ensure that the protections and entitlements that come from these enterprise agreements and commonwealth legislation cannot be questioned or undermined. Commonwealth laws and enterprise agreements are available in the public domain and, therefore, do not need to be published on the legislation register.

Schedule 1 amends the Workers Compensation Act 1951 by removing an outdated reference. This will ensure that people who are injured at work can be fairly covered

for the cost of travel by private vehicle to receive treatment. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.15), in reply: The Statute Law Amendment Bill 2021 carries on the technical amendments program that continues to develop a simpler, more coherent and accessible statute book for the territory through minor legislation changes. It is an efficient mechanism to take care of non-controversial, minor or technical amendments to a range of territory legislation whilst conserving resources that would otherwise be needed if the amendments were dealt with individually. Each individual amendment is minor, but when viewed collectively the amendments are a significant contribution to improving the operation of the affected legislation and the statute book generally.

Briefly, schedule 1 of the bill makes minor amendments that have been approved by the Chief Minister. Schedule 1 amends the Controlled Sports Act 2019 to include the Controlled Sports Registrar in addition to the minister as someone who may be informed or advised about controlled sports issues by an advisory committee. This is a practical measure as the registrar is responsible for exercising many of the functions under the act.

An amendment is made in schedule 1 of the Mental Health Act 2015, as has been noted, to include a registered affected person as someone who may appear and give evidence at the hearing of certain proceedings before the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The Victims of Crime Commissioner was recently afforded the right to appear and give evidence in proceedings in respect of which there is a registered, affected person. However, the same right was not extended to the registered affected persons themselves. This was an inadvertent omission and is corrected by this amendment.

Schedule 1 of the bill also amends the Public Sector Management Act 1994. The amendment displaces the Legislation Act 2001 section 47(3) and (6) in relation to a commonwealth law or an ACT enterprise agreement applied, adopted or incorporated in a public sector management standard. Section 47 sets out how a statutory instrument such as a management standard may make provision about a matter when applying a law or instrument. Public Sector Management Standards 2016 incorporate the terms of ACT enterprise agreements in relation to superannuation and other entitlements of certain public servants and statutory office holders.

The displacement of section 47(3) ensures the enterprise agreements and any relevant commonwealth laws apply as enforced from time to time. Further, section 47(6) is displaced because both commonwealth laws and ACT enterprise agreements are readily accessible on the internet and the ACT government intranet. There is therefore no need for them to be published in the legislation register.

The Worker's Compensation Act 1951 is amended in schedule 1 to correct a cross-reference in relation to working out the amount of compensation payable by an employer to an injured worker. Section 75 sets out how to calculate the cost of taking an injured worker by private motor vehicle to and from a place to receive medical

treatment and rehabilitation services. Section 75(3) contains a reference to an amount mentioned in the commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Regulation 1997. However, the cross-reference is outdated as this amount is now determined by the Commissioner of Taxation in a legislative instrument.

Schedule 2 of the bill is reserved for minor, non-controversial amendments of the Legislation Act 2001 initiated by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. The amendments omit redundant examples and notes, correct cross-references, and omit redundant schedule items.

Finally, schedule 3 contains minor or technical amendments of legislation initiated by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. Schedule includes amendments to correct minor errors, update language, omit redundant provisions and notes, and improve the form of the legislation. Of particular note, are the amendments to remove a standard provision about approved forms from some acts and regulations that have not used or no longer use approved forms.

I express my appreciation for members' support for the technical amendments program. The program is another example of the territory striving for the best and leading the way to a modern, high-quality, up-to-date, easily accessible statute book. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

**Sitting suspended from 11.20 am to 2 pm.**

## **Ministerial arrangements**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (2.01): I understand that members are aware that the Deputy Chief Minister is isolating, awaiting a COVID test result, so she will not be present in question time today. I will endeavour to assist members with questions in the Deputy Chief Minister's portfolios.

## **Questions without notice**

### **Health—COVID-19 vaccination rollout**

**MS LEE:** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Health. Members of the Canberra Liberals have received numerous reports of Pfizer vaccine doses being wasted in the Garran clinic. Those reports have come from both general members of the community and medical staff. The matter has been raised with us since the weekend of 25 April, when some people who were technically not eligible responded

to an SMS doing the rounds in Canberra to book in for vaccines at Garran. Minister, how many doses of Pfizer vaccine have been discarded unused since it first arrived in the ACT?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Lee for the question. Yes, we hear these rumours all the time. I ask questions regularly, and I am consistently advised that that is not accurate, particularly in relation to the incident that Ms Lee referred to. There were some appointments available that had not been taken up at the surge centre, but there was not a risk of vaccine doses going to waste if people did not come and use those appointments. That was not true. That was not an authorised message. I know that some people did get appointments that weekend who would not have otherwise been able to book the vaccine, but—

**Ms Lee:** Point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Resume your seat, minister. Point of order, Ms Lee.

**Ms Lee:** The question was specifically about how many doses of the Pfizer vaccine were discarded unused. I ask that you direct the minister to answer the question.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The minister is in order. You made reference to other elements in your question.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I should have said before I started talking about the detail that I will take the specifics of the question about the actual number on notice, but the context is really important. As I said, we do hear these rumours all the time, and I am consistently advised and assured that we are not seeing doses go to waste.

There is always some wastage in a vaccination program. Particularly for the Pfizer vaccine, there will be some doses that are unable to be used for technical reasons. Apparently when you dilute and draw the Pfizer vaccine—or draw and dilute it—you cannot tap or shake the syringe to get rid of air bubbles. It is quite a technical thing. In other vaccines and other injectables you can do that, but you cannot do that with Pfizer. So if there is an air bubble, then that cannot be used. It is uncommon—our staff are very skilled—but that is one reason that there might be doses that are not able to be used. (*Time expired.*)

**MS LEE:** Minister, how are discarded doses accounted for? Is there a recording process? If so, what is it?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Yes; in all vaccination programs there is a recording process for wastage.

**MRS JONES:** What is the current level of vaccination in the ACT? How many people have been fully vaccinated and how many have been partially vaccinated?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** The last numbers that I had—I will look these up again—were that about 95,000 doses had been given. About 20,000 of those were second

doses. Doing the maths on that, there are about 75,000 people who have received either one or two doses. About 20,000 people have received both doses, so about five per cent of the population have been fully vaccinated.

Having said that, we need to put a caveat on it in terms of population, because the ACT is a centre for vaccinating people from around regional New South Wales as well, so it is probably not a hundred per cent accurate to compare that 20,000 people to the population of the ACT. But those are the rough numbers, and I can get the exact figures.

### **Health—COVID-19 vaccination rollout**

**MRS JONES:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, like other states the booking system for state-managed COVID vaccine clinics requires people to provide their Medicare number. However, in the ACT if the number does not match the ACT government's data, then the person cannot book their vaccine online and is forced to wait on the phone in a queue, sometimes for hours. In other states the Medicare numbers which are collected do not have to match state data in order to book appointments via their websites. How many Canberrans, trying to do the right thing and get their vaccine, are forced to endure a telephone queue after being rejected by the website booking system?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I know there was some glitch with the call back system on one or two days but the actual answer to Mrs Jones's question is none, because there is a call back service. So if you call the phone number—

**Mrs Jones:** On a point of order, I am not sure the minister completely understood the question.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** You said, "How many people had to wait?"

**Mrs Jones:** I am not being funny here. I am actually trying to explain the question.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I listened to the question, but go for it.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Why don't you repeat the question?

**Mrs Jones:** Like other states, the booking system for state-managed COVID requires people to provide their Medicare number—

*A member interjecting—*

**Mrs Jones:** In other states the Medicare numbers do not have to match the state data in order to book appointments. How many Canberrans, trying to do the right thing and get their vaccine via the website, are forced to go onto the telephone queue, essentially?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I have already answered Mrs Jones's actual question. I am happy to talk about what we are doing in terms of the Medicare number entry. If

Mrs Jones had listened to my statement this morning she would already be aware that we are doing a number of things in relation to this.

The initial design required a 100 per cent match between the Medicare number and the other details and for someone of course to already be in the ACT health patient administration system. We have changed that to require only about an 80 per cent match, and that has helped.

The team is also working with Services Australia to proactively update Medicare details for all of the patients, other than those who are deceased, and who are currently in the ACT's health records system so that we can proactively have the correct Medicare number for those people. We expect that that process may take another couple of weeks and we are also expanding the call line so that it will operate from tomorrow from 7 am to 7 pm, seven days a week.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, how many people are on the call line taking calls?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I will take that question on notice in terms of the exact number of staff who are on today, but we are looking to expand that staffing by around 30. As I said, we will be able tomorrow to take calls from 7 am to 7 pm, seven days a week but with additional staff. The team is also continuing to work to improve the online booking system to reduce that confusion around Medicare numbers and that difficulty with Medicare numbers as we go forward.

I have to say that the digital services team did a really incredible job in standing up the booking system and standing up the MyDHR portal to be able to be used for this purpose, but it does have some limitations in terms of people having to already be in the ACT health system and of course some limitations in terms of entering Medicare numbers. The Medicare card is not exactly designed to make an easy way of entering the unique number for those people.

We will continue to improve our systems as we learn more and as we go forward, but, as I say, if anyone does need to use the phone line there is a call back system on that so that people do not need to wait an extended period.

While I am on my feet, I will answer the other question in relation to the exact numbers. As of 26 May, 76,129 people had had the first dose of any vaccine and 19,985 people in the ACT had had a second dose.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, instead of having a free field to enter the Medicare number, is one of the options that the team is looking at to have a box per number for the Medicare card number to avoid any confusion?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** That is not an option that we are currently looking at but we do know that one of the challenges is that on some browsers, not on all browsers, the number is hidden as it is entered and that does make it very difficult for people to check back that they have actually entered the correct number. So there is some work going on to make sure that on all browsers it will not be the case—that the Medicare

number will be visible so that people, once they have entered it, will be able to check the accuracy against their card.

### **Drones—delivery drone use**

**MR DAVIS:** My question is to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, and it relates to delivery drones in the ACT. Minister, I have received representations from a number of my constituents concerned about the use of delivery drones in the ACT. I understand that, prior to my election, there was an inquiry by the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism that found that the “single biggest obstacle to community acceptance of drone delivery services” is noise pollution. Minister, what is the government doing to address community concerns related to delivery drones operating in the ACT?

**MS CHEYNE:** As the member may be aware, the commonwealth government has exclusive power to regulate airspace, and because drones—including those operated by Wing—are considered to be aircraft, the regulation is governed by a number of commonwealth agencies. I understand that, particularly when Wing was trialled down south, some Canberrans raised concerns around the processes for noise approval, and whether the processes under the commonwealth regulations on aircraft noise were followed. The advice that I have is that the commonwealth considers that Wing is compliant with all requirements for noise under those regulations. I know that Wing has recently updated the community—including, I believe, at Gungahlin Community Council—on the noise being much reduced for the aircraft or drones that they are looking to be using soon. If the member has a more specific query or recent query, I am happy to engage with officials and seek some further advice from the commonwealth.

**MR DAVIS:** Minister, what role, if any, does the ACT government have, specifically, to monitor and regulate drone delivery in the ACT?

**MS CHEYNE:** I refer the member to what I said in my first answer. Drones are governed by a number of commonwealth agencies. We absolutely are attuned to all aspects of drone delivery here in the ACT—both the challenges it presents but also the innovation opportunities it brings. I recall that those were canvassed during the inquiry that Mr Davis refers to.

We recognise that there might be some confusion as to who controls what, so we have urged the commonwealth—including recently in an inquiry that the federal parliament is undertaking—to take the lead on the establishment of a national framework addressing all aspects of drone regulation, including noise and including privacy. Given the commonwealth’s comprehensive regulatory powers in this area, we believe that a national approach is the only way forward. We do have a good relationship with the commonwealth in this space, but the commonwealth can approve drones not the ACT government.

**MR BRADDOCK:** I have a supplementary question. Minister, what are the ACT government’s plans for the future of drone delivery in the ACT, and will it be consulting with the community about those plans?



**MS CHEYNE:** Again, this is not the ACT's responsibility; it is the commonwealth's responsibility, but we do have good relationships with officials in the commonwealth government. In terms of possible expansion of the operation, it is simply not our jurisdiction to regulate air space, but we have arranged for an understanding whereby commonwealth officials will inform ACT officials if Wing is intending to expand its delivery locations. I am aware that there has been some media attention given to the possible expansion of Wing, expanding its delivery locations, but certainly I have not and nor has the ACT government as far as I am aware—including as recently as today been advised that any notification of expanded delivery locations has been given to the commonwealth by Wing. I would also note that my most recent advice—Mr Davis might be interested in this as well—is that Access Canberra has just recorded one complaint in relation to Wing drones in recent months.

### **Health—maternal and child health clinics**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, when the Weston Creek walk-in centre was opened last year and soon after transformed into a COVID-19 testing centre, the maternal and child health clinic in the same building was closed and not reopened. Now you are opening a maternal and child health clinic in Coombs, claiming that it is new. Minister, will this maternal health walk-in centre differ from the one that you closed in Weston Creek?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** The one in Weston Creek was relocated during the construction of the walk-in centre, and was intended to be moved back into the Weston Creek community health centre. Obviously, that did not happen immediately, because the Weston Creek walk-in centre became a COVID testing site. As we looked at opportunities to deliver better care closer to home right across the ACT community, we determined that a better allocation of resources would be to put the medical into the new medical imaging centre, which has been funded in this budget—the community medical imaging in the Weston Creek community health centre adjacent to the walk-in centre—and to move the MACH services that were going to go back into the Weston Creek community health centre and walk-in centre into Coombs.

We were very clear about that. In fact, when we announced the Coombs walk-in health centre during the election campaign, we said the likelihood would be that it would be for maternal and child health services that were otherwise going to go back into the Weston Creek health centre. We are doing exactly what we said we were going to do.

**MR HANSON:** When will the final scope of the maternal and child health clinic in Coombs be known, given that it should open on 1 July this year, according to the CMTEDD website?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Hanson for the question. The maternal and child health services are offered via Canberra Health Services; it will be the same type of maternal and child health services. Obviously, we are getting close to having more to say in relation to the range of services that will be available in Coombs; again, we are doing exactly what we said we were going to do. People's expectations can be that the

maternal and child health services available in Coombs will be the same as would have been available if they had moved back into the Weston Creek community health centre.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, where have those maternal and child health services been supplied from whilst the one in Weston Creek has been closed?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I will take that question on notice and come back. I have a recollection, but I am not sure that it is accurate. I do not want to provide the wrong answer, so I will double-check and come back to the Assembly.

### **Tourism—COVID-19**

**DR PATERSON:** My question is to the Minister for Tourism. Chief Minister, can you please update the Assembly on how the ACT government is supporting Canberra's tourism sector as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic?

**MR BARR:** I thank Dr Paterson for the question. I am pleased to advise that tourism in the ACT is recovering strongly after being clearly one of the hardest hit industries through the pandemic. The ACT government continues to support the industry to attract more visitors to Canberra which, in turn, supports local jobs. We have an ambitious goal of returning the ACT's annual visitor spend back to \$2½ billion in 2022. The investments that the government has made in partnership with the tourism sector are working, with more people visiting Canberra.

Our commercial accommodation occupancy level reached 73.2 per cent in April, just above the national average that sits at just 60 per cent. This resurgence is due, in large part, to the ACT's considered and decisive health and economic responses to the pandemic. We have also undertaken a very significant program of co-investment with the tourism sector through the COVID-safe tourism program. So far we have supported 15 tourism businesses to create new visitor experiences and we have established a tourism cooperative marketing fund to support local operators to create new campaigns to attract visitors to Canberra.

Of course, cheaper flights more often mean more people travelling to Canberra. So we have invested in initiatives to support the recovery of Canberra's aviation sector, and we have done so in partnership with Canberra Airport.

**DR PATERSON:** Chief Minister, how have investments and partnerships helped bolster the aviation sector, including the number of flights travelling to and from Canberra?

**MR BARR:** Remarkably, we are now better connected within Australia than we have ever been in the history of the territory. For the first time in more than a decade, the ACT has direct flights either in operation or scheduled to every Australian capital city. As of last month, Canberra Airport was operating more than 300 flights a week, which is around 85 per cent of the pre-COVID flight levels.

I am pleased also to observe that increased competition between airlines is making it cheaper and easier to visit Canberra, as well as for Canberrans to visit the rest of the country. In April, we welcomed Rex Airlines to the Canberra market, beginning with their seven services daily between Canberra and Sydney. This month, obviously pending the Victorian lockdown, they are scheduled to begin their Canberra-Melbourne route.

Of course, Rex is just the latest in a number of airlines who have expanded their operations into Canberra, including FlyPelican, Alliance Airlines and Link Airways. Rex's entry into the Canberra-Melbourne market is a key example of the government's aviation policies encouraging greater competition, and with a one-way ticket on that very busy route dropping to as low as \$69, Canberra tourism operators and tourists are the winners.

Our growing aviation network is also a clear signal of confidence in the region's broader tourism sector. So from here the territory government will continue working with Canberra Airport to work with other airlines, and existing ones, to attract more flights to and from the ACT. Whilst it is going to be a little bit of time before we see more frequent international travel, we will continue prioritising the establishment of new domestic and trans-Tasman services in partnership with our counterparts across the ditch.

**MS ORR:** A further supplementary: Chief Minister, what work is underway to re-establish flights between Canberra and New Zealand?

**MR BARR:** An extensive amount of work, and I thank Ms Orr for the question. Just last week I was in New Zealand working with key aviation and government figures on establishing direct flights with a focus on Canberra-Auckland and Canberra-Wellington. Of course, members would be aware that we have enjoyed direct flights to Wellington before and we are committed to re-establishing a mutually beneficial connection between the ACT and New Zealand.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that these discussions have been very positive and there is genuine interest in introducing direct flights to and from Canberra and New Zealand. There is scope for different airlines to connect Canberra to different New Zealand cities, catering for distinct markets. Being a larger airport hub, Auckland also presents opportunities to connect Canberra with the rest of the world, particularly destinations in North and South America, as international travel re-emerges in 2022 and 2023.

### **Health—COVID-19 vaccination rollout**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for Health. On Friday last week a 78-year-old contacted the Canberra Liberals to say that she had phoned the ACT government number to book her vaccination as her GP is not administering the vaccine. She made the call at 4.20 pm and she was shocked to find that she was 55th in the queue! And she wondered if it were really possible for 55 people to be in the queue. She waited for 40 minutes on hold until she was 22nd in the queue, at which

point the message changed from, “you are 22nd in the queue,” to just the number 22, and then 21 and then 20. Concerned that the system wasn’t working, she hung up and contacted us. Minister, why did this lady have to wait so long?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Parton for the question, and I am sorry to hear about that constituent’s experience. But as I said earlier, there has been a call back function on this line. I understand that occasionally it has not been working, but by and large people have been able to receive a call back. So there is no requirement for people to remain on hold for a long period of time.

However, we have been really conscious of the fact that there have been long waits, and some people have also been waiting for a call back. And that’s why we are expanding the phone line availability from tomorrow from 7 am to 7 pm, seven days a week. We’ve also put extra staff on. So I can advise the Assembly that yesterday was a record for bookings made, both by phone and online. And so 617 bookings were made via phone and 598 online. So we’re getting close to 50-50.

Call wait times also appeared to be lower, averaging under 10 minutes compared to 20 minutes for previous days, and anywhere between 30 minutes and two hours previously. And the maximum wait time is also now significantly lower as a result of that increase in staffing and the streamlining of the service. So the maximum wait time today—I think that is from yesterday, but it might be from this morning—is 49 minutes.

This is a significant improvement. Of course, we are sorry to hear when people have experiences of waiting on the line, and that is why we have put these extra resources in place and we are expanding the hours of availability.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, how many additional staff have been allocated to this area, and what is the total number of staff who are taking calls?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I believe I have already taken that question on notice.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, why does the message suddenly change from, “You are 22nd in the queue,” to 22 or 21 after the person has had a consistent call message for 40 minutes?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I am happy to go and follow that up and come back to the chamber with some answers on that. That is the first time that I have heard that. Apologies if the opposition has written to my office and has not got a response in relation to that matter, but I certainly have not heard that directly from other people I know who have called the line. So I will follow that up.

### **Planning—consultation**

**MS CLAY:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. In the April sittings I asked you a question on the current planning review and when consultation would be open to the community on substantive details. We were pleased that community consultation started in May, but I understand that places are limited

and community members must lodge an expression of interest. And depending on the level of interest, participants are randomly selected. There are also separate stakeholder consultations, and I have been made aware of concerns about that. For instance, only one person can attend from each community council, some stakeholders have not been invited at all and no substantive details of the review have been circulated. How will the EPSDD make sure that it gets informed input from key stakeholders, including the ACT Conservation Council, the Environmental Defenders Office, community councils, Pedal Power, the Public Transport Association of Canberra and other groups?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Clay for the question. It is an important time in the planning review project, as she has indicated, with those stakeholder workshops opening up. Ms Clay is right in that there are limited numbers, due to ensuring that we are COVID safe, and we have put out the expression of interest for people to attend. Of course, we do want as many people as possible from a variety of community groups and community people to attend the stakeholder workshops wherever possible, but we do need to be COVID safe.

I think the next meeting of the EPF will be on 28 June. That will be one that I will be attending. All community councils have expressed an interest in attending that meeting, as well. It will be separate from the current stakeholder meetings. So it will ensure that groups like community councils get to have their say at the EPF as well as at the stakeholder meetings for the review of the planning act.

**MS CLAY:** If community interest in the community district planning meeting exceeds the places, will you offer additional sessions for the public in each district?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I will not be able to guarantee that. We are trying to get as many people as we can, of course. It has been a long period of discussion with the community to get to this point. We are now moving through the review process. Where possible, we engage, wherever we can. We do want their feedback and we will look at what we can do to ensure that we get all the feedback necessary.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Minister, what do you want to achieve from the stakeholder and public consultations for the planning review?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I think we have made this very clear. We want to engage with the Canberra community to seek their views on the planning review project to ensure that we can put those views in place for that important work into the future.

### **Health—COVID-19 vaccination rollout**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, the Canberra Liberals have been contacted by a constituent who informed us that they are having great difficulty with completing the post-vaccine survey. They rang ACT Health to report their difficulties, only to be told, “Don’t worry about it.” Why is the government not ensuring that Canberrans are able to give proper feedback on the vaccine process, and what is the response rate to the survey?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I will take on notice the question in relation to the response rate to the survey. That experience is not consistent with what I have heard from other people who I know have had the vaccination. They have said that the process has gone very smoothly. Obviously, people tell us things as MLAs, and it is really important that we follow those up, and I am very happy to follow that up. Again I would say to the opposition that, if people are coming forward with questions like that, we are always very happy to follow those things up. It is really important that we get good advice from people about their post-vaccination experience. I am happy to follow that up. I am not entirely sure who that person would have called. That would be really helpful information—to understand what number they called.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, what is the point of having this survey if residents are being told not to worry about it when they contact ACT Health?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I am not going to simply accept the premise of that question. That may have been a much more complicated conversation than is being presented by the opposition. I think it is very important for people to complete their post-vaccination survey. That is obviously our view. We want to collect as much information from people as we can. If the opposition would like to send me some further information about that, we can follow it up. There may have been a particular reason why the person on the other end of the phone thought it was better for that particular individual, for some reason that we are not aware of, to not pursue that. Without further information, it is very hard for me to take at face value the premise of that question.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, how else can Canberrans provide feedback about their vaccine experience to the ACT government if they have given up on the post-vaccine survey?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** They can always email ACT Health or they can email me. They can call my office, and people do that on a regular basis; or they can call ACT Health. I do not know that we have much evidence of people giving up on the survey at this point in time. I will follow it up, and I will come back to the Assembly with an answer on the response rate, and see whether we have had any other representations in relation to the survey being difficult to complete. Certainly, I would continue to encourage people to complete that survey post vaccination. As I said, it is not feedback that I have had in relation to that post-vaccination survey.

### **ACT Corrective Services—parole process**

**MRS KIKKERT:** My question is to the Minister for Corrections. The Ombudsman's 2020 report into parole processes at the AMC reveal several shortcomings in parole policies and mechanisms. Included in those findings was that in the absence of official advice for detainees, a parole manual was created by a detainee to assist fellow detainees in understanding the process. It was described by the Ombudsman as a comprehensive document with good tips. He noted that ACT Corrective Services could adapt the document in consultation with detainees that have been involved and make it available to all detainees. Minister, what does it say about your performance as corrections minister when it falls to an inmate to do your job?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for the question. I will take the details of the question on notice in regard to—

**Mrs Kikkert:** Have you read the report?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Yes, I certainly have. I have read the report, and, of course, I have instigated a committee to ensure that the recommendations are implemented across the AMC. Mrs Kikkert is well aware of that because she has been quite vocal against the implementation of that committee.

*Mrs Kikkert interjecting—*

**MR GENTLEMAN:** We will continue to work with that committee on the implementation.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, has this detainee been fairly and justly compensated for their freelance consulting?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I will take that on notice.

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Jones and Mrs Kikkert, that is enough! You have a colleague on the floor who is trying to ask a question. I ask that you be quiet. Mr Cain.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, why are you not supporting ACT Corrective Services so that they, rather than others, are delivering basic administrative services?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** We are supporting ACT Corrective Services. Of course, in this budget, we have allocated more funding for more corrective service officers. Just last week I was at the graduation of this college for 2021, the first of we think three colleges for this year, to ensure that we have the staff numbers on the ground to support Corrective Services in the important work that they do. I will repeat this—it is important work that they do for our community in keeping our community safe. We will continue to invest in ACT Corrections and the important work that our officers do, unlike the Canberra Liberals who, of course, voted against that funding in the budget.

### **Government—infrastructure projects**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on how the ACT government's biggest ever infrastructure delivery program is supporting economic recovery through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic?

**MR STEEL:** I thank Ms Orr for her question. As members of the Assembly would be aware, the ACT government is committed to a \$14 billion infrastructure plan and growing our employment base to 250,000 by 2025. We recognise the critical role that infrastructure plays in creating and supporting good local jobs and ensuring that Canberra remains a connected, vibrant and sustainable place to live. While COVID-19

has presented a significant challenge to our economy, we are bouncing back strongly. We have the best employment figures in the country as well as a very strong balance sheet.

In my portfolio alone, our government is investing in public transport, upgrading our strategic transport corridors to improve vehicle, public transport and active travel access; building a new Canberra Institute of Technology campus; and upgrading local community infrastructure. The largest project that our government is delivering is light rail to Woden. I am very pleased that we expect, subject to works approval being given, work to begin on early works for stage 2A of light rail as early as August. It will help to create a frequent and reliable transport spine that better connects Canberrans with our major town centres and residential and employment hubs as well as some of our key recreational areas.

Together, all this investment is helping to sustain activity and get more Canberrans working to keep our economy strong. At the same time, we are delivering the essential infrastructure that Canberra will need in the years to come. Too many cities fail to plan ahead for growth, which leads to gridlock, reduced quality of life and haphazard solutions that do not work for our community. We are seizing the opportunity now to get on with building our city's future. That is what Canberrans can see all around them in many projects going on across Canberra.

**MS ORR:** Minister, what are the latest delivery updates on the ACT government's major transport and community infrastructure projects?

**MR STEEL:** Yesterday, the request for tender for the enabling works utility relocation package for light rail stage 2 to Woden was issued to the market. This package of works is part of early works in the city to support the delivery of light rail. The works will involve moving critical water and communication utility assets from their current position along the southern section of London Circuit to a new alignment by Edinburgh Avenue, Vernon Circle and Constitution Avenue. The works also include the establishment of site compounds used for site office establishment, storage, construction parking and utility installation. It is important work that will allow us to begin work raising London Circuit in the first half of next year.

The Woden town centre is also alive with construction activity at the moment. We are building a new protected cycleway along Corinna Street; work is already underway on intersection upgrades on the corner of Irving Street and Launceston Street; and soon further intersections along Launceston Street will be under construction, with new traffic lights.

In the next few months, we will be starting construction on the new public transport interchange on Callam Street, which will be built to accommodate light rail and integrate with the new Woden CIT. The CIT campus itself is undergoing preliminary design work ahead of construction, starting next year, with the campus welcoming students later on in 2024.

These are just a few of the big and important projects that are underway. As we approach construction on many of these projects throughout the year, I look forward



to providing members with regular updates as well as consulting with the community as we progress.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, how is the government ensuring that the voices and perspectives of Canberrans are taken into account when designing and delivering major infrastructure projects?

**MR STEEL:** We recognise that for many of these infrastructure projects consultation is absolutely critical and getting input from Canberrans is critical to getting a really great outcome. That is why we consult early and often, through particularly the YourSay channel, digital media but also face-to-face opportunities, including pop-ups. We collect information about what the community wants out of our individual projects—their priorities and specific issues of interest, like accessibility, environmental issues and heritage and design considerations—and then we use that feedback to directly inform the decisions that we make about how projects are delivered.

A great example of this is the light rail virtual consultation room, which we launched just last week. This new website makes it easy for people, particularly in a very COVID safe way, to follow the latest project developments and have a say in shaping the future of the light rail network, particularly with the stage 2 project. It even allows you to take a virtual ride on light rail stage 2A.

We have also undertaken the first of many significant community engagement campaigns on stage 2A of light rail, including 580 face-to-face meetings with commuters, residents and businesses that will be affected by the project, particularly during construction but also post construction.

We are also responsive to the feedback that we hear. For example, in relation to the new Woden CIT project and the new transport interchange, Woden residents have told us that maintaining a north to south connection through the town centre is important after we build the interchange, providing priority for buses on Callam Street. That is why we will soon be starting consultation on a new connection between Bradley and Bowes streets, ahead of a wider consultation on the design of the CIT campus itself later this year.

Finally, I want to highlight the community engagement that we do on our smaller projects, too, like the consultation that we have just been undertaking on the new shop upgrades at Kaleen, Campbell and Duffy. We know that these local neighbourhood infrastructure projects are incredibly important, and we need to hear that feedback from the community, too. *(Time expired.)*

### **Health—nurse-led walk-in centres**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Minister for Health, regarding nurse-led walk-in centres, which are an important part of our health system, especially for people seeking—

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** You say that now!

**MS LAWDER:** I am not sure I have ever said anything different.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Members, allow Ms Lawder to ask the question.

**MS LAWDER:** Our nurse-led walk-in centres are an important part of our healthcare system for people seeking medical advice or assistance, especially of a more minor nature. Minister, do you collect data on the number of presentations to these centres and the effect this has on reducing presentations to emergency departments? If so, will you release that data?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Presentations to walk-in centres are released every quarter in the quarterly performance report, as are numbers in relation to how many people who present at walk-in centres are fully treated at the walk-in centre or are referred to the emergency department. It is hard to accurately determine how many people would have otherwise gone to the emergency department. That is something that we continue to work on. Certainly anecdotally a lot of people indicate that they would have gone to an emergency department if the walk-in centre was not an available option.

**MS LAWDER:** I have a supplementary question. Minister, how are you improving communication with the community about what injuries and illnesses are appropriate to be treated at the nurse-led walk-in centres to reduce presentations at emergency departments?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Lawder for the question; it is a good one. We continue to try to use social media and other channels to get information out to people. Whenever a new walk-in centre is opened, information is sent out to the local community about the centre that is opening and the services that it has available. We regularly use ACT and Canberra Health Services social media channels. We encourage people to download the ACT Health app, and I would certainly encourage all members of this place, when they are talking to their constituents, to encourage them to download the ACT Health app, which not only gives information about waiting times and locations of the walk-in centres but also gives information about what our fabulous nurses at the walk-in centres can treat in terms of minor injuries and illnesses.

We also have a commitment to looking at how we can expand the scope of practice of the fantastic nurse practitioners and advanced practice nurses who work in our walk-in centres. We are committed to increasing the number of nurse practitioners at our walk-in centres because walk-in centres are a fantastic ACT Labor initiative. It is something that we are very proud of. We are very pleased that the Canberra Liberals have finally embraced them in the way that Canberrans have, and we will continue to expand on them and improve.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, what number of the health walk-in centres promised at the election will be nurse-led walk-in centres?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** The commitment at the election was an additional five of what we call walk-in health centres. We were very clear throughout the election

period that these were not going to be nurse-led walk-in centres in the exact same way that our five walk-in centres were—that they would offer a mix of immediate and appointment-based services, dependent on the location and the needs of the individual community. So, in South Tuggeranong, West Belconnen, North Gungahlin, in my own electorate of Kurrajong in the Inner South, and in Molonglo in Coombs, those centres will be different depending on the needs of the communities. But one thing is clear: our fabulous nurses will continue to lead the services within those centres. They will be multi-disciplinary centres that meet the needs of those communities.

**Mrs Jones:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: My question was not how wonderful the nurses are; we all appreciate the nurses. The question was how many of the walk-in centres will be nurse-led walk-in centres, and there has been no answer to that question. The number has not been given.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I disagree with you, Mrs Jones. Minister, you have the floor if you want to continue.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I have nothing to add.

### **Canberra Institute of Technology—locations**

**MR BRADDOCK:** My question is to the Minister for Skills. Minister, as Gungahlin has a population of 80,000 and trending to more than 100,000, what is the government doing to provide CIT training for the population of the Gungahlin district, to meet their skill demands?

**MR STEEL:** I thank Mr Braddock for his question. We certainly recognise the importance of ensuring that all people in Canberra have access to quality training in the Canberra region to support our industries and economies, and particularly in growing areas, such as the areas of construction and trades.

CIT, of course, has a presence in the Gungahlin area through the campus, which was opened in 2011, co-located with the public library and the Gungahlin College. It occupies about 300 square metres, so it is a relatively small campus. The needs of the entire community are met through CIT's main campuses, currently at CIT Reid, but most of those functions will be moving to the new CIT campus which is of course being designed at the moment in Woden, and at the main campus in Bruce. There are also satellite campuses in Tuggeranong.

CIT have undertaken a campus renewal plan. The development of that plan occurred a few years ago. The basis of that plan is that training would be delivered on their main campus sites. However, they are setting their sights on the future, particularly through their new CIT compass, their strategic plan, which will look at how they meet the needs of industry into the future, and also how they ensure that training is provided in the most flexible way to meet the needs of industry and also for students.

Their ambition is to create a CIT cloud campus. That will provide new opportunities to be able to deliver training in a range of locations, including Gungahlin, and accessing a range of courses, including some courses that may not currently be

delivered directly there. The current level of courses that are delivered at Gungahlin, which is based on community demand and may change from time to time, includes English language, business accounting, digital media technologies, construction—*(Time expired.)*

**MR BRADDOCK:** Minister, will the CIT expand its presence in Gungahlin College?

**MR STEEL:** The CIT are governed by a board. They will consider what the needs of industry are and what the needs and demands of that community are in relation to training, and what needs to be delivered in certain locations. However, they have made it clear through their campus renewal plan that the main centres of face-to-face learning will be at CIT Bruce and the new CIT in Woden.

However, as an example of how they adapt to needs, demand for English language and accounting classes at Gungahlin has grown significantly, and CIT has responded by increasing the number of classes being conducted this year through the CIT in Gungahlin. They want to make sure that they have that engagement with industry, as the ACT government continues to do through our skills needs list and so forth. Particularly through their strategic plan, they are committed to engaging with industry and making sure that they meet the needs of the industry in a variety of different ways, and making sure that those flexible learning opportunities are available for all Canberrans.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, could you please talk to the CIT presence and campus in Woden, and how that is progressing?

**MR STEEL:** I am very pleased that significant work is progressing on the CIT campus in Woden. This is going to accommodate most of the functions that were previously supported at the ageing CIT campus in Reid. It will provide a new, world-class education and training institution in the heart of Woden. Work is about to get underway on building the new interchange, which will make way for the CIT campus which will be built on the old interchange. We have architects appointed that are currently developing the reference design for the CIT, which will then be used once we go through procurement for the final design and construction delivery partner for that major project.

We are looking forward to engaging with the community on the design of the project, as things progress. The CIT has been leading this work, engaging with both the CIT staff and students on the CIT Woden project. That has all fed into the functional information that has been used to inform the design of the new campus, which we think will be a fantastic site for teaching and learning going forward in the areas of hospitality, right through to arts and other areas that are critical to meeting industry need in the economy.

### **Health—occupational therapy**

**MS CASTLEY:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Occupational therapists train for two years post-graduate or four years undergraduate and then they are ready to work. We currently have a severe shortage of occupational therapists, and there is

also a shortage of supervisors and placement opportunities, thus limiting the number of graduates in occupational therapy per year. If the ACT government were to fund one additional FTE occupational therapy practice educator at the Faculty of Health at the University of Canberra, 14 students could graduate per year. Are you aware of the lack of placement opportunities?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Castley for the question. Of course, the ACT government works very closely with the University of Canberra, which trains a range of graduates for our health system, both across nursing and allied health—and, of course, sports condition and all kinds of other things. We work very closely with them to understand the demand and also to enable placements. At the University of Canberra Hospital, for example, a specialist rehabilitation hospital, we have a very strong partnership with the University of Canberra in being able to provide student placements.

The particular issue of a single additional funded occupational therapy place and some placements for that has not been raised with me directly. I have a very good relationship with Michelle Lincoln, who runs the health area at University of Canberra hospital, so I am happy to discuss that with her. But we work very closely with the University of Canberra to understand the shortages and the demand pressures across the system. Allied health is critically important to our health system. I often talk about it as the glue that keeps the system together. It is an alternative support for people, but it is also a critical key support for people in managing a range of conditions, from early intervention right through to managing chronic conditions in older age. So I am very happy to continue to have that conversation with the University of Canberra.

**MS CASTLEY:** Minister, what have you done to create additional opportunities for students to get the necessary hours of supervised practice time?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** One of the things that we did only a couple of years ago was to open the new University of Canberra specialist rehabilitation hospital at the University of Canberra and to enter into a partnership with them to ensure there was both research and innovation and also training through that.

We have a range of partnerships with the University of Canberra. I will actually take that question on notice so that I can come back to Ms Castley with some more detailed information about the very wide range of placements that are available. I think it is really important to recognise in occupational therapy and in a range of other allied health areas that it is not only the health portfolio that uses those allied health skills; it is also other portfolios. I am very familiar in my portfolio of families and community services and Ms Berry's portfolio of early childhood development around the importance of occupational therapists but also the wide range of allied health specialists across our community.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, have you spoken recently to OT Australia? Will you work with them to create more placement opportunities so that we can have more OTs graduate in the ACT?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Jones for the supplementary question. I am very happy to meet with them. We consider requests for meetings pretty much weekly in my office and go through all of the requests that have been made for meetings. I do not recall discussing a meeting request recently from OT Australia, but I am very happy to meet with all stakeholders across the health system and very keen to understand what we can do to ensure that we are getting a really strong supply of graduates here in the ACT.

We know that we have shortages across the allied health system and we do have to grow our own. And we are absolutely committed to our partnerships with both the University of Canberra and ANU but also with the Australian Catholic University in doing that.

### **ACT Corrective Services—appointments**

**MR CAIN:** My question is to the Minister for corrections. In March this year the former Commissioner of ACT corrective services, Jon Peach, was appointed to the specially created role of Executive Manager of Security and Emergency Management, a position that pays \$327,000 a year. Coincidentally, a short time earlier, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate received a report that was very critical of Mr Peach's emergency management response during a riot at the AMC saying at page 27:

... the office of the Inspector of Correctional Services is not persuaded that the value added by the commissioner's presence at the AMC outweighed the confusion it caused amongst AMC staff ...

I note, this was during a riot. Minister, how is it appropriate to appoint a person whose performance caused confusion during a riot to an executive management role?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mr Cain for the question. I support decisions made by Justice and Community Safety in the way that they appoint our staff to different positions across the agency. Of course they look at the skills and opportunities that are provided by those individuals to best fit them for tasks that really assist the ACT community. Again, I support their decisions.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, how can Canberrans trust the government that appoints a person to a specialist security role who could not deliver standard security management in a prison during a riot?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I am not sure if that is the position that the corrections inspector put in his report and recommendations. I think Mr Cain is stretching the explanation a little bit there. But, as I said, of course our Justice and Community Safety Directorate manage our staff skills and put them in the best place as possible.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, what improvements to corrections officers' working conditions did Mr Peach implement that qualified him for this new executive role?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Of course, JACS has looked at the work Mr Peach has done over the years in various different areas of AMC that would qualify him for this particular role. I was not involved in the decision-making regarding the skills of Mr Peach and the role that he would take up in the new position.

### **Health—prescription monitoring**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the implementation of national real-time prescription monitoring in the ACT?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. The ACT government is implementing a new real-time prescription monitoring system, to be known as Canberra Script, from November 2021. The implementation of Canberra Script is a key action under the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021 to continue our work in minimising harm associated with both illicit and prescription drugs.

Canberra Script demonstrates the ACT government's commitment to reducing the devastating impacts that the misuse of some prescribed medicines can have on individuals, their families and the wider community.

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Real-time prescription monitoring systems provide important information to prescribers and pharmacists before they prescribe or supply a monitored medicine.

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You are going to be warned soon, Mr Hanson.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Monitored medicines are those acknowledged as having the highest risk of harm in the community due to the potential for addiction and misuse.

In 2019, the ACT was one of the first jurisdictions to start a local real-time prescription monitoring system, known as DORA, before national efforts to address concerns about medicine abuse commenced. DORA has been an important clinical tool for health practitioners to provide safer care for their patients. Canberra Script will link to a national real-time prescription monitoring system and include enhanced features and functionality. The expanded information in Canberra Script will include more prescription-only medicines related to significant harms due to abuse and misuse such as benzodiazepines and tramadol.

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson!

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Each Australian jurisdiction will implement their own local version of the national RTPM system over 2021 and 2022 to enable national consistency.

The ACT government is working with the Australian government and other partners to make the system available for early adopter sites in November 2021—

**Mr Hanson:** Hear, hear!

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You are warned, Mr Hanson.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** before a complete rollout to all providers from February 2022.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson, I come in here every question time and your interjections are consistent and persistent. I ignore them quite a bit. Whether it is “Hear, hear” or snide remarks over Mr Pettersson, I really have had enough.

**Mrs Jones:** Madam Speaker, on your ruling: is it genuinely the case that you think we should now sit totally silently in the chamber?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** No, and you will know that in every question time I do not ask for that. But there is serial offending that sometimes just gets the better of me.

**Mr Hanson:** I accept your ruling, Madam Speaker, but I would just like to make a response. The first interjection I made in the entire question time—I think the last question—it was a pretty gentle comment. Then I was saying “Hear, hear” to the minister because I fundamentally agree with what she is saying. I really do.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, how does Canberra Script reduce harm in the Canberra community?

*Mrs Jones interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Jones, don’t stretch it today. Ms Lee, you must talk to your colleagues.

**Ms Lee:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary. Over the past decade, deaths due to the misuse of drugs have become more likely to be from prescription drugs than illicit drugs. Nationally, the number of deaths involving opioid pain relief medication has more than tripled in the last 10 years. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in 2016, there were 663 drug-induced deaths where benzodiazepines were present and 550 where opioids such as oxycodone and codeine were present. These statistics highlight the devastating impact that the dependency and overuse of prescription medicines have on the Australian community.



The ACT government recognises that these growing harms call for responses and actions by Australian governments. Building on the strong foundations of the DORA real-time prescription monitoring system, Canberra Script will give doctors, nurse practitioners and pharmacists in the ACT more information about what medicines their consumers are being prescribed. This information will support practitioners to provide safer care for their patients.

Canberra Script includes real-time alerts and notifications, through compatible software, that a patient may be exhibiting signs of misuse by receiving prescriptions of the same medication from multiple locations. Canberra Script closes the loop by ensuring that all health professionals involved in the care of a patient have access to the full monitored medicines history from across Australia. By having access to the full monitored medicines history for ACT residents, the health professional can intervene and reduce harm from the misuse of prescription medications. This is particularly important in the ACT as we are surrounded by New South Wales. Having that cross-border access is absolutely vital.

Canberra Script is just one way we can reduce harm from drug misuse, of course. The ACT government is continuing to invest in evidence-based and informed harm minimisation responses to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, for the safety of the Canberra community.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, how is the ACT government collaborating with health practitioners to ensure that Canberra Script benefits the community?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** The development of Canberra Script demonstrates the really positive work that can be accomplished together with an extensive range of stakeholders from across health care to develop solutions that support better care in the community. Throughout the development of Canberra Script, there has been a strong focus on engagement to meet local practitioner needs and show the value of real-time prescription monitoring for practitioners.

A stakeholder engagement group has advised on system features, on implementation, on the development of health practitioner training packages and on consumer information. Key partners in the development of Canberra Script include Painaustralia, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Capital Health Network and other health sector peak bodies that are best placed to encourage the use of Canberra Script.

Importantly, the ACT government is working with partners to ensure a consumer-focused approach to implementation. We are making sure that information supporting Canberra Script's rollout does not stigmatise consumers who are taking monitored medicines, is sensitive to healthcare needs and supports those consumers to continue to navigate through the health system.

Through key partners and champions, we are working hard to achieve high-level uptake of Canberra Script among health practitioners. The vision is that all those who

prescribe or dispense monitored medicines use and embrace Canberra Script to provide safer care for ACT consumers.

It was a real pleasure recently to attend the general practice forum. I know that there was a good conversation about the take-up of Canberra Script, using that opportunity.

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

## **Supplementary answers to questions without notice**

### **Planning—consultation**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.08): In relation to the question on the planning review workshops, I advise that the final schedule for the remaining stakeholder working series is yet to be determined in consultation with those participants that expressed an expression of interest.

The schedule for the district planning workshops is Molonglo Valley on 1 June; inner south on 3 June; Weston Creek on 8 June; Belconnen, 10 June; Gungahlin, 15 June; Woden, 17 June; Tuggeranong, 22 June; and inner north, 24 June. Of course, those people that did not get a place for the in-person workshops will be able to enter the conversation online. Those contacts will be made available to them.

### **Health—Maternal and Child Health clinics Health—COVID-19 vaccination rollout**

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH** (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (3.09): I have a few matters. I confirm that maternal and child health services were relocated from the Weston Creek Community Centre to the Phillip Health Centre and to Village Creek Health Centre in Kambah when the development of the Weston Creek walk-in centre was underway.

In relation to vaccinations, I am advised there has been no wastage of either Pfizer or AstraZeneca vaccines in ACT clinics due to cancellations or no-shows. So those are rumours, and I encourage people to put those to bed wherever they can. Indeed, the ACT has according to commonwealth data the best vaccine utilisation rate across the country with daily records often showing zero wastage. Again I want to thank the really great health staff who are doing that important work and doing it with great skill.

I am advised that this morning 33 people were answering the COVID-19 booking phone line. At 11.30 am, five of those people were taken off the phone line to help with contact tracing, so there are currently 28 people on the line. An additional 19 people to the number available previously were put on today, and by Friday we will add another 18.

## Papers

**Madam Speaker** presented the following papers:

ACT Ombudsman—Notification of retirement, dated 24 May 2021.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Bills referred but not inquired into—Civil Law (Wrongs) Amendment Bill 2021—Correspondence to Speaker, dated 24 May 2021.

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee—Bills referred but not inquired into—Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Bill 2021—Correspondence to Speaker, dated 20 May 2021.

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act—Auditor-General's Reports—2021—No 1/2021—Land Management Agreements—Government response.

Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission—Annual Report—2019-20, dated 16 September 2020.

Children and Young People Act—ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee—Annual Report 2020—dated 30 April 2021, together with a statement.

Financial Management Act—Pursuant to section 26—Consolidated Financial Report for the financial quarter ending—31 March 2021.

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

Architects Act—Architects (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-72 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Building Act—Building (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-73 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Children and Young People Act—Children and Young People (Drug Testing) Standards 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-69 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act—Construction Occupations (Licensing) (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-74 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Electricity Safety Act—Electricity Safety (Fees) Determination 2021—Subordinate Law DI2021-75 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Environment Protection Act—Environment Protection (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-76 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Fisheries Act—Fisheries (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-70 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Gas Safety Act—Gas Safety (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-77 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Act—

Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Advisory Council Appointment 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-65 (LR, 24 May 2021).

Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Advisory Council Appointment 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-66 (LR, 24 May 2021).

Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Advisory Council Appointment 2021 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-67 (LR, 24 May 2021).

Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Advisory Council Appointment 2021 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-68 (LR, 24 May 2021).

Heritage Act—Heritage (Fees) Determination 2020—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-78 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Integrity Commission Act—

Integrity Commission (Acting Commissioner) Appointment 2021 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-58 (LR, 6 May 2021).

Integrity Commission (Commissioner) Appointment 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-57 (LR, 5 May 2021).

Labour Hire Licensing Act—

Labour Hire Licensing (Exempt Workers) Determination 2021 (No 1)—DI2021-82 (LR, 19 May 2021).

Labour Hire Licensing (Fee) Determination 2021 (No 1)—DI2021-81 (LR, 19 May 2021).

Labour Hire Licensing Regulation 2021—Subordinate Law SL2021-9 (LR, 19 May 2021).

Liquor Regulation 2010—Liquor (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Licence Fee Waiver and Reduction) Declaration 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-54 (LR, 22 April 2021).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act and Financial Management Act—Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-59 (LR, 5 May 2021).

Nature Conservation Act—

Nature Conservation (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-79 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Nature Conservation Amendment Regulation 2021 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SI2021-8 (LR, 13 May 2021).

Public Trustee and Guardian Act—Public Trustee and Guardian (Investment Board) Appointment 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-56 (LR, 3 May 2021).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) Concession Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-83 (LR, 21 May 2021).

Road Transport (General) Driver Licence and Related Fees Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-63 (LR, 10 May 2021).

Road Transport (General) Fees for Publications Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-60 (LR, 10 May 2021).

Road Transport (General) Numberplate Fees Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-62 (LR, 10 May 2021).

Road Transport (General) Refund and Dishonoured Payments Fees Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-61 (LR, 10 May 2021).

Road Transport (General) Vehicle Registration and Related Fees Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-64 (LR, 10 May 2021).

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Regulation 2017—Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Parking Authority Declaration 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-52 (LR, 22 April 2021).

Unit Titles (Management) Act—Unit Titles (Management) (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-84 (LR, 21 May 2021).

Veterinary Practice Act—Veterinary Practice (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-53 (LR, 29 April 2021).

Water and Sewerage Act—Water and Sewerage (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-80 (LR, 20 May 2021).

Water Resources Act—Water Resources (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-71 (LR, 20 May 2021).

## **Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee Statement by chair**

**MS CLAY** (Ginninderra) (3.11), by leave: The committee sought advice on conflicts of interest with regard to Mr Braddock's motion on the Gungahlin town centre and was advised that there was no conflict of interest as, under the standing orders, this hinges on pecuniary matters. In seeking this advice and working through the issues brought up, the committee has received advice that if the Assembly passes the motion it will likely affect the committee's consideration of the matter that it is undertaking pursuant to the Planning and Development Act 2007. Members may wish to take this into account in considering the motion.

## **Environment—fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty**

**MS CLAY** (Ginninderra) (3.12): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) acknowledges that:

- (a) the scientific consensus is clear that human activities are primarily responsible for accelerating global climate change, and that the climate crisis now represents one of the preeminent threats to global civilisation;
- (b) the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported in 2018 that we must achieve net zero in greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of this Century in order to have a reasonable chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius;

- (c) the Climate Council reported in April 2021 that the majority of emissions cuts need to occur within the next decade to avoid major irreversible tipping points;
- (d) the ACT has been significantly impacted by climate change in recent years with the ACT experiencing:
  - (i) the hottest January on record in 2019;
  - (ii) the hottest ever day on 4 January 2020;
  - (iii) the most hazardous air quality in any city in the world in January 2020. This smoke event was directly caused by cross-border fires and is estimated to have resulted in 31 deaths; and
  - (iv) significant loss of flora and fauna through the Orroral Valley fires in January and February 2020, including damage to 80 percent of Namadgi National Park and 20 percent of Tidbinbilla;
- (e) climate impacts will get worse over time and our entire community is being impacted by the health and safety risks of fossil fuel expansion, particularly those who also face socioeconomic and health inequities, including people with underlying health conditions, our First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, those living in low-income households, those experiencing homelessness, the young, the elderly and those with a mental or physical disability;
- (f) our youth and future generations have the most to lose from a lack of immediate action to stop fossil fuel expansion as they face major and lifelong health, ecological, social, and economic impacts from prolonged and cumulative effects of climate change, including food and water shortages, infectious diseases, and natural disasters;
- (g) the ACT was the first State or Territory in Australia to declare a state of climate emergency in May 2019, recognising the worsening impacts of climate change on the community and that climate action requires urgent action across all levels of government;
- (h) the ACT Government has a continuing commitment to being at the forefront of meaningful climate action and reducing our demand for fossil fuels through:
  - (i) demonstrating our national and international leadership on climate change;
  - (ii) powering Canberra with 100 percent renewable electricity from 2020;
  - (iii) achieving zero net emissions by 2045 at the latest;
  - (iv) phasing out fossil fuel gas by 2045;
  - (v) delivering 30 percent tree canopy and 30 percent permeable surfaces coverage in our urban footprint;
  - (vi) encouraging the transition to zero emission vehicles and active transport; and
  - (vii) transitioning Canberra's built environment to be climate-ready and environmentally sustainable; and
- (i) the ACT Government continues to have work to do;

(2) notes that:

- (a) the unfortunately weak Paris Climate Agreement is silent on coal, oil and gas, an omission with respect to the supply and production of fossil fuels (the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions) that needs to be collectively addressed by other means;
- (b) global governments and the fossil fuel industry are currently planning to produce about 120 percent more emissions by 2030 than what is needed to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and avert catastrophic climate disruption, and such plans risk undoing the work of our city to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- (c) the fossil fuel industry is currently claiming over 50 percent of COVID-19 recovery funding from senior levels of government in the G20, thereby siphoning away recovery funding badly needed by cities and other industries;
- (d) the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure and expanded reliance on fossil fuels exposes communities to untenable risks to public health and safety at the local and global levels;
- (e) the economic opportunities presented by a clean energy transition far outweigh the opportunities presented by an economy supported by expanding fossil fuel use and extraction; and
- (f) the ACT Government is committed to working closely with the community, ensuring a just transition for those impacted by evolving industries and employment, and growing green industries and jobs;

(3) further notes that:

- (a) a new, global movement is emerging, calling for a new Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty that uses, as a guide, the three pillars of the existing nuclear non-proliferation treaty to:
  - (i) end new fossil fuel exploration and expansion (non-proliferation);
  - (ii) manage the phasing out of existing production (disarmament); and
  - (iii) develop equitable transition plans (peaceful use); and
- (b) Barcelona in Spain, Vancouver in Canada, Los Angeles in the United States, the City of Moreland in Victoria and two municipalities in the United Kingdom have endorsed this call for an international treaty action so far; and

(4) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) join with other cities, organisations, and individuals, to endorse the call for an international Treaty on Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation; and
- (b) send a letter to urge the Australian Government, and other States and Territories, to similarly endorse the global initiative for a Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty.

I seek the support of this Assembly for a proposed international treaty to stop the proliferation of fossil fuel. This is part of a global movement calling on governments for a treaty and is modelled on the successful anti-nuclear weapons movement. I want to spend a minute talking about that nuclear non-proliferation treaty, because it gives

me hope for the situation that we are currently in. Nearly 53 years ago on 1 July 1968, the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was signed. Just over 50 years ago that treaty came into effect and currently 191 countries are a party to it.

Despite its enormous significance and complexity, that treaty took just three years to negotiate. At the time it was first proposed, only five countries were armed with nuclear weapons but it was estimated that within 20 years there could be as many as 30. Instead, we think that only a few more nations acquired nuclear weapons. That treaty worked.

These non-proliferation treaties are based on three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use. Critics point to the continuing existence of nuclear warheads, but the fact remains that we have kept a lid on nuclear war since well before I was born thanks to a global movement. We did it before, and we can do it again. The bottom line is one of success. Through cooperation, we have saved ourselves from self-destruction.

We are facing another apocalypse now. We are in a climate emergency and once again we face the looming possibility of destruction. We could become victims of our own technology and unchecked ambition. We could take much of the living world along with us. We must act cooperatively, as we did with that first non-proliferation treaty. There is a growing movement that knows it is time for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. A treaty that only took three years from start to finish to set up all around the world—we did it before and we can do it again.

To be honest, at first I was not sure about this. When it comes to the climate, I have treaty fatigue. We already have the Kyoto protocol, the Paris agreement, the UN framework convention and our very own climate emergency declaration made right here in the Assembly. Surely, we have moved beyond the point where more words will help. Surely, we just need to get on with the job.

Before I was elected, I picked projects with really tangible outcomes. I was a climate activist. I ran a recycling company and I ran a carbon diet. When it comes to the environment, I am more about action than words; but when I took a closer look at this global movement, it made perfect sense.

A fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty would not be just another declaration. This call fills a vital gap. It tackles the supply side of fossil fuel. This is an aspect of climate policy left out of the Paris agreement. We need to deal with it if we are going to tackle climate change. We also need a just transition. We need to make sure people have energy and the jobs they need in the green economy.

Most actions so far have focused on reducing demand. Here in the ACT we are doing a lot in this space. We brought in 100 per cent renewable electricity based on Greens policy. We brought in light rail, which is now operating on that 100 per cent renewable electricity, also based on Greens policy. We took the nation's most progressive EV policy into the last election along with financial support to help people make their households more sustainable, and we are now implementing it with our Labor partners.



We are working towards energy efficient buildings, changing fossil fuel gas over to electricity and reducing transport emissions. From individuals, to corporations, to communities, to this government, many of us are doing our part to reduce our demand on fossil fuels; but we also need to phase out fossil fuel supply and we need to do it fast. We must have a robust international treaty on the supply side, and we must help people through these changes.

A fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty could keep large swathes of fossil fuel in the ground. It would start with an assessment of existing reserves and an agreement about how we phase-down production. It would align fossil fuel use with Paris agreement targets. It would help the poorest countries get through this difficult phase and help give them energy independence.

The proposed treaty would be modelled on the three key pillars, the first pillar being non-proliferation. This is an agreement not to exploit any new fossil fuel reserves. I understand this pillar well from my work in the climate activist movement. Rallies are really good at taking complex ideas and turning them into simple statements—we need to leave fossil fuel in the ground. We desperately need that first pillar right here in our own country. The Australia Institute recently released research showing that our federal government is subsidising fossil fuel by \$10.3 billion each year. That is \$19,686 every minute of every day, propping up an industry that is wrecking our climate.

The second pillar of the treaty is disarmament. That means phasing out fossil fuel infrastructure in a calm and orderly way. We are already well and truly running that second pillar in the ACT. The ACT Greens took a commitment to the last election to phase out fossil fuel gas by 2040. That plan was labelled by some as crazy last September, but I am pleased to say that closer examination has proven it to be the only sane course in a climate emergency.

We now have full government agreement to phase out all fossil fuel gas by 2045 at the very latest. There is actually no need to wait that long and we have already started the work now. Our government recently announced that it had overhauled plans for Whitlam to remove a proposed gas connection. The Molonglo commercial centre will be gas free, and I am looking forward to learning a lot about the transition away from fossil fuel gas from that project. Our new suburbs will not be connected to fossil fuel gas and will run on renewable electricity instead. It is really fantastic progress in less than a year and it shows how fast we can turn things around when we try.

The third pillar is peaceful use. This means financing low carbon alternatives through a global transition fund. The world is changing. We can lean in and create good change by getting off fossil fuel or we can passively sit back and wait for climate disaster and have the worst kind of change you ever imagined. Either way, the world is changing and we Greens do not want to leave anyone behind in that.

This third pillar is actually my favourite because it is where all the invention and the green jobs kick in. We are going to find new ways to do things, and there are so many opportunities. I know from personal experience as a green entrepreneur that we will

make so many new jobs. There are twice as many jobs in renewable energy than there are in fossil fuel projects. That is a story that runs right through the economy.

One thing that really struck me when I was reading up about this treaty is the argument that giant local corporations are not going to voluntarily give up their business models with the speed that we need to save ourselves and the planet. Nation states with fossil fuel gas, oil, and coal reserves will not walk away either. If we want change—the right kind of change—we have to make this happen.

There is an old concept in law and economics that is known as the tragedy of the commons and it runs like this. If you have a common good, like a piece of land that can be used by everyone, there is a risk that it will get overused. We should share, and in a perfect world we would. But people are not perfect. Someone looks at the village green and decides to get as much grass as they can for their cows and make a profit. This leads to overgrazing. Others see this and they worry that the grass is running out. What do they do? They do not fence off the village green; they add their own cows, and they make sure that they get the grass before it runs out. Everyone knows that overgrazing will kill the grass, but no one wants to be the first to pull out, and soon there is no more village green.

We are seeing this play out with fossil fuel. We know about climate change. We understand what fossil fuels are doing. We all agree that we need to stop mining, refining, selling and using fossil fuel, but no one wants to be the first to close their rig. It is time to fence off the village green and lock the gate. It is time to leave that fossil fuel in the ground.

Australia, for years, has been a shameless player in this tragic game. We have heard a lot of arguments at the federal level. We have heard the drug-dealer defence: “Someone else will supply the coal if we don’t.” We have heard the sibling defence: “I won’t stop unless China stops first.” We have heard the energy-poverty defence: “What about remote villages and poor communities who need cheap power?” This last one makes me really angry because those communities would benefit far more from small-scale, locally owned renewables. They would manage and control their own power and they would get out of poverty. The last thing they need is foreign fossil fuel exports from a nation that charges more than they can afford, or from some billionaire who puts profit ahead of people. Give them some green tech and some independence, and watch them make a better world.

It would be funny to watch this high school debate play out on our national stage if it were not a matter of life and death. I mean that quite literally. We have already seen fatal climate change right here in Canberra. Thirty-one people died during the “smokepocalypse” last year. We had the worst air quality of any city in the world. I remember reading about a woman who stepped off a plane at the Canberra Airport and died on the airstrip. That smoke was caused by the uncontrollable bushfires that come with climate change. We knew that we would get more fires with climate change. We also knew that we would get more hail, more storms, more floods, more droughts and more heatwaves. We have known all this for decades. But it is one thing to know something, and it is another to taste it and feel it and know that you, or someone you love, may die from it next time around.

My daughter is seven years old. She has never experienced a normal year. Since she was born, every year in Canberra was at least one degree above average. She does not know what a normal climate is. She has never lived in one and she probably never will. There is a piece of art hanging in my office about this. I was not allowed to bring props in here, so I invite everyone to come up and have a look at it. The artwork is made by one of my staff, who is also worried about climate change. She made her artwork on a loom, and it is a weaving of Australia's climate change data from 1910 to 2020. It moves from blues and greys a century ago to oranges and reds now. It is beautiful and it is terrifying. Last year she had to add a new colour, purple, because we broke all the records and the colours she had did not fit the data. We all lived through that purple year, and we all know what it looked like. We had fires, floods, hail, storms, smoke and heatwaves. I am truly frightened when I think about what the next colour is going to bring. By the time my daughter is my age, she will be living in the next colour and Canberra will not have a winter anymore.

We cannot wait until 2050 to act on this. A recent International Energy Agency report made it clear that to stay within a safe climate range, 1½ degrees, there is no more room for new coal, new oil and new gas infrastructure anywhere, starting now. Other countries are already taking action. New Zealand, France, Germany, Uruguay and Costa Rica are all divesting. They are stopping oil exploration and fracking. They are divesting from fossil fuel stocks and they are phasing out coal fired power.

Internationally, we already have agreements in place to ban mining in Antarctica and to ban exploration and mining in world heritage sites. Here in the ACT we do not have any fossil fuel reserves. You can bet that my mates would be locked onto the gates if we did. We cannot keep our fossil fuel in the ground because we do not have any. But what we can do is call on our federal government to do it, and we can get behind this push for a global fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. We can maintain our position at the forefront of climate action in this country. We can be a beacon of hope for all the seven-year-olds out there and for all the world leaders who seem to be incapable of acting. What we do in this next decade will determine our planet's future.

Today's motion calls on the ACT government to endorse the global movement for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. It calls on us to write to the Australian government urging them and other states and territories to do the same. If this motion passes, the ACT will become the highest level of government in the world to call for this treaty. But we will not be acting alone; the city of Moreland in Victoria, the city of Los Angeles, the city of Vancouver and the city of Barcelona have all endorsed calls for the treaty. So have more than 400 organisations.

This movement is supported by 101 Nobel prize winners, including the Dalai Lama. Over 1,300 scientists and academics have joined this call. This treaty would end the expansion of new fossil fuel projects. It would phase out existing projects fairly and in line with climate science. It would ensure a just transition globally for workers, communities and countries that have been dependent on fossil fuel. This treaty would mean an end to all publicly funded fossil fuel infrastructure. We would not have the federal budget that was just handed down. We would stop building rail links to coal ports. We would not pump \$600 million of taxpayer money into a gas fired power

station in the Hunter. We would stop the madness of sending billions of dollars in subsidies to a dead industry that is destroying the climate.

I was delighted to stand with national Greens leader Adam Bandt, ACT Greens leader Shane Rattenbury, and federal Greens candidate Tim Hollo last Friday to talk about this motion. I had not realised how important this was to the rest of the country until that morning. The ACT is a beacon of hope. We have such strong climate action here that I forgot how far behind Australia has fallen. We need to tell our federal, state and territory counterparts that it is possible and that we need to join together and act now. I commend this motion to the Assembly.

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (3.27): I thank Ms Clay for bringing this motion forward today. She has highlighted the fact that the ACT is leading the nation in climate action.

In 2019 the ACT became the first jurisdiction outside Europe to transition to 100 per cent renewable electricity, and just last year we achieved a 45 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels, exceeding our 2020 interim target. Now, as Ms Clay has indicated, we are focused on reaching net zero emissions by 2045. As a city, the best contribution we can make to the global effort to reduce emissions is to take real action ourselves to address climate change, and, in doing so, demonstrate how good public policy can be implemented at a sub-national government level, and how good policies can work. I believe that this is exactly what the ACT is doing.

We took an ambitious emissions reduction platform to the 2020 election, with a set of policies that supported and encouraged households through this rapid transition. Importantly, these policies will also help create up to 2,000 sustainable jobs as part of our plan to grow our employment base to 250,000 jobs by 2025. The territory budget for this fiscal year invested more than \$300 million over the next five years in the delivery of these climate action commitments, which include helping Canberra households to invest in renewable energy upgrades through the Sustainable Household Scheme—a scheme that will provide eligible households with access to zero-interest loans for purchases, including rooftop solar systems, household battery storage systems, electric heating and cooling, hot-water heat pumps and electric vehicle infrastructure. The scheme will extend to provide assistance for those wishing to enter into the electric vehicle revolution. The Sustainable Household Scheme will save families hundreds of dollars each year and contribute to a city-wide reduction in energy consumption. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that more than 4,500 households have already registered their interest in the scheme.

We are also getting on with the job of delivering the Big Canberra Battery—a distributed, large-scale battery storage system to harness emerging technology. The battery will provide at least 250 megawatts of power, contributing to a more stable electricity grid and producing a dampening effect on prices in the territory. Since our announcement to fund the building of the battery, several reputable companies—dozens, in fact—have expressed an interest in being involved in the project.

The government is also making it easier and more affordable for Canberrans to transition to electric vehicles. Just last month we announced a policy that will allow Canberrans who purchase new or second-hand zero-emission vehicles to have two years of free registration. This, combined with existing initiatives around not applying motor vehicle stamp duty to the purchase of these vehicles, makes a real difference to their affordability. We know that an important consideration for people when making the decision to purchase an EV is where it can be charged. That is why the government has committed to rolling out at least 50 new charging points across Canberra over the coming 12 months.

The ACT will continue to be a leader in our country and our region on climate action as we take the next important steps towards a zero-emissions future. But in doing so, it is important that we ensure vulnerable Canberrans are not left behind, whilst also creating sustainable jobs in the renewable energy sector. So in the ACT we do that hard work on the ground in support of households, businesses and families. I believe that all of this combined lends greater authority and credibility to our support for the call for an international treaty along the lines of Ms Clay's motion.

The motion accurately reflects ACT government policy and the ACT's leading role in Australia to address climate change and, very importantly, our desire to make this an equitable transition. Whilst it is fair to say—and many would agree—that international processes on climate action appear to drag on interminably, the more national and sub-national governments that lend their voices to the call, the quicker we will achieve consistent global action. I have made the observation in this place on numerous occasions that within Australia it is reassuring that states and territories—across the political divide, I might add—have filled the void on climate action in this country in the last decade, as, depressingly, at a commonwealth level we have seen the continuation of political games on this most significant issue.

So this is a good opportunity for the ACT to join an international call. I believe that we are well credentialed to do so in light of all of the policies, initiatives and achievements that we have in place. We have a credible voice in this debate, so I thank Ms Clay for bringing forward her motion today and I commend it to the Assembly.

**MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (3.34):** I welcome the opportunity to speak about the importance of our environment on behalf of the Canberra Liberals. The Canberra Liberals believe that nature must be protected and respected. Since 2016 the Canberra Liberals have supported our local climate change targets as they have evolved, including the 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2020, 40 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020, and the longer-term target of zero emissions by 2045, plus the five-yearly interim targets.

The Canberra Liberals' support for these goals means that the ACT is the first jurisdiction in Australia to have tripartisan support for local greenhouse gas emission targets, which is significant and worth celebrating. Despite the Canberra Liberals' ongoing support for these targets, it is unfortunate that the Labor-Greens government has a poor record—a record of non-consultation across the Assembly on such

important climate change plans. As I have noted before in this place, we still have seen no action by the government on the 10-year review of the Climate Act, and no call for public input. On this, the Canberra Liberals and the Canberra community are still waiting for leadership from the Greens leader and minister responsible for emissions reduction.

Australians are increasingly aware of the need to deal with climate change and the effects of climate change. As Ms Clay remarked, we saw these effects during the summer bushfires, with great damage to Canberra and places that Canberrans know well—the Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla. It is not only city folk who are concerned about our changing environment. People living in regional centres and country towns also take these matters seriously. Naturally, they are also concerned about jobs and ensuring that government-led actions to reduce carbon emissions do not cost them and their families their livelihoods.

The fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty has not been endorsed by any major state or national legislature around the world. The only council in Australia to adopt the treaty is the inner Melbourne city of Moreland, where the 11-member council has a majority Greens-Labor membership. Internationally, the highest-level endorsement has been from local governments and smaller areas like the city of Los Angeles and the city of Barcelona. In Los Angeles electricity prices are 53 per cent higher than the US nation-wide average, while Barcelona has some of the highest electricity prices in Europe.

As I have said, the Canberra Liberals support action on climate change and want to work cooperatively with the ACT community to reduce our emissions and make changes to deal with the current and future impacts of climate change in our region. This motion could be seen as a distraction by the government to take attention away from the lack of action in some areas on climate change. For example, as I mentioned earlier, the minister appears to have forgotten to establish a review of the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act. The minister's development of the current climate change strategy was late, and he did not liaise with all parties in the Assembly to seek broad consensus to deal with what is supposed to be a shared problem. The minister says that the next strategy is due one year after the next Assembly election and it is something for the next government to develop, even though the last one took three years to develop.

If the ACT Greens really wanted to do something about fossil fuels, why wouldn't they have done more about replacing fossil fuels in the ACT government fleet? In late April, Auditor-General Michael Harris described the government's failure to include sufficient charging infrastructure in the new ACT government buildings in Dickson and Civic as a missed opportunity. And he warned that a lack of electric vehicle charging stations in the ACT may hamper the public sector adopting a zero-emissions vehicle fleet, with public servants rightfully concerned that they will be unable to charge their vehicles.

If the ACT Greens really wanted to do something about fossil fuels, why have they supported the brand new gas-fuelled government office on London Circuit, as they know how to build electric buildings like the one in Dickson, which uses only

renewable energy? And why do the Greens continue to support more diesel fossil-fuel buses to the ACTION fleet, even though these buses will be around beyond our zero emissions target date?

The International Energy Agency's landmark report *Net Zero by 2050—A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector* states that even by 2050 fossil fuels will play a role as we reach net zero. It is worth noting what the IEA reveals that net zero means a huge decline in the use of fossil fuels, dropping from almost four-fifths of the total energy supply today to slightly over one-fifth by 2050, and that fossil fuels that remain in 2050 are used in goods where carbon is embodied in the product, such as plastics, and sectors where low emissions technology options are scarce. It also notes that fossil fuels will continue to play a role in heavy industry, construction and transport where emissions are hardest to abate, and that we need to invest in technologies to mitigate those emissions rather than banning them outright. This includes carbon capture and storage, which Labor's national platform is committed to but the Greens oppose.

Critically, the IEA has been crystal clear in stating that action is required. The executive director of the IEA has remarked in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the gap between rhetoric and what is happening in the real world, is just getting larger. He has said:

When I look at all the countries which have come up with targets and commitments, very few of them have credible energy policies put in place.

There is no point in feel-good targets with no road map to achieve them. As I said earlier, there is no point in climate acts when the Greens, Labor and the minister ignore the legislative requirement to review their own laws. The Canberra Liberals support a target of net zero emissions by 2045 and we agree that we need a comprehensive plan to get there—one that is achieved with genuine community input, tripartisan consultation and legislative review. Finally, it says everything about the priorities of this Labor-Greens government that they would rather make believe that the ACT Legislative Assembly is the UN General Assembly instead of taking genuine action on pressing issues that directly affect Canberrans, including rising electricity prices, increased costs of living, housing and homelessness, hospital waiting times and worrying education standards.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (3.41): I am proud to speak in support of this motion today. We face a climate emergency—as we recognised here in the Assembly in May 2019—and we need urgent and transformative change to protect life as we know it. For too long we have been burning fossil fuels and damaging natural ecosystems in the name of industrialisation and continued economic growth, with little thought for future generations, other species or the Earth that supports us.

The consequences of these actions are shockingly clear. Our climate is changing. Here in the ACT, as Ms Clay has outlined, we are already experiencing some of those projected impacts, including extreme heat, intense and devastating bushfires, and impending loss of native species. Globally, the impacts are equally stark, and they are reported on a regular basis in the media—sea-level rise, the loss of ice, the thawing of the tundra and the retreat of glaciers. All of these are being reported and measured at

the moment. These are not future projections, although they are projected to get worse in the future.

But I do not want to focus on these impacts today. I want to focus on the solutions, because the solutions are clear, and they are available to us now. This call for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty is about shifting the global focus to these solutions and accelerating our global response. The time to act is now, and we need to move quickly and work together if we are to succeed. Over 1,200 of the world's eminent scientists, academics and researchers have supported the call for this treaty.

They state:

We ... call on governments around the world to adopt and implement a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, as a matter of urgency, to protect the lives and livelihoods of present and future generations ...

They go on to explain:

... efforts to reduce demand for fossil fuels will be undermined if supply continues to grow. Continued production means either that fossil fuels will continue to be burnt for energy—pushing the world towards catastrophic global warming—or that the industry and countries reliant on fossil fuels will face massive stranded assets, stranded workers, and stranded economies,

They go on to say:

While the Paris Agreement lays an important foundation for action on the demand-side of the equation, without international cooperation and policy processes focusing on the supply of fossil fuels, countries will continue to overshoot their already insufficient emissions targets.

If we are to meet the goal of the Paris agreement to keep warming to below 1.5 degrees, global greenhouse gas emissions need to be at least 45 per cent lower by 2030. To have a chance of meeting this target, we must stop burning fossil fuels as soon as possible. The burning of coal, oil and gas is the greatest contributor to climate change, responsible for almost 80 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions since the industrial revolution. The treaty will call to end the expansion of fossil fuel production, phase out existing production of fossil fuels, and invest in a transformational plan to ensure 100 per cent access to renewable energy globally, while supporting a just transition for workers and fossil fuel-dependent nations.

The global carbon budget concept is useful for understanding why we need to act immediately. If we wish to keep warming to below 1.5 or two degrees Celsius, then the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions must be kept below the carbon budget set by nature for that amount of warming. The budget is not an annual one, but rather a cumulative one for all time—past, present and future. The carbon budget cannot be modified to suit the needs of humans; it is a fundamental feature of the way the Earth works. Once the carbon budget has been spent, net emissions must be held to zero from that point onward to avoid exceeding the temperature target.



So the longer we delay this action, the quicker we will need to cut emissions and the less room we will have for error. The 2020 Global Carbon Budget report estimated that we need to cut global emissions by one to two billion tonnes each year from 2020 to 2030 to be on track to keep warming to below two degrees. Bear in mind that the Paris agreement talked about 1.5 degrees. Each year that we delay taking this action will mean greater reductions are needed in future years.

Our experience here in the ACT demonstrates the opportunities that come with embracing and supporting renewable energy. Our 100 per cent renewable electricity target, and the reverse auctions we used to achieve it, attracted over \$500 million in local investment and provided a vital boost to the Australian renewables sector that was struggling in the absence of strong national leadership. There had been a complete vacuum, and the people who won those contracts and people in industry will tell you that it was the ACT government's reverse auctions that kept the large-scale renewable sector afloat in the terrible years of the Tony Abbott climate policies—or absence of climate policies.

Australia has a great opportunity to become a renewable energy superpower, and could aim to export zero-emissions renewable energy and technologies to the world. In doing this, we can create thousands of zero-emissions jobs in renewable electricity, green hydrogen, green manufacturing and technical expertise. These projects could reinvigorate rural areas and provide green jobs for Australians all over the country. The phase-out of fossil fuels is not only possible; it is necessary—and it will lead to a better future for all of us. We do not have time for excuses, and we do not have time for federal government policies that protect the fossil fuel industry at the expense of our future. We need decisive action nationally and globally. Anything less is a deliberate decision to expose our communities to unacceptable harm and future climate risks.

That is why the ACT has been so clear in its action. It is worth reflecting on what the ACT has done because Ms Castley has done that classic thing. A little bit of research and a little bit of knowledge can be presented so that it sounds as if you know what you are talking about when it is used to tell a very inaccurate story. The ACT government fleet, for example—

**Ms Castley:** That is so condescending.

**MR RATTENBURY:** No, we heard the speech, and we heard all the misrepresentations that were in it. The ACT government fleet, for example, was recently recognised by the Australasian Fleet Management Association for the outstanding work that has been achieved. It is generally recognised as being the largest zero-emission vehicle fleet in Australia. And, yes, we have a few more vehicles that we need to transition, but that is the policy. And, yes, the Auditor-General did make some findings for improvement but you cannot deny that the ACT has done more than anybody when it comes to transitioning our fleet.

Ms Castley threw in a red herring about electricity prices in Los Angeles and Barcelona. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that ACT electricity prices, even with

the increases that we are going to see this year, remain comparable to electricity prices anywhere else in Australia. We have achieved that while achieving 100 per cent renewable electricity. That is a fact that was conveniently left out of that red herring reference to Los Angeles and Barcelona.

In terms of Ms Castley's ongoing concern about the review of the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010, I sent a letter to her yesterday outlining the steps that the government has taken. In that letter I said that the review was initiated in April this year and is due to be completed by September 2021. That work is now well underway. I noted that the act states that the review must occur as soon as practicable after the end of the Act's 10th year of operation. The act was notified on 4 November 2010, meaning that the review must be initiated as soon as practicable after November 2020. Ms Castley has asked me on occasions why it was not done in October. That is because that is what the act says. The review will assess whether objectives are being achieved, and will identify any required changes to policy settings in the operation of the act. I am pleased to update Ms Castley and let her know that that letter is in her email when she wants to have a look at it.

Finally, there were a number of comments about the Greens' policy on the building at 220 London Circuit. That building was built with gas, much to my disappointment. We have subsequently managed to change the policy. I explained this in response to Ms Lee's question in recent hearings. That contract was signed before the policy was adopted. The Greens were not able to get that policy agreed to, but the policy has now been changed. That is why subsequent buildings, like the Dickson building, are being done under that new policy which we were able to bring into effect in the ACT—again, I think, leading the country in that regard.

Finally, when it comes to diesel buses, our position is that no more diesel buses should be purchased, and I believe that is now government policy. No more diesel buses will be purchased for the ACT. After having clarified those points, I thank Ms Clay for moving this important motion today and I commend it to the Assembly.

**MS CLAY** (Ginninderra) (3.51), in reply: I thank the members for their kind words about this motion and for their consistent tripartisan support for really strong action on climate. It has been a pleasure to watch, at the ACT government level, the really good tripartisan support, and I am really sad that we are not getting tripartisan support on this one. I am a bit puzzled by the comment that we did not try and consult with the Canberra Liberals. I did contact Ms Lee's office seven times and I heard back once.

**Mr Rattenbury:** Only seven?

**MS CLAY:** Only seven. I thought that if I contacted the office more often than that I might be a bit of a climate stalker, and I decided to stop. We tried really, really hard. I always want to get tripartisan support on any climate action because I think that it is so important. We have to put the climate wars aside. We have done that in this house many, many times, and that is why we have such great action here.

We have heard about a lot of the really tangible, firm actions that the ACT has taken. Mr Rattenbury outlined those. We have seen some really great improvements and a

massive and rapid change from a fossil fuel economy to a growing green economy. We are not there yet but we are well and truly on the road and we need to keep doing that tangible work. But we need to remember that we have a leadership role as well. This treaty would call on Australia to leave fossil fuel in the ground and to stop subsidising a dead industry. This is part of a global push to phase out fossil fuels. This treaty would ensure a just transition and it would ensure that we leave no member of our community behind.

We have all lived through climate change, here. We all know what it is. We have all seen the fires. We all lived through smokepocalypse. A lot of other people did not. They cannot hear me; they are gone. We understand what climate crisis is. Nobody can deny it anymore. Anyone who loves our bush capital knows that the biggest threat we are currently facing is climate change, and we know that we need to do everything we can at every level of government, at every level of business and at every level of the community. We need tangible leadership targets. We need to do all of it. We need to do it now. Frankly, we needed to do it yesterday, but I do not have a time machine and we cannot go back.

If we pass this motion, this call for a treaty would be a testament to how Canberra is leading the country on climate change. We know that other cities are looking to us as leaders in this field. That really came home to me last Friday, when we were visited by our national leader, Adam Bandt. It is difficult to remember, sometimes, how different things are in Canberra from the rest of Australia and the rest of the world. People are looking at the rapid changes that we are making here, at what we are doing—with transport and EVs, with household sustainable schemes, with our transition to 100 per cent renewable, and with the massive uptake we have seen in the green economy and green industries—and they are seeing that it is genuinely possible. It is a beacon of hope and we need to keep demonstrating that.

This motion would pave the way for many other jurisdictions around the country and around the world. The call for the treaty has been around for only a few months and already many jurisdictions have signed on. We would be the highest level of government, but we will not be the first. I think there will be many, many more councils, states, territories and countries that will join this call quite quickly. I am really glad to say that, because we do not have a lot of time to waste here. It is time to end the production of fossil fuel. It is time to pave the way into a just transition and it is time to call on our federal government and our state and territory counterparts to take the actions that we know are needed and to do that right now. I commend this motion to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Justice—Canberra Community Law**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (3.55): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) Canberra Community Law (CCL) has been providing free legal services to Canberrans on low incomes for over 30 years, specialising in public housing, Centrelink and race and disability discrimination law; and
  - (b) CCL continues to experience increased demand and greater complexity due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (2) further notes:
- (a) short-term COVID-related funding ceases by 30 June 2021;
  - (b) private and non-government funding has also reduced during the pandemic; and
  - (c) CCL faces a significant shortfall in resources to maintain current service levels from 1 July 2021; and
- (3) calls on the ACT government to provide funding certainty for CCL within the next seven days.

Canberra is home to so many amazing organisations made up of dedicated and hardworking individuals who go to work every day seeking to improve the lives of others. Canberra Community Law—or CCL as it is affectionately known in acronym-heavy Canberra—is an independent community legal centre that provides flexible and accessible legal services free of charge to members of the community facing financial barriers or other challenges. It is the only free legal service that specialises in public housing, Centrelink and race and disability discrimination law.

Canberra Community Law has been standing up for struggling Canberrans for almost 35 years. CCL is ably led by the inspiring Genevieve Bolton. Genevieve is a recipient of the Australian Human Rights Commission Law Award, a Medal of the Order of Australia, and was named on the ACT Women’s Honour Roll in 2018. Genevieve and her team have responded to the changing and increasing legal needs of Canberrans with professional, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive legal services. The support they provide empowers their clients to face their challenges and aspire to a better life.

When the pandemic hit last year, CCL moved quickly to establish a COVID-19 legal clinic and the Canberra covid legal help website in response to heightened demand for legal assistance during this enormously challenging time. Job losses, associated mental health issues and increased instances of domestic and family violence have created a greater need for community legal services. Between July and December 2020, compared with the same period in 2019, CCL saw a 10 per cent increase in total clients, with a 17.2 per cent increase in clients in the critical areas of housing and social services.

Last year alone CCL provided free legal help to 859 clients, 93 per cent of whom were experiencing financial disadvantage and 68 per cent of whom were experiencing or at risk of homelessness. There was also a significant increase in the total number of legal advices, up by 25 per cent, confirmation of the increased workload across the organisation.

One of the people who Genevieve and her team have helped through the pandemic is a Housing ACT tenant, Judith. Judith had been a model Housing ACT tenant for over a decade. She became the victim of abuse from her neighbours and managed to obtain personal protection orders or PPOs against her neighbours. To escape the abuse, Judith exhausted her savings, staying in motels and other accommodation, even resorting to sleeping in her car for over 50 nights. Judith had to leave her job and became physically and mentally unwell. Strains on government services during the pandemic meant that Judith was unable to access crisis or low-income accommodation. With CCL's experience, expertise and support, Judith was placed on the priority housing list and thankfully is now living safely in a private complex.

Another area in which CCL do a lot of work is supporting Canberrans to navigate and deal with the Centrelink system. During the pandemic, one of CCL's clients, William, had his JobSeeker claim rejected by Centrelink. William was experiencing extreme financial hardship and faced eviction from his community housing unit. William found it difficult to access Centrelink services during COVID-19 and had difficulty working through the issues and systems on the phone.

CCL met with William and helped him gather supporting documentation, including financial statements and medical reports demonstrating that his gambling was being medically treated as an addiction. CCL drafted a submission to the Authorised Review Officer and made oral submissions arguing for the JobSeeker preclusion period to be reduced, based on special circumstances. Thanks to the team at CCL, William received an arrears payment and is now working with a psychologist on measures to better manage his money.

An area that Genevieve and her team are particularly proud of is their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT. The Dhurrawang Aboriginal Human Rights program is a specialist legal service that provides advice and representation to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT. The Dhurrawang program also runs a specialist outreach service with the AMC, assisting inmates with race discrimination and other human rights claims.

Additional funding last year allowed CCL to increase its front-line legal services around the pandemic so that Canberrans like Judith and William were able to receive assistance when government services were under pressure. However, this short-term COVID assistance funding that CCL received during the pandemic ceases on 30 June this year, in about four weeks time.

While this funding comes to an end, the strain on government services remains high and the need for community legal assistance continues at an increased level. The lockdown in Victoria and this morning's declaration of COVID exposure sites along the South Coast are stark reminders that the pandemic continues and its impacts will remain for quite a while longer.

Canberrans like Judith and William still need support from Canberra Community Law. Without urgent funding certainty from the ACT government, Canberra Community Law faces an immediate reduction in staffing and will need to reduce its service

capacity by 20 per cent. This equates to 170 of some of the most vulnerable Canberrans in our community going without the vital legal services that they need.

I bring this motion today because it is my duty to stand up for and be a voice for some of the most vulnerable members of our community and those Canberrans who rely on the services and support that CCL provide. These are the Canberrans that, without the services provided by CCL, will be denied access to justice, will be denied basic but vital legal advice and representation. This vitally important organisation must get certainty of funding going forward from the ACT government as soon as possible, so that they can keep providing these free and vital services to the most vulnerable members of our community.

There is a budget submission before the government right now and I urge the Attorney-General, I urge this government, to provide Canberra Community Law with funding certainty within the next seven days. Canberra Community Law needs this. Some of the most vulnerable members of our Canberra community need this. The ACT government can provide this certainty. I urge the government to provide it as soon as possible. I commend my motion to the Assembly and urge all members of the chamber to support it.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (4.03): I thank Ms Lee for bringing this motion today on a matter about which I am quite passionate. The motion reflects the important work done by Canberra Community Law in helping some of the most vulnerable Canberrans and notes that, for those services to continue, they need adequate funding.

Canberra's legal assistance sector is actually composed of the Legal Aid Commission and a variety of community legal centres, which include Canberra Community Law. I am really aware of the funding pressures that the CLCs are currently facing, and over the past several months I have been meeting with their leaders, hearing loud and clear about how adequate resourcing is necessary to do their incredible work for people sorely in need.

The ACT Greens have long been supporters of our community legal centres, having secured commitments through the past several parliamentary agreements to improve and expand upon them. We fundamentally believe that these services provide a real gap filler between those that can access legal aid and those that can afford private legal support.

In this Assembly the Greens have committed to ensuring well-funded community legal centres. In the parliamentary agreement for the Eighth Assembly we secured an agreement for increased funding to the Aboriginal Legal Service, and in the Seventh Assembly we secured a commitment to establish a free legal service for homeless people. That service is today known as Street Law, within Canberra Community Law. That did not exist until the Greens brought that policy forward in 2008. In that Seventh Assembly we also campaigned to bring about the community legal centre hub, and that building now stands on Barry Drive and is the home for a number of these

services and it really gives them a terrific opportunity to be co-located and draw benefit from working with each other and combining their efforts.

Canberra Community Law is, of course, one of Canberra's community legal centres. It does provide free legal assistance to people with housing issues, those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, with social security problems, experiencing race or disability discrimination or with other complex socio-legal difficulties. The people whose lives can be turned around by Canberra Community Law are among the most vulnerable in our city. These are people who are very close to falling through the gaps, and the government applauds and appreciates the transformative work by the staff of Canberra Community Law.

The Women's Legal Centre is another of Canberra's CLCs. It provides vital legal support in a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed way to vulnerable women, in areas such as domestic and family violence, family law, child protection and employment. Some of the stories about what the Women's Legal Centre has been able to do for some women who are really on the edge of disaster are genuinely inspiring.

The Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT is, of course, another key part of Canberra's network of community legal centres, providing free legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the areas of criminal law, care and protection, family law and social support.

Another CLC serving Canberra's most in need is the Consumer Law Centre, which provides support to people who have issues with consumer credit, debt recovery and bankruptcy, to name a few. This kind of work is especially more important now that the commonwealth government is seeking to loosen lending standards, and that is a measure that is opposed by many of the state and territory governments who know that this is going to have a real impact at the ground level. What the federal government is actually seeking to do is contrary to the advice of the royal commission into the excesses of the banking industry.

Finally, of course, we have the Environmental Defenders Office, which provides free and low-cost legal services to protect our land, air and water. The EDO works with community members, conservation groups and the traditional custodians to achieve these really important outcomes.

I express both my and the government's sincere gratitude for the hard work that our CLCs put in to turn people's lives around when they are at crisis point. As I have mentioned, Legal Aid ACT is the other part of the legal assistance sector in Canberra. I recently had the opportunity to visit Legal Aid and see how hard their staff work across criminal, family and civil areas of law. I also saw the innovative approaches that they take to make sure they can provide an appropriate and personal touch and make sure that people are given the best support that they can get and have their best chance to get their lives on track when they find themselves having difficulty with legal issues.

Having painted a picture of the full community legal sector in Canberra, let me turn to funding. The legal assistance sector is funded in the ACT as part of a national

framework called the National Legal Assistance Partnership. This is an agreement between all states and territories with the commonwealth for funding for legal services.

Over the course of this five-year agreement, Canberra Community Law will receive approximately \$3.525 million. The Aboriginal Legal Service will receive approximately \$3.994 million, and the Women's Legal Centre will receive \$5.312 million. These funding numbers that I have just informed the Assembly about do not account for COVID-19. The pandemic has caused a significant surge in demand for community legal assistance. Ms Lee provided some examples that Canberra Community Law have experienced, and I know that others are experiencing similar spikes in demand.

This prompted the commonwealth, in partnership with ACT government funding—both levels of government—to provide additional funds to the legal assistance sector to deal with this surge. We were clearly advised that this was going to be the case. People anticipated this surge in demand. But this funding was provided on a one-year basis when it was first provided last year. Of course, at the time we did not know what the duration of the impacts would be. I am grateful that the community legal centres were able to use this additional funding to take on a huge amount of extra work and to support our community at a time of significant need.

Many of the problems caused by the pandemic are not immediately legal. The pandemic has caused financial issues, has driven relationship breakdowns or has driven already dysfunctional relationships to crisis point. At crisis point, a problem does not necessarily become a legal one immediately. Even though the pandemic has caused the problem, we may not see that legal demand right away. We have certainly seen some but, in fact, we are likely to see more of it continuing in the future.

I have also heard from the community that these problems have become more complex. If a woman needs to leave her partner, that might be her immediate need. But what then of any children or property? What happens to the housing situation? And then once her safety can be catered for, how do you go through the family law system? These are all protracted issues. They are not things that generally resolve themselves within 12 months.

Despite these protracted needs caused by the pandemic, and about which we were warned—and we are seeing that level of demand remain stubbornly high—the commonwealth government has decided not to continue the funding that was provided for the initial 12 months. I was disappointed that in the recent federal budget that did not come through, because clearly the cases being outlined by the community legal centres show that that demand has continued to be there and we have not seen a slowdown in that demand occur. I am not sure why the commonwealth decided not to continue that support, because plainly the need still exists.

The commonwealth did provide increased funding to women's legal centres. I still do not have an exact figure for what that will mean for the Women's Legal Centre in the ACT. It has been a little difficult to get those numbers. But I do thank the



commonwealth for that support. I think that is an important investment and that will ease the pressure on one of our community legal centres.

While the commonwealth did observe the need in one area, it does beggar belief that it would fail to recognise the needs of all vulnerable people. The COVID-19 funding was provided for the pandemic. But, as we know, the pandemic is not over, and though it has been less intense its effects are persisting. People are continuing to need this support and the commonwealth has not stepped up in the federal budget to provide that ongoing support, which would have been very welcome and which would have made a significant difference.

We are currently going through our own budget process here in the ACT. As members know, it is a little later this year. We only just did the last budget through February-April and our next budget is due in August. I am keenly aware that community legal centres, including Canberra Community Law, have a very real need to continue resourcing their indispensable work.

As we are talking about people's jobs here, we will also be aware that those staff need to know as soon as possible whether their jobs will continue—not just the service delivery but the staff who deliver those services. That is why I am glad to say that publicly now, because we have heard about the need for funding. We will provide that certainty as soon as we can within the budget process. I have spoken personally to a number of leaders of these organisations and said that as soon as I can provide them that certainty we will provide them with that information.

To that end, I do have an amendment to Ms Lee's motion. It has been circulated. It reflects the needs of the whole sector, all the community legal sectors, quite a number of whom are facing budgetary pressures, particularly in light of the failure of the commonwealth budget to provide that to them. It also addresses the fact that we are working on the budget right now and makes clear that we will provide that information to the sector as soon as practical. I am not quite sure when that will be. We are actively working on it right now. I do not know if it will be within seven days but it will be as soon as we possibly can.

To that end, despite the fact that I do have an amendment, I welcome and appreciate the fact that Ms Lee has brought this issue to the chamber today, because support for our community legal centres is vital. They do provide such an important role in our community. I think it has provided us an important opportunity for this whole chamber to reinforce our support for the community legal sector.

I commend my amendment to the Assembly. I think that it reflects the issues raised. It does make the point that we are disappointed by the failure of the federal government in the budget to support the whole sector. As I say, I acknowledge the support for the women's legal centres in particular, but it has left a gap in areas like Legal Aid and the Canberra Community Law and others.

I now move the amendment that I have circulated in my name.

Omit all words after "That this Assembly", substitute:

“(1) notes:

- (a) Community Legal Centres (CLCs) are a key support in Canberra’s legal assistance sector, alongside Legal Aid ACT. Together they provide a range of valuable and specialised legal services, helping to support vulnerable and disadvantaged Canberrans;
- (b) ACT CLCs include the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT, Canberra Community Law, Women’s Legal Centre, the Consumer Law Centre, and the Environmental Defenders Office; and
- (c) demand for legal assistance in Canberra has grown and become more complex as a result of COVID-19. This increased pressure remains;

(2) further notes:

- (a) the Federal and ACT Governments have jointly provided short-term COVID-related funding to the legal assistance sector until 30 June 2021;
- (b) the latest Federal Government Budget did not continue this funding for the majority of ACT CLCs, leaving them at risk of a shortfall in resources to maintain current service levels from 1 July 2021;
- (c) sources of private and non-government funding to the legal assistance sector have decreased during the pandemic; and
- (d) the ACT Government will make funding decisions regarding the ACT’s legal assistance sector as part of its 2021-22 Budget process, and advise the sector as soon as practical; and

(3) calls on the Federal Government to recommit support for the ACT’s legal assistance sector.”

I commend the amendment to the Assembly.

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (4.14): I stand to speak in support of Ms Lee’s motion. As the shadow minister for housing, I spend seemingly more than half my life advocating for people who have fallen through the cracks of housing or who are about to fall through. And those cracks seem to be getting wider. For that cohort, Canberra Community Law is the critical last line of defence against homelessness. I implore the government to grant them the certainty that would enable these services to continue.

Based on what has been said in the chamber, I do not think that there is any disagreement on this particular aspect of this debate. I cannot overstate the importance of this organisation and of some of the organisations that have been added to by Mr Rattenbury in this debate.

Particularly when it comes to Canberra Community Law, those who are staring down the barrel of the prospect of homelessness are always, always, facing severe economic challenges. They are just about never able to fend for themselves in the legal space. And the services provided by CCL, the understanding that they have in this space and, I guess, the genuine human ability to actually care, are unmatched.

Their importance has been elevated even further by two things of the government’s doing: (a) the discontinuation of funding for the Tenants Union ACT, which this Labor-Greens government did in 2019; and (b) the extreme housing affordability

crisis in the ACT, which is in big part due to decisions made by this government in the land release, the taxation and the residential tenancies policy space. It beggars belief that a Labor-Greens government could create such a dire problem for so many people and then not create funding certainty for an organisation like Canberra Community Law, which provides these services to such vulnerable people at a time of crisis.

In regard to the amendment from Mr Rattenbury, this is the ACT Legislative Assembly. This is not the federal parliament. This is not the United Nations. We seem to have a grasp of that on this side but I am not sure that there is a grasp of it on the other side. We are keen to debate things that are within the control of this Assembly.

I often wonder how on earth we fill in the time here. When did we wrap up for lunch this morning? Was it quarter past 11 or 11 o'clock or something? I wonder how we would fill in the time here if indeed, by some progressive miracle, Mr Albanese found himself Prime Minister at some stage. What on earth are you going to talk about? What are you going to fill the space up in here with? If you cannot have a crack at Morrison every day, what is it that you are going to talk about? We would very much sooner be speaking about things that are within our control.

When it comes to this motion, let us walk you through this. We have a Liberal leader who has brought a motion to this chamber which calls on the ACT government to provide funding certainty for Canberra Community Law within the next seven days. That has come from a Liberal, and a Greens member has amended the motion and removed that. What is going on in here? What is going on in this place?

In closing, I quote from the Canberra Community Law Executive Director and Principal Solicitor, Genevieve Bolton, who is reported in the *City News* today as saying:

“There’s also a housing crisis in the ACT at the moment in terms of public housing stock and crisis accommodation ...

“It’s almost impossible to access crisis accommodation and there’s very limited public housing stock at present which has generated a lot of work for us in terms of people contacting us seeking our advocacy for them to get onto the most urgent list.”

That is from Genevieve Bolton. As the shadow minister for housing, I can back up her claim, because the same people who are contacting Canberra Community Law are contacting my office as well. They are contacting my office in a state of despair. For the most part, they report that their calls for help are left unanswered by either one of the housing ministers. If we cannot do this job with two housing ministers, maybe go with three. I do not know. But I digress. These vulnerable Canberrans are in crisis. Please do not leave them behind.

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (4.19): I rise today to say a few words in support of Canberra Community Law and

the great work they do in providing services to detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. Canberra Community Law plays an important role in providing access to justice for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. They provide specialist legal services to detainees at AMC. These programs include the women in prison legal employment sessions and the Dhurrawang AMC legal clinic.

The women in prison legal employment sessions provide legal education and advice to women at AMC. This program commenced its pilot in April 2019 and since then over 60 women detainees have sought legal advice from a lawyer. Since its commencement, the program has also run 17 information sessions, which have been attended by over 230 participants. Each session is delivered by a Canberra Community Law staff member and a subject matter expert. Sessions focus on various legal topics such as victim support, child and youth protection services, Centrelink and housing. The program also delivers information sessions on topics raised by the women themselves.

Canberra Community Law also established the Dhurrawang specialist clinic, which is a new specialist outreach service designed to complement the women in prison legal employment sessions. The Dhurrawang specialist clinic focuses on reaching the AMC male detainee population, particularly those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The pilot Dhurrawang AMC clinic aims to facilitate early referrals to solicitors who can assist with legal issues and to advise and represent Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander peoples in CCL's area of expertise.

Getting legal advice early is crucial to supporting detainees at AMC as they navigate the legal system, housing and family arrangements and an array of other issues. Bringing these services to detainees increases the accessibility of legal advice and is hugely beneficial. I recently met with Canberra Community Law, who told me a bit about the varied advice and wraparound services that they provide to detainees, based on assessments of each person's needs.

I commend them on their work in bringing crucial services and advice to detainees at AMC. Their work is greatly appreciated and valued by many. I support the motion as amended by Mr Rattenbury.

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (4.22): In closing, my motion is very straightforward. It acknowledges the amazing work of Canberra Community Law. Their pleas, their very public pleas, for certainty of funding, so they can continue to do the work they do for our vulnerable Canberrans, have been publicly documented.

As they are renowned for doing, the Greens have absolutely hijacked the spirit, the wording and the intent of the motion. The Attorney-General's amendment is a disrespectful response to an organisation that provides a free legal advice and service to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. To change my motion so completely, to escape from and divert any responsibility whatsoever, shows arrogance and a complete lack of care.

The Attorney-General is very quick to jump to criticism of the federal government when it comes to funding, yet he and his government cannot even provide certainty of ongoing ACT funding at the last hour.

We know from experience that the Attorney-General is extremely good at platitudes and talking the talk, and we heard it again today—all the right words. “These organisations are doing all the great things; they are doing so much for our Canberra community.” Yet, when we read the amendment that he has moved to my motion, it shows an absolute lack of respect and a lack of heart for some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Today is 2 June. What my motion seeks comes after months of pleas from the sector to provide certainty that they will be able to continue to provide those vital services to our community. There is now less than one month to go before their current funding runs out. For the Attorney-General to seek to completely amend my motion to remove any reference to his government providing any certainty, any reassurance or any support to the sector is heartless and cruel. To change the motion to merely note that the ACT government will “advise the sector as soon as practicable”—in other words, “whenever we want”—is heartless and cruel.

To divert any responsibility for the funding shortfall that our community legal centres are facing, the services that are provided by Canberrans for Canberrans, in a lot of the areas of law that are passed in this chamber, shows again a complete lack of respect for the work they do and a lack of care for the people who receive those services. It is heartless and cruel.

May it be known that if the Attorney-General’s delaying of the reforms to domestic and family violence were not enough to show his lack of heart for our most vulnerable Canberrans, today, the day that he rejected the call to provide funding certainty to the sector, is a cementing of his lack of heart for some of our most vulnerable.

I move the following amendment to the Attorney-General’s amendment to my motion:

Omit paragraphs (2) and (3), substitute:

“(2) calls on the ACT Government to provide funding certainty for the ACT’s CLC within the next seven days.”

In my amendment I acknowledge the ACT’s community legal centres and agree with paragraph (1) of the Attorney-General’s amendment, in acknowledging the great work that all of these organisations do. The Aboriginal Legal Service NSW-ACT, Canberra Community Law, of course, the Women’s Legal Centre, Consumer Law Centre, and the Environmental Defenders Office are organisations that provide enormously important, vital and specialist legal services to members of our community who are doing it tough. The Attorney-General spoke earlier about their important work, and I acknowledge that we are both in agreement about the importance of their work.

Whilst we are talking about the Aboriginal Legal Service, to echo some of the sentiments of Mr Parton, this is a government that have absolutely and utterly failed our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Under their watch, we have the highest Indigenous incarceration rates in the country. Under their watch, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans are almost 20 times more likely to be incarcerated. This is a disgraceful legacy of the Labor-Greens government.

If that was not shocking and disgusting enough, they will not even provide certainty of funding to the very organisation that is there, picking up the pieces, for the vulnerable members of our community who need them the most. This organisation is there for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans who need support as a direct result of the utter and absolute failures of this government.

My amendment also goes on to seek—because I must—certainty of funding for these community legal centres, because they will not be able to survive and provide the vital services that they do without that certainty.

This is the job of this government. This is the role of this government. This is the duty of this government: to take responsibility for its vulnerable citizens and to provide funding certainty so that these organisations get on with what they do best—support Canberrans, to help Canberrans, in Canberra.

It is 2 June. Asking for confirmation of certainty of funding within one month, less than one month, surely, is not too much to ask. I implore all members of this chamber to vote for my amendment to the Attorney-General's amendment to my motion. I implore all members in this chamber to stand up for the community legal centres, for the services that they provide that are so vital to our community. I implore all members to show some heart and also to vote with their heart.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (4.30): The government will not be able to support Ms Lee's amendment, despite her colourful and fairly derogatory comments. The reality is that the ACT budget is not due until August. The budget cabinet is actively working on these matters at the moment. I cannot stand here and, as someone who seeks to be good to my word, guarantee that in the next seven days the budget cabinet will resolve this matter.

I indicated quite carefully in my remarks that we are working to get this done as soon as possible. I think it will be done quite soon, but I cannot stand here and guarantee to this Assembly that the cabinet process will have this resolved in the next seven days. We are doing it as fast as we can.

The budget is due in August. I have indicated to the community legal centres that they will have an answer before the end of June, and as much before the end of June as we can give it to them. I just cannot guarantee that it will be in the next seven days. That is the sole reason that the government will not support and cannot support this seven-day requirement.

As for the rest of the remarks, I have flagged issues with the commonwealth because the commonwealth, in failing to provide any money in the budget, has left the gaping hole that Ms Lee is now saying that the ACT government has to fill.

**Mrs Jones:** No, certainly not.

**MR RATTENBURY:** That is the answer. In saying that there is a funding gap and the commonwealth government did not put in the money that they put in last year—

**Mrs Jones:** What certainty is there currently with the ACT funding?

**MR RATTENBURY:** Mrs Jones is intervening and showing that she does not actually understand. The key issue facing Canberra Community Law is that they are saying they will lose staff on 30 June because the money that the commonwealth provided to them last year is no longer available. That is the issue here. The ACT government is being asked to fill that gap. That is what Ms Lee's motion does. That is actually what is going on here.

We are looking to do that. We are looking to find ways to fill that gap because we know that these organisations provide really vital services. But the commonwealth has just buck-passed it to us. We will try and address that, but we have a budget process to go through. That is what is going on. We will do our best, and we will give these organisations an answer as soon as we can. But that is the reality of what is happening here.

Question put:

That **Ms Lee's** amendment to **Mr Rattenbury's** proposed amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Mr Cain  
Ms Castley  
Mr Hanson  
Mrs Jones  
Ms Lee  
Mr Milligan  
Mr Parton

Noes 14

Mr Barr  
Mr Braddock  
Ms Burch  
Ms Cheyne  
Ms Clay  
Ms Davidson  
Mr Davis  
Mr Gentleman  
Ms Orr  
Dr Paterson  
Mr Pettersson  
Mr Rattenbury  
Mr Steel  
Ms Stephen-Smith

Amendment negatived.

**Mr Rattenbury's** amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

## Standing orders—suspension

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (4.38): I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Order of the day No 3, Private Members' business relating to development of the Gungahlin Town Centre, being called on forthwith.

This item, as members may recall, is a motion brought by Mr Braddock relating to planning and development issues around the Gungahlin town centre. Members will recall that this was adjourned at the end of the last session. It was adjourned for two reasons. One was to clarify issues that were being raised as concerns by members of the planning committee and the other was to allow further discussions to take place on the content of the motion.

That work has now been done on both of those matters. Mr Braddock has circulated a revised version of his motion. It is ready to go. There has been some discussion about whether it should be an additional item of business or whether it should be allowed to come back on. Certainly, the discussion amongst a range of members has been that it is a good practice for this place, where a matter is being debated and there is not agreement on how to go forward, that we do not necessarily want to have to use up a whole extra slot for private members, and that we have both the time and the capacity to be able to bring these back.

That is what is being proposed today. This is a practice that could apply in a range of circumstances. It is one that will enable this Assembly to do its work better. Certainly, we have plenty of time to do it today, so I am sure that members will be supportive of dealing with this matter that was deferred at the last sitting. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (4.39): Madam Speaker, we will not be supporting the motion for suspension, for three reasons. Firstly, we did not support the original adjournment. What happened there, as you will recall—and Mr Rattenbury has just alluded to it—is that it all became a bit of a farce in here. Mr Braddock realised that he had overstepped the mark; they needed to take the debate out of the chamber so that the Labor Party and the Greens could have secret negotiations about what they would agree to. They have had their little secret negotiations; then they have brought it back. This has all been stitched up behind closed doors. It is not the way to do business in here, and we made that point very clearly. That is why we opposed the adjournment in the first place.

The second point is that this is an abuse of standing orders. That is why they have had to move to suspend them. We have a set allocation of private members' business that is agreed to, and that has been the precedent in this place. Mr Rattenbury said, "It's good practice; we can bring back items that have been adjourned." That has never been done before. This sets a whole new precedent. Advice from the Clerk is that this has not been done before. This is a new precedent.



Mr Rattenbury thinks that this is good practice; no, it is not. This is a breach. In terms of what I have ever done in this place, or what you have ever done in this place, Madam Speaker, this is a new adventure for us. It sets a precedent for us. Let me tell you: we will roll with this. We will roll with adjourning things and bringing them back on, so that we can all have two bites of the cherry. That is what is happening here.

We have an allocated number when it comes to private members' business. We stick to that. What is happening today is that the Greens are going to get two bites because Mr Braddock could not get his stuff sorted out in the first place. If he did not get it sorted out, that is not our problem. He should not have to go home, do his homework, get a dressing down from Mr Gentleman, sort it all out behind closed doors and then have another bite of the cherry. That is what is happening today.

The Labor Party, as weak as they are, because they did not want this barney, and they did not want it playing out, having regard to their little love-fest with the Greens, have stitched it up behind closed doors. They said, "We'll let you bring it back. You don't need to take up one of your slots. We'll let you bring it back, as long as you do what we want. As long as you do what we want, we will let you have this."

**Ms Lee:** He was schmoozed, wasn't he?

**MR HANSON:** He was schmoozed. Remember that we had "Braddock the brave"? "Braddock the brave" is no longer "Braddock the brave". What is he?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson!

**MR HANSON:** What is he? "Braddock the backflipper"?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson! You are on a warning, and you will refer to members in this place by their title.

**MR HANSON:** I will, Madam Speaker. What else rhymes with "B"? Backflipper?

**Mr Gentleman:** A point of order, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** No, you will withdraw, Mr Hanson, and you will remind yourself that you are on a warning. You will address people by their name.

**MR HANSON:** I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

The Greens had a choice today. Did they want to debate Ms Clay's motion or did they want to debate Mr Braddock's? That is the way we have done business in this place. Mr Rattenbury has been here for 12 years and you have been here for 12 years. He is a former Speaker; he knows that. You are a Speaker, Madam Speaker; you know that. And the rest of the members in here know that. It is a lot easier to stitch things up behind closed doors in secret deals between the Labor Party and the Greens.

With respect to pretending that this is the same motion, look at it. Look at the amendment that we will see from Mr Braddock, members. Is that the same motion? It is a whole new motion—substitute “this Assembly”, and all words after “this Assembly”. The whole thing is new. It is a whole new motion that has been stitched up between the Labor Party and the Greens behind closed doors.

They talk about being open. They talk about process. This is a complete abrogation of the processes of this place. That is what is happening today, just to keep this little love-fest between the Labor Party and the Greens going.

The third, and last, point that I make is that this is before a committee. Ms Clay, who is the chair of that committee, spoke earlier and said that if it does pass it will affect the committee’s consideration. A committee that has legislative functions is looking at this issue in a considered way, and Mr Braddock is steamrolling in here, stumbling along and saying, “No, I’ll get it right this time; trust me.” The committee chair has stood up and sought leave to say, “This is going to affect our consideration.”

There is no way that we should be supporting this. You might think, “Okay, we’ll let them have another slot. We’ll ignore that.” We do not normally in this place do things that trample all over a committee’s consideration of a matter, particularly when the chair of the committee has stood up and said, “Hey members, be aware that if you pass this today, you are interfering with our business.”

We should not support the motion for suspension, Madam Speaker, on a number of grounds. It sets a whole new precedent in this place. And let me tell you: if you pass this, we will use it. (*Time expired.*)

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (4.45): Whilst I always enjoy Mr Hanson’s comedic contributions to this place, his recollections of history are inaccurate and do not accord with how many matters of private members’ business, and indeed occasionally government business, have been dealt with in this place.

No-one amongst this group has been here for longer than me, so I have the longest corporate memory of anyone in this place around how we have dealt with these sorts of matters. At various points, be it with legislation or motions, debate has been adjourned. We have gone off and sorted out particular matters and then brought them back, including in the detail stage of a piece of legislation. Often there have been private members’ bills that have covered similar territory to government legislation, and we have had cognate debates on particular issues.

In the context of this particular suspension of standing orders, it is not unusual, in the time that I have been in this place, which is longer than anyone else now, that this sort of thing would occur.

I do not think that it should be standard practice, and I give a degree of lenience, in making that observation, about the fact that we have a number of new members in this

place. We have been very lenient in allowing people to navigate their way through the standing orders of the Assembly. We have done that for opposition members on numerous occasions. Already, in this parliament, people have had the opportunity to reframe questions, to start again and to do things differently. When people have not appeared, and have not been ready for their slot on the notice paper, we have allowed the agenda in this place to be reorganised in order to accommodate the no-show—sometimes for people who have been in this place for three or four terms.

Mr Braddock’s motion received 25 minutes of debate in the last sitting before it was adjourned. It is appropriate that in this instance it can be brought back on, while being mindful of all of the issues that have been raised in terms of the committee inquiry, and that is a legitimate issue that has been raised and addressed. It is appropriate now to resolve this matter. Mr Hanson can make all the threats he wants, but he knows that he needs 13 votes to suspend standing orders, and you have got nine, mate. You are nowhere near it.

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Speaker—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Will you resume your seat, please?

**Mr Hanson:** Mr Barr referred to me as “mate”. I think that is unparliamentary.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** We will let that one—

**MR BARR:** I withdraw. Mr Hanson is not my mate; that is true.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Have you finished, Mr Barr? You have a minute or so left.

**MR BARR:** Madam Speaker, in concluding—

**Mr Parton:** So it is a dictatorship. If you have got the numbers, you can do anything.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I would not go there, Mr Parton. Hush.

**MR BARR:** The Assembly is the master of its own destiny, Madam Speaker. Thirteen votes constitutes a majority on any issue.

**Mrs Jones:** I’m glad he’s got the basic maths sorted out.

**MR BARR:** Better than you lot, I will tell you that now. That is why I sit here and not over there.

*Mrs Jones interjecting—*

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Members, that is enough.

**MR BARR:** Let me point out that the substantive issue here that we need to address is the future policy regarding the Gungahlin town centre.

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MR BARR:** Let us have the opportunity to debate that this afternoon and resolve the matter. The Assembly can resume its consideration of a matter to which it has so far devoted about 25 minutes. I think it is appropriate, given that we have the time available now, to conclude the debate on this motion. I commend the motion to suspend standing orders to the house.

**Ms Cheyne:** Madam Speaker, several times during the debate Mr Hanson has interjected, including 10 seconds ago, describing the parliamentary and governing agreement between ACT Labor and the ACT Greens as a “dirty deal”, and he should withdraw.

**Mrs Jones:** On the point of order, that was actually me.

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Speaker, on the point of order—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson, sit down, please.

**Mr Hanson:** It is not unparliamentary.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Please sit down. Given your honesty, I ask you to withdraw, Mrs Jones.

**MRS JONES:** I withdraw.

Question resolved in the affirmative, with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

## **Planning—Gungahlin town centre**

Debate resumed from 11 May 2021, on motion by **Mr Braddock:**

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the Suburban Land Agency auction on 12 May 2021 of the following blocks in the Gungahlin Town Centre:
  - (i) section 246 block 4;
  - (ii) section 249 block 4;
  - (iii) section 249 block 5; and
  - (iv) section 249 block 12;
- (b) the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh Community Engagement Report;

- (c) Draft Variation 364 (DV 364), Gungahlin Town Centre Precinct Code, is currently the subject of an inquiry by the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services;
  - (d) the resolution relating to development of the Gungahlin Town Centre passed by the Assembly on 10 February 2021 (the resolution) calling on the ACT Government to "support the further development of the Gungahlin region and town centre, ensuring that there are additional employment opportunities in Gungahlin by ... ensuring current sales of development sites incorporate the requirements to support best practice mixed-use developments"; and
  - (e) the importance of increasing the level of affordable rental and public housing stock in close consultation with the community so as to maintain community support and deliver good social outcomes; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) report to the Assembly by the next sitting day, how the sale of the aforementioned blocks meets the conditions specified in the resolution, in particular "ensuring current sales incorporate the requirements to support best practice mixed-use developments";
  - (b) acknowledge the level of community concern about Gungahlin Town Centre planning;
  - (c) address the community's concerns by developing through effective consultation with the community, and incorporating into the Territory Plan, a plan for the Gungahlin Town Centre that incorporates the following elements:
    - (i) no reduction in commercial office space, the area of the linear park, or Community Facilities Zoned land;
    - (ii) any variation to the use of blocks 3 and 5 section 231 must be done via a disallowable instrument; and
    - (iii) within current height limits;
  - (d) not proceed with any other sales of land in the Gungahlin Town Centre for the purpose of mixed-use development until these variations are incorporated into the Territory Plan;
  - (e) report to the Assembly every three months updates on Gungahlin Town Centre planning;
  - (f) direct the Suburban Land Agency to develop land in the Gungahlin Town Centre in a way that generates higher quality outcomes for the community by:
    - (i) consulting widely with the Gungahlin community before future mixed-use or commercial blocks are sold, and ensuring that outcomes from that consultation are reflected in an appropriate sales process;
    - (ii) consider bringing land to the market in larger blocks that encourage place making development; and
    - (iii) increase the size of commercial premises allowed in the lease restrictions for mixed-use developments;

- (g) designate a single point of contact within ACT Government with responsibility for whole-of-government outcomes for Gungahlin; and
- (h) develop and publish a strategy to actively encourage employment in the Gungahlin Town Centre by 31 December 2021.

**MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (4.51)**, by leave: I move the following amendment:

Omit all words after “That” and substitute:

“this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) community concern about Gungahlin Town Centre planning and the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh Community Engagement Report;
- (b) *Draft Variation 364 (DV364) Gungahlin Town Centre Precinct Code* is currently the subject of an inquiry by the Legislative Assembly Planning, Transport, and City Services Standing Committee;
- (c) the resolution relating to development of the Gungahlin Town Centre passed by the Assembly on 10 February 2021 (the Resolution) calling on the ACT Government to “support the further development of the Gungahlin region and town centre, ensuring that there are additional employment opportunities in Gungahlin by...ensuring current sales of development sites incorporate the requirements to support best practice mixed-use developments”;
- (d) the ACT Government is the largest single employer in Gungahlin, with over 1 000 staff employed there across a range of directorates and agencies;
- (e) the Australian Public Service has a significant presence in, and anchors all other Town Centres, but has not acted to locate any significant Federal agencies in the Gungahlin Town Centre, despite thousands of Commonwealth public servants residing in Gungahlin;
- (f) the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement aims to deliver a total of 400 additional public housing dwellings, and 600 additional affordable rental housing dwellings by 2025, noting the significant challenges in land availability, industry and sector capacity; and
- (g) the importance of increasing the level of affordable rental and public housing stock in close consultation with the community so as to maintain community support and deliver good social outcomes; and

(2) Calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) consult Gungahlin residents about the future of their town centre and district, to ensure community facility and commercial zoned land is appropriately delivered;
- (b) confirm there will be no reduction in the area of the linear park, community facility land or commercially zoned land in the Gungahlin Town Centre;

- (c) direct the Suburban Land Agency to develop land in the Gungahlin Town Centre in a way that generates high quality outcomes for the community by:
  - (i) consulting widely with the Gungahlin community before future mixed use or commercial blocks are sold, and ensuring that outcomes from that consultation are reflected in an appropriate sales process;
  - (ii) considering selling land in larger blocks that encourage place-making development;
  - (iii) allowing an increase to the size of commercial premises in the lease restrictions for mixed-use developments; and
  - (iv) structuring all planned Gungahlin Town Centre land sales to ensure their primary purpose is employment generation, commercial and/or community facility use, while (1) consultation about the future of Gungahlin Town Centre and district is ongoing; and (2) incorporation of the Resolution into the Territory Plan is finalised;
- (d) actively encourage employment in the Gungahlin Town Centre through regional consideration and implementation of the ACT's economic development strategies;
- (e) prepare and submit a prospectus for the Commonwealth Finance Minister on the relative benefits of moving new or growing Federal agencies to Gungahlin, to support further economic development in the region; and
- (f) report to the Assembly by October 2021 on implementation of the Resolution.”

When the Greens went to the last election, a stronger democracy was amongst its promises. As part of this, we wanted to ensure that ACT government decision-making, legislation, policy and programs were informed by genuine, ongoing community engagement that was meaningful, respectful and transparent. That is also why we called for an adjournment of this matter: to make sure that we could protect the integrity of the scrutiny and oversight of our parliamentary committees and the independence of Canberra's planning bodies.

In light of this, following on from what Associate Professor Kate Crowley wrote, that successful minority governments require creativity, pragmatism, calm and time, the adjournment of my motion from the last sitting also allowed us time to implement these other necessary qualities.

The amendment was crafted following earnest and constructive negotiations on how the government will achieve shared commitments in the parliamentary and government agreement on improving the planning system, giving residents a stronger say on how their neighbourhood is developed, developing public and affordable housing, tree canopy targets, and good social outcomes.

I believe that the process to bring this motion back to the Assembly has done just that. Together, we have worked creatively, pragmatically and calmly to find the answers to creating a dynamic and vibrant town centre in Gungahlin. Similarly, I am committed to working constructively with other representatives of Yerrabi and the Assembly

more generally, so I thank members of the Liberal Party for agreeing to support the original motion.

A healthy democracy flourishes only when engaged citizens are supported to have a genuine, equitable and effective voice. This motion calls for the people of Gungahlin to exercise this voice over future development. Today, we have made a significant step forward for the future of the Gungahlin town centre.

Features of today's motion include no reduction in land zoned for community facilities or commercial use, consultation with Gungahlin residents about what community facilities and commercial uses are most appropriate, and reflecting the results of that community consultation in an appropriate sales process. Whilst this consultation continues, we should ensure that interim sales are for the primary purpose of employment generation or community use, encourage land to be released in ways that encourage place-making, and allow for larger commercial leases so as to ensure that they are viable, because there are only so many coffee shops that Gungahlin needs. Finally, we should actively encourage employers into the Gungahlin town centre.

This is a really positive step towards developing a Gungahlin that is vibrant and sustainable. Community voices are so important because people in Gungahlin have a vision for this place. Since tabling the motion, I have heard a wide range of creative ideas—a music studio, art spaces, community halls, coffee carts and better playgrounds, just to name a few.

I say to the members of the public who have been providing these ideas to the “possibilitree”—please keep them coming. It is by creating a positive vision for Gungahlin that we help to create a space that we can be proud of, and make Gungahlin a destination, home to great entertainment, community and family events, retail and employment opportunities.

This motion is not the last word on the future of the Gungahlin town centre. There is also a committee inquiry currently underway, and I strongly encourage anyone who is interested to make a submission.

I am sure that other members of this Assembly must be sick of hearing about Gungahlin by now. I appreciate that there are views from other regions in Canberra that Gungahlin is the golden-haired child who receives a deluge of government attention, to the detriment of other regions. To those people, I say that the debates we are having now about Gungahlin are really debates about all of Canberra and its future—the new greenfield developments in regions such as Molonglo, as well as infill developments such as in the Woden town centre.

The debates about Gungahlin may be more pointed, given that the opportunity to act is limited, so I give the assurance to fellow members that at some point the debates about Gungahlin will diminish in number and the debates will move on to another part of Canberra. I hope that, in the meantime, we will settle the underlying issues and that we will be debating new issues when it comes time for that. In closing, I commend my amendment to the Assembly.



**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (4.56): I rise to speak on behalf of the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Housing and Suburban Development who, as members are aware, is isolating, having been COVID-tested after a ministerial visit to Jervis Bay last week.

In addressing the amended motion from Mr Braddock, I advise the Assembly that both Labor and the Greens entered this term of government clearly committed to providing more housing options for Canberrans. Whilst we have the important debate on the points that Mr Braddock and the Gungahlin Community Council have raised, it is equally important to consider that context.

Since the COVID pandemic, there has been increased demand for housing and increased demand for land. The government is working hard to meet that demand and to continue to invest in the infrastructure necessary to make Canberra a great place to live for everyone, no matter which region of the city that we live in.

In the last sitting period, when this motion was brought forward, the Deputy Chief Minister briefly summarised the content of the parliamentary and governing agreement as it relates to new housing supply. I think it is worth reiterating those ambitious targets that we have set.

The agreement says that we will increase housing supply to meet increased demand, and that we will build 400 new public housing dwellings and 600 more affordable homes. Finally, also relevant to this motion, we will build at least 70 per cent of new housing within Canberra's existing footprint. These are important commitments, and commitments that all members of the government, both Labor and Greens, signed up to. We are all committed to delivering on them, because the government believes that everyone deserves a dignified place to live in our community.

It is understood and expected that not everyone will want new residential construction in their neighbourhoods. We saw that with the Public Housing Renewal Taskforce. Our program will see public housing built across Canberra and in existing suburbs, because public housing tenants deserve choices about where they live, the same as everyone else.

I do not think anyone here disagrees with that concept, but when sites are actually identified, we quite often hear them described as inappropriate or not suitable for public housing. We have this phenomenon where everyone agrees with the principle that we need more housing and we need more public housing, but then they become specifically opposed to each individual delivery of that general view. That has to be the most frustrating element of debate in this parliament, and often in this community, in relation to the delivery of more housing. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot be generally in favour of more and then specifically opposed to each individual project as it comes forward. All too often, that characterises the debate. That politics has to end. Public housing should be part of every Canberra neighbourhood. At a time when we need more public housing, whether that is in Chapman, Holder, Ainslie, Dickson or in the Gungahlin town centre, there is seemingly always someone calling to cancel it.

The reality is that Canberra needs more homes, and it needs them over the next five years. The people most at risk in our city need more affordable and public housing options. The houses have to be built. That is why I believe it is important that all members here engage with their electorates on how we can deliver more housing with community support, not how we can stop, stymie and seek to score the most miniscule of political points on the development of public housing.

Turning now to the Suburban Land Agency and its sales and consultation processes, consultation and engagement are a very important part of meeting the government's commitments. The ACT government does not just want to increase the number of homes available for Canberrans. We desire to build great neighbourhoods and create community spaces alongside the new homes.

Mr Braddock's motion reflects the government's ambitions to create such spaces, more employment opportunities close to where people live, and more amenities for residents of Gungahlin. Mr Braddock's motion also compliments Ms Orr's motion from earlier this year, which very eloquently set out the needs and ambitions of Gungahlin residents. This means the government is closely listening to residents about their concerns, and is responding.

That is why last month the CEO of the Suburban Land Agency met directly with the Gungahlin Community Council to hear from them about the concerns that led to Mr Braddock's motion. The SLA recently undertook a process that serves as a model for what commercial and community development will look like in Gungahlin. That model is the work they have undertaken from the Belconnen town centre.

A series of surveys and community forums were held involving community groups, individuals, businesses and local members; all participated. The SLA used that feedback to develop a place design brief. That brief sets out the non-financial goals for the development in the town centre. Through an appropriately structured sale process, the Suburban Land Agency can then ensure that anyone who buys the land meets these non-financial objectives.

The government has heard loud and clear that people want more non-residential development in the town centre. This motion points to the ongoing planning discussion around the town centre and asks for community input into future changes. It asks for land sales to be for the primary purpose of employment generation, commercial and community use during that time.

Already, in relation to recent sales in Gungahlin, the Suburban Land Agency met with the Gungahlin Community Council and incorporated some adjustments to their sale processes to respond to concerns. As a result of that engagement, the SLA will offer the Gungahlin community direct input into the future sales program. Future sales will be structured to deliver commercial, employment and community outcomes, both directly and indirectly. Both the sales mechanism and the non-financial requirement of sales will reflect that consultation in the Gungahlin town centre.

With the steps that the Deputy Chief Minister has already undertaken, and with this motion, there is a clear and public framework to guide the SLA's work. The CEO of

the SLA wrote to the Gungahlin Community Council in May to give a commitment on consultation about future land sales. The Deputy Chief Minister also met with the council and heard from them directly.

This motion reinforces the commitment that the government has made about consultation. It is also important to remember that, as we undertake that consultation, the aim is to provide more housing supply and better housing options for the whole community.

The government understands there will be strong views about suburban development and public housing. In responding to those views, we work to find ways forward that deliver more housing for Canberrans. The decisions we make as a government must show a credible path to deliver more housing and to meet our parliamentary and governing agreement commitments.

When it comes to housing, that sometimes means that we have to decide to build new housing, particularly public and supportive housing, that is high quality, dignified and efficient, in existing suburbs, without the unanimous support of every single member of the community. We will always engage, and we will always show, within our land release program, that we are delivering on the commitments that we have made.

On this motion, and in any conversation about land, our focus is, and will continue to be, on realistic paths to deliver more public housing, more affordable housing and more homes across Canberra to meet demand. We promised to ensure more housing options in the election, through the parliamentary and governing agreement. We remain firmly focused on meeting those commitments.

The government is happy to support the motion as amended that is before us today because it accurately reflects our determination to deliver housing for Canberrans in need, whilst supporting growing communities, and making the Gungahlin town centre an even better place with a more diverse range of economic activity. That is the commitment. That is what we are working to deliver.

**MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (5.06):** What a rollercoaster it has been for the people of the Gungahlin community. They get their hopes up and then they come crashing down. They are caught like mice on a little treadmill.

The Canberra Liberals are not anti-development. Just the opposite. We favour the right form of development for Gungahlin town centre and the whole Gungahlin community. Under this government, that is not happening. The outer north, Gungahlin, has so much to offer. We have a great community, a diverse community, with lots of hardworking people. What we do not have is a government willing to invest in our region and willing to listen. I think about the missed opportunities in Gungahlin, particularly the town centre. It is so frustrating.

Gungahlin is one of the 18 districts in the ACT. In 1991, it had only 381 residents. Today, as we know, it is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. In 2021, Gungahlin has over 70,000 residents. It is projected to go above 100,000 by 2041.

That is an incredible amount of growth. With that growth, we should have seen diverse opportunities realised. We should have had the opportunity to plan for a dynamic group centre servicing a very large local population; the design building layouts that foster a variety of developments and community facilities; and the construction of many more buildings to provide employment, wider retail diversity and entertainment venues, to support a large community that wants to shop and enjoy activities closer to home.

This government has been in power for the last 20 years. That means that Labor and the Greens have been the chief architects of the Gungahlin region. On that front, they have failed. They have failed to create a dynamic and well-balanced town centre. The roads are a mess; parking is a disaster. We lack community facilities such as indoor sporting facilities or even a functional pool. Our schools are at bursting point; we have no tertiary institutions or real vocational training in the region. We have reached the stage where members of our Labor-Greens coalition are actively calling on their own government to do something.

The sale of these blocks is yet another example of this failure. My community has said that enough is enough. Mr Braddock brought this motion on in the last sitting but was railroaded into parking it and letting the land sale go through. Worse still, he sought to represent himself as a champion of the community. It was a weak attempt to be seen to be acting on behalf of local residents, but he did not have the clout to influence his masters.

Mr Braddock also sponsored a petition that was pushed hard at the time by the Gungahlin Community Council. This half-hearted attempt also failed and left the community feeling let down.

The real issue here is the planning mindset blockage. Originally the area allocated for commercial space in the Gungahlin region was 200,000 square metres. It was dropped to 100,000 square metres, and now it is reduced to 65,000 square metres.

The precinct at the top of the hill opposite Yerrabi Pond was meant to be an office and commercial zone. Another failure. There have been election promises for a smart hub to exploit the early NBN rollout to attract more jobs to the Gungahlin town centre. This is another failure.

In 2010, planning reports recommended that the Gungahlin town centre's distinctive urban village character be retained. This attitude continues despite the growth of the region and the strong message from the community that they want to have a real town centre. An urban village does not suit a region rapidly growing to 100,000 residents.

I realise that there has been high demand for growth in residential development within the town centre compared to commercial development. This reflects planning failure and an incessant profit grab by the government to garner quick sales. This most likely is because running a business in the ACT is tough with this government in power. The government does little to proactively try and attract potential business.

I want to see a plan to bring all stakeholders to the table to share their ideas for the Gungahlin town centre and to indicate what their interests are—or would be if planning attitudes were changed in the right way. These plans would include the community, independent town planners, developers, planning directorate representatives, and the government. I know that the independent planners, on behalf of the developers, want to build what the community desires to meet their broader needs. The government persist in their mantra of seeking best planning practice and holding endless so-called consultation sessions to prolong the process. In addition, the government has short-changed its community and developer interests by limiting consultation parameters so that answers are sought on a restricted range of issues, often nowhere near what the current community want to discuss.

This is the last chance we have to realise the potential of the Gungahlin town centre. I cannot understand how this Labor-Greens government can ignore the opportunity to take the masses of private vehicles away from the daily commute to the city by not promoting significant local employment opportunities in the Gungahlin region. I cannot understand how the Labor-Greens government can ignore the benefits of making the light rail service more efficient by ensuring that the Gungahlin town centre has adequate employment opportunities so that it can fill up the northbound trams in the morning and the southbound trams in the evening. Surely this should be an essential plank of their philosophy. They might pretend to be siding with the community but, in reality, they are keeping them on the rollercoaster. How can they end their ride?

To use a winter analogy, this is another snow job. Gungahlin residents will soon find out who their real friends are in the region.

**MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (5.13):** Madam Speaker, I do not aspire to be a cynical politician, but sometimes the temptation is strong, particularly when yet another motion and subsequent amendments appear from a government MLA calling on their own government to do what they should already be doing: representing our communities and improving our towns, with more jobs and better facilities.

I read with interest the *Canberra Times* article yesterday entitled “Govt to debate Gungahlin centre’s future”. The article states:

Labor and the Greens have been locked in discussions over the past three weeks about an amended motion.

That is the amended motion that we are discussing today. I am puzzled as to which part of it was so contentious that it required protracted negotiation between Labor and the Greens. What this motion calls for is what all Yerrabi MLAs want: more jobs for Gungahlin, more quality housing, and mixed-use development sites that encourage small and large businesses to establish in our town.

As we know, the Assembly debated Mr Braddock’s notice of motion during the last sitting week. The Canberra Liberals announced that we would support it, meaning that it would have passed. Then Mr Braddock sided with Labor to defer the vote, leaving Canberrans confused about what they stand for.

It is easy for Labor and the Greens to hit on the federal government to do more to locate an agency and jobs in Canberra. That is what every state and territory government does. Mr Braddock conveniently omits the fact that the federal government will create 300 new jobs in Gungahlin from early next year when Defence Housing Australia moves in. DHA has entered into a 15-year lease, with two optional five-year terms, to start next March. That is huge news for local businesses and residents.

As I said at the outset, I did not come into this place to be cynical, and I am trying hard not to be. But what is the outcome of the notice of motion we debated several months ago calling for action to improve Yerrabi Pond, which in some places is still an eyesore? At the time, I called on Minister Steel to set up a small working group comprising the Friends of Yerrabi Pond, Mr Braddock, me and a Labor MLA for Yerrabi, so that we could get the show on the road. Not surprisingly, I have heard nothing. I will take that initiative and kick off the inaugural meeting of that working group. Minister, I will send you an invite this afternoon.

I have said time and again that if only the Chief Minister had chosen to have a minister representing Yerrabi, things would be different. Instead, we have four ministers from his own electorate in Kurrajong. I note that we do not have Kurrajong MLAs on their feet each week pleading for more jobs and better parking, infrastructure and facilities for their areas. The difference is stark.

Unlike some members of this Assembly, I will never be sick of hearing about Gungahlin. I am Gungahlin's representative, and I will keep fighting for it.

**MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (5.17):** It is always a pleasure to rise and speak about Gungahlin town centre. It is, after all, an issue close to the heart of—dare I say it?—every Gungahlin resident and at least five members of this place. It is great to have the opportunity to do so, so soon after my colleague Ms Orr's motion about the development of Gungahlin town centre.

A few months ago, I spoke quite plainly about what I see as the issues in the town centre. That view comes from thousands of conversations with constituents and community surveys, both my own and those of local organisations. This is a big issue, and it is canvassed often.

What I said then, and what I will summarise now, is that I believe that Gungahlin is at risk of becoming a permanent commuter district. Unlike other town centres, like Woden, Tuggeranong and Belconnen, there are limited employment opportunities in Gungahlin town centre. The largest and only major employer in the town centre is currently the ACT government. I would like to see more ACT public servants in Gungahlin—I have said it before, and I will say it again today—but the ACT government cannot provide the major employment opportunity for the entire district. If we seek to replicate the scale of other town centres, we will need other employers too.

Despite significant space, lobbying and political promises for commercial development in the past, there has been a lack of actual results in Gungahlin. That is for a range of reasons. Two of them, I believe, are the development of the airport precinct and the lack of action of successive commonwealth governments, Labor and Liberal. They are the primary causes, in my opinion.

During the work week, Gungahlin town centre can be slow. Every morning a large proportion of Gungahlin's population commute out of the area. In the evening they all commute home. Our roads become clogged during peak hour, and light rail and other public transport are even busier than they need to be. I often like to joke that I could save time on my commute if I was to drive on the often-empty other side of the road. It is a joke, of course, but it is a very visible symptom of the lopsided interaction that the Gungahlin district has with the rest of Canberra.

If you walk around Gungahlin during the day, you will see empty cafes, quiet shops and some empty trams. The town centre is not lively and invigorating. It is about people trying to sneak in a quick and quiet grocery shop or maybe even visit the doctor. The businesses that are open, mainly hospitality and retail, often struggle without the regular customers that other town centres have. If you need any more evidence of this, there are plenty of tenantless shopfronts that I can show you. Without any major employment hubs in the area, these businesses rely on weekend trading and the kids from Gungahlin College to keep things ticking over. When you compare this to activity in other town centres, it is a stark contrast.

I believe that the role of government is to shape communities. I am of the school of thought that when our communities need help, the government should step up. I also believe that our government, through our planning processes, has a central role in shaping our communities. The residents of Gungahlin have been waiting a long time for their town centre to be a vibrant town centre like the others.

If you look at the eastern side of Gungahlin town centre, it sits there empty. It is, quite literally, a paddock. It is roughly the same size as the entire developed town centre. I do not think that the residents of Gungahlin want to wait any longer, and I think that they want it to be developed properly. I do not think these need to be mutually exclusive.

Let me go to the detail of Mr Braddock's motion. There are a few issues at play that deserve purposeful discussion, including community use land and the community discussion around DV364.

DV364 has not reduced the amount of land set aside for community use. The draft variation has updated the area required by reflecting that approximately 2.2 hectares of community land has already been developed from the original six hectares required. The draft variation requires 3.8 hectares of community use land. The draft variation proposes the option for community use being provided within mixed-use developments as gross floor area in certain circumstances and with the right safeguards. If these cannot be met, then the area provision applies.

The issue of commercial space is a big one. All Gungahlin residents want to see thriving commercial spaces and employment opportunities. The original plans for Gungahlin included a large commonwealth department. However, the commonwealth have shown that they are prepared to move to Gungahlin, and it is not a large department, which I think is at the crux of most local residents' frustration.

Let us be real. The commonwealth government, under the Liberal Party right now, has adopted a policy to appease the Nationals, who seek to move jobs from Canberra to regional Australia. Canberra needs to be fighting to save public service jobs. The prospectus in the motion is a noble idea, but it is quite clear where the ACT stands after the election commitments by the federal Liberals in previous elections. I do not think that that will be the solution for Gungahlin town centre.

When it comes to the plan of Gungahlin town centre, everyone is in agreement that the town centre should remain commercially zoned. It is a question of what type of commercial zoning.

Specific blocks have been highlighted in Mr Braddock's original motion. I was pleased to see that two of the blocks were purchased by a registered training provider. I am glad that those sales were not blocked. These blocks are clearly not large-scale commercial opportunities that will provide countless jobs and shape the town centre. They face onto grassland and low-density housing. Blocking their sale or threatening to block their sale is not the solution here.

Further, DV364, which is a very topical issue, has nothing to do with the residential use of these blocks. Under the territory plan, these blocks already permit residential use on them. These sites in Gungahlin town centre have always been and will always be suitable for the vision of some housing. I know that; I think everyone knows that. To see an education provider bid is very welcome, nonetheless. The most obvious place for large commercial space is, of course, along the light rail route and closer to the existing town centre.

I want to touch upon a point of concern in the community right now, something that the Chief Minister spoke to at length. Most Gungahlin residents do not want to see more apartments in the town centre. Some cannot stand the sight of apartment buildings and view the lifestyle of those who live in apartments as inherently lacklustre. But apartments provide homes, overwhelmingly at the more affordable end of the market, and provide people with the opportunity to live closer to town centre amenities.

There is something very revealing about a person when they start coming up with reasons why their neighbourhood cannot grow anymore. Seemingly, their neighbourhood was just the perfect size when they moved in. But I am sympathetic to the view that existing residents see land as a zero sum that could deprive them of an amenity for lack of space.

Residents of Gungahlin want to see more retail space, they want more commercial space, and they want more hospitality venues. As a government, we must work to



ensure that those expectations are met. I do not see the role of government as being that to twist the arms of certain retailers to provide certain services in certain locations. I believe we can incentivise where corporations and the market fail to meet community needs.

The Chief Minister acknowledged, as he read out the remarks of Minister Berry, that the SLA can be directed to go about the work of selling land in ways that foster good outcomes. That is a good thing. Once we have built on all the available land in the town centre, it is too late for a generation. It is not too late forever, but it is too late for a generation. Town centres are always changing, but there is a certain inertia that exists until buildings reach end of life.

Despite all of this, I am still very confident that Gungahlin town centre will grow into the vibrant centre that residents want it to be. I look forward to the community discussion that we are having right now continuing and I look forward to Gungahlin residents soon enjoying their town centre.

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.26): I thank Mr Braddock for persisting with this motion. Community consultation is an important feature of the ACT's planning system and we will continue to speak with the community about planning for Gungahlin. We will listen to the community council, but I would also like to hear from members of the community that are not necessarily represented on the council.

I am looking forward to seeing the outcome of the standing committee's inquiry into draft variation 364. This builds on the consultation process undertaken for the Gungahlin town centre planning refresh and a statutory consultation that informed the draft territory plan variation.

I know, and the government knows, that planning decisions are always a tricky balance between delivering for the community that is currently in place and delivering for new people in our growing territory who have not settled in an area. We want to build homes close to shops, services and major public transport routes.

Gungahlin is not the only town centre with increasing amounts of residential development. Belconnen, Woden and Tuggeranong have seen more and more people choosing to call town centres their home.

Madam Speaker, in a previous life, I was a real estate agent helping people find their first home or their new home in Gungahlin. I am enormously proud that I am able to continue to help people find a home in Gungahlin.

**MR BRADDOCK** (Yerrabi) (5.27): I thank all members for their contributions. Whilst there has been a lot of hot air directed at me in the process, I draw the Assembly's attention back to the substantive question and what it achieves for Gungahlin residents. That includes no reduction in land zoned for community facilities or commercial use, genuine consultation on the future of the Gungahlin town

centre, and actively encouraging employment in the Gungahlin town centre. I commend the amended motion to the Assembly.

Amendment agreed to.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee**

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (5.28): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion. I circulated it in my name but forgot to write my name on it, although I signed it.

Leave granted.

**MS ORR**: I move:

That:

- (1) the Assembly recently considered a motion relating to a matter that was also the subject of an inquiry before an Assembly committee;
- (2) the conventions and practices around the interaction between Assembly and the operations of Assembly committees are not well defined, and
- (3) this Assembly refers to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure whether standing orders need to be made to cover the interaction between motions moved in the Assembly that relate to active committee inquiries, and any other related matter.”

My motion requests a referral to the admin and procedure committee to look at some questions that have come up around the moving of motions and committee inquiries. We have had a fair bit of advice, but we are still working through some of those issues. It will mean that in the future members can make decisions with a higher level of clarity.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (5.29): Madam Speaker, we are not going to oppose this motion, but I would make the point that it is probably unnecessary. This place has operated pretty well with clarity, and what has happened today is the aberration. If you decide to suspend standing orders, trample all over them and go on a funky new adventure, then you end up in these sorts of places. Now not only is a substantive matter being looked at in a committee but we are going to refer what happened today—the debacle of this whole matter being adjourned and put before a committee—to the process as well.

We will not oppose the motion, but the issue is not necessarily a problem with standing orders. We do not go into this process as the opposition thinking that there is a need to change standing orders to fix up the problems of today. It is a salutary lesson for members of this place to make sure that we adhere to the protocols of this place and the standing orders and do not make things up as we go along that necessitate potentially trampling all over committee business.

We will not oppose the motion, but I do not go into the process with any expectation that we need to change our standing orders significantly. We just need to be more aware of what they are now and not break them and cause these problems in the first place.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Adjournment**

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

### **Pharmacy Guild of Australia Intern of the Year award Multicultural affairs—events**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (5.31): I take this opportunity to highlight the outstanding achievement of a Canberra-trained pharmacist, Angus Koerstz. Angus was recently announced the Pharmacy Guild of Australia Intern of the Year. Angus completed his intern year, training under pharmacist Bradley Butt at the Cooleman Court pharmacy in Weston Creek. Angus was named intern of the year due to his passion for advocacy and practical work in the field of men's health. There is no-one better that he could have trained under for this particular area of interest than our own Brad Butt.

Since completing his intern year Angus has left Canberra and moved to Dubbo to work for the family pharmacy. Angus continues to champion the Continenence Foundation Australia initiative Bins 4 Blokes and has established a clinic at Dubbo Private Hospital. Whilst Canberra may have lost a highly valued member of our community in Angus, it gives me great pleasure to know that our Canberra community assisted him in his training and his achievements. I once again congratulate Angus for this outstanding achievement and wish him all the best as he continues to champion the cause of men's health in the Australian community.

On 18 April it was an honour to attend the 10th anniversary of the Environmental Meditation and Healing Garden located on a one-hectare site just east of Clare Holland House, the ACT's hospice. The Canberra Interfaith Forum established the garden in 2011 after four years of effort in order to symbolise our commitment to respect, protect, and conserve the natural environment; to provide a venue where we could meet and meditate on and deepen our connection with the environment; deepen our harmonious relationship and promote healing and reconciliation with each other, including the Indigenous community; strengthen the mutual bonds and understanding by working together on garden maintenance; and provide a facility where visitors to the ACT hospice and volunteers working there could rest peacefully in nature.

The garden was formally launched by Ms Mary Porter AM MLA representing the Chief Minister in May 2011. An attractive plaque listing the 12 spiritual traditions of the Canberra Interfaith Forum and eight cooperating organisations is placed at the

upper side of the garden bed. I was most pleased to be in attendance and to have the opportunity to speak to the crowd. Well done, Canberra Interfaith Forum, once again doing us proud.

On 9 May it was my privilege to attend the IAAC fundraiser barbecue at the Gungahlin town centre playground. This event was raising funds towards the unfolding crisis plaguing India under the third current wave of COVID cases. I want to thank the many organisers for making the event possible, particularly Sandi Mitra, who is so deeply connected with the Indian community in the ACT. He and his friends and supporters have family in India who have been badly affected by this troubling third wave. It was so good to see the funds raised, which go toward such an important cause as the federal government continues to send aid to India for them to get on top of the crisis. Thank you for all the work you do. I hope to join you again in the future as we pray and work hard for the people of India.

On Friday, 21 May, I was honoured to attend the event at the Sri Lankan Embassy showcasing the celebration of culture and faith. This was also an event to celebrate International Day of Tea, and what better way to celebrate faith than over tea. When I think of the number of deep and meaningful conversations I have had over the years over tea, it is a gift to the world. Let's face it, Sri Lanka has done more than most in spreading the joy of the use of tea around the world.

We were blessed with prayers by representatives of the Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian faiths. We were amazed watching the various dance and music performances. Then we were treated to some tea and supper while celebrating the Sri Lankan culture. My special thanks to the Acting Ambassador, Somasunadaran Skandakumar. Thank you so much; it was my pleasure to be in attendance.

### **LGBTQI+ community—events**

**MR DAVIS** (Brindabella) (5.35): I rise to mark a few important dates that have passed just recently, dates that are important particularly to Canberrans of the sexuality and gender diverse community. I want to speak first of all to IDAHOBIT, celebrated each year on 17 May, celebrating this year 31 years ago when the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from the classification of diseases and related health problems.

As you may know, Mr Deputy Speaker, I recently hosted a IDAHOBIT event, an LGBT-Q&A panel, in the reception room at the Legislative Assembly. All members of the Assembly were invited, In particular, I thank Ms Lee, Mr Cain, representatives of Ms Lawder, Dr Paterson, Mr Steel, and all members of the ACT Greens party room for being in attendance.

We heard from a number of very impressive Canberrans who impressed upon us some of the challenges that still face sexuality and gender diverse Canberrans including but not limited to ensuring public safety for non-binary and gender diverse people, in particular with the use of public bathrooms and ensuring easy access to appropriate identity documentation, It also educated all of us on how best to be a good ally.

I particularly thank our panellists who shared their personal stories and opened up with the audience so as we could best contribute to this important policy space: Representing A Gender Agenda, Alistair Ott, a Wiradjuri non-binary queer brother boy; Jacquie Reid, a lifeline lesbian feminist activist; Kat Reed, the CEO of Women with Disabilities ACT and the ACT Young Canberra Citizen of the Year; and Yenn Purkis, a disability and non-binary community leader.

Friday, 28 May 2021 also marked the LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Day. This day began in 2020 and is run by the Australian-based LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Foundation. Evidence shows intimate partner violence is reported at similar rates in stereotypical gender relationships as they are in heterosexual relationships. A 2018 survey, by Women's Centre for Health Matters found that 35 per cent of LGB women in Canberra have experienced domestic violence. Bisexual women and transgender people are more likely than their peers to experience domestic violence. We know that homophobia, transphobia and biphobia all create environments of stress and precarity for LGBTQIA+ people, and they drive those conditions of violence.

As the ACT Greens spokesperson for both LGBTQIA+ people and for the elimination of family and domestic violence, I am looking forward to being an enthusiastic and earnest participant in Deputy Chief Minister Berry's sexual assault law reform task force. I am very focused on being able to contribute effectively and poignantly where and when I can to ensure that the needs of LGBTQIA+ people are advanced and advocated for as part of this process.

We are going into the America's Pride Month. Yes, there are some things where America is ahead of us—they have a whole month where their nation is littered with rainbow flags whereas we tend to just have the occasional day. We know we do not act in a microcosm in Australia and that sexuality and gender diverse Canberrans will be exposed to a plethora of pride-based social media posts and a bit of rainbow capitalism from all the smart businesses trying to source a bit of that pink dollar. That is why it is really important to make sure that we in this place are focused on issues particularly around domestic violence.

One of the things that I grow increasingly concerned about as a young but not too young queer person is that sometimes we as the Canberra community want rest on our laurels and merely embrace all the good that we have done. As we embark on this very important community conversation and body of policy and law reform work as it relates to family and domestic violence, we must ensure the lived experiences of sexuality and gender diverse Canberrans are brought fiercely into that conversation so they are not left behind and that sexuality and gender diverse Canberrans, like all Canberrans, can live in safe, healthy and happy homes.

### **Ginninderra electorate—events**

**MR CAIN** (Ginninderra) (5.40): I would like to provide a brief summary of events I have attended recently in Ginninderra, where I have had the good fortune to meet many brilliant people who are making a difference in their local community and to

engage in activities that promote their welfare. I remind my fellow MLAs that the community is our object of service and also very, very frequently our greatest resource. There is so much expertise and so much commitment in each of our electorates, and I encourage any MLA to be an active participant in their community. As I have said before in this place, the Canberra community are a very capable bunch and it is always a pleasure to hear about their efforts, especially in Ginninderra.

I congratulate inaugural chair of the African Australian Council ACT, Dr Yvette Djomani, and wish that organisation all the best as it draws together several different African community groups in our great city.

I also thank the Canberra Organic Growers Society for their constant support for Canberra community gardens. It was a pleasure to join them last Saturday at the Charnwood Community Garden. It was a pleasure to be invited to visit one of the local primary schools in my electorate, and I thank Principal Lina Vigliotta for showing me around St Vincent's Primary School in Aranda.

It was a pleasure to talk to some local experts—I will not name them, because I did not seek their permission to do so—in urban planning and design. I really appreciate the support they gave to me in developing a planning vision for this great bush capital. Of course, I am a contributor to and attendee at Belconnen Community Council meetings, and thank that council for its ongoing commitment to this electorate.

I also acknowledge a growing and enterprising business in Belconnen, the Bharat International Indian restaurant and grocer. I appreciate their enterprise and desire to expand the diversity of food offerings both in dining and in shopping options in that community.

I have to mention the SMILE initiative in Melba—the Support Melba Inclusive Learning Environment—which is seeking to turn an abandoned play area into something beneficial to local families and local schools.

Just this week I had the opportunity to speak, with some concern, about the pending closure of the West Belconnen waste facility and the uncertainty in the community as to the government's plans for that part of our city in terms of waste management.

I have mentioned many times that I am committed to being engaged with the community, and that included last week a full day of doorknocking in one of our suburbs. Learning so much about the local district from local residents is part of what makes this job so fulfilling.

### **Digital technology—jobs growth**

**MS DAVIDSON** (Murrumbidgee) (5.43): On 26 May, I attended the launch of ACS Australia's Digital Pulse report for 2021. This annual report highlights the importance of the digital technology workforce in Australia and provides insights into areas for improvement and emerging trends. The report showed that ACT workforce growth over 2020 was significantly higher than the national average of 4.3 per cent. In a year

when many other industries suffered from the economic impacts of COVID-19, digital technology jobs grew, particularly in Sequel, Java, and DevOps.

Particularly exciting is the growth in jobs in artificial intelligence and cyber security. By 2030 it is estimated that Australia will need an AI specialist workforce of between 32,000 and 161,000 workers. But it is also of note that more than half of the top 10 skills in demand for technology workers are actually non-technical. These include communication, team work and problem solving. There will be people who have these non-technical skills already but who have lost jobs in industries heavily impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and who could retrain for a job in one of Australia's fastest growing industries. This is a great opportunity for Canberra, if we can support those training places through our excellent local universities and CIT.

I note that the ACT government's technology upgrade fund for the community sector, which provided grant funding of \$487,000 in 2021, supports community sector organisations not only to pay for software and hardware but also to pay for training and support. This will enable community sector organisations and the community members they support to improve their digital technology, knowledge and skills.

I also note the proportion of women employed in technology in Australia is now 29 per cent compared to 47.5 per cent for similar occupations in the professional, scientific and technical services industry. At the current rate of growth it will take 66 years for the number of women in technology to reach parity with women in the professional, scientific and technical services industry, and that is still less than 50 per cent. The attrition rate for women leaving the industry is twice that of men.

I was pleased to see the high levels of enthusiasm from the many industry leaders in the room at the launch of the Digital Pulse report to make greater progress on this. This is why the ACT Greens went to the 2020 election with a policy to support greater diversity in the technology industry, such as allowing ACT government public servants to work from home and access a four-day week wherever possible; gender weighting in criteria for government contracts with technical roles; boosting the number of women enrolling in and graduating from CIT technology courses; scholarships and work experience opportunities for years 9 and 10 girls in STEM subjects; and more ACT government trainee and graduate jobs for technology roles.

I greatly appreciate the work of ACS and Deloitte Access Economics in producing the annual Digital Pulse report, and I look forward to opportunities to support future growth in Canberra's digital technology industry and continued development as a leader in technology innovation.

### **National Reconciliation Week**

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (5.47): As we approach the end of National Reconciliation Week, I rise today to share a few thoughts about reconciliation. I recently had the privilege of sitting down for nearly an hour to listen to a senior Aboriginal leader. I asked him to explain to me what reconciliation means to him personally. His first response: telling the truth. Nothing can get better until we know the facts, he asserted. Whilst it is essential to know what happened in the past, a

commitment to truth-telling means that it is equally important to know what may be happening in our own time and place.

His second response was: genuinely listening. As he explained, this means finding out what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would do if they had their way and then helping to make it happen. For far too long, decisions have been made on behalf of Indigenous Australians instead of by them or with them. When it comes to matters that impact their families and their communities, no-one knows better what they need.

I accept these principles of reconciliation. Accordingly, I fully support the request by community leaders that a formal board of inquiry investigate and respond to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT in touch with the criminal justice system or incarcerated. Indigenous Australians in Canberra have every right to ask that the facts be investigated and reported and their request should be honoured.

Ideally, the principles of reconciliation should shape all government decision-making. This is essential for the wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which in several important areas experiences more disadvantage in the ACT than in any other jurisdiction. For example, whilst Indigenous Australians are proportionally the most incarcerated people on the planet, those living in Canberra are nearly 20 times more likely to be locked up than non-Indigenous people, the highest ratio in the nation. Because the principles of reconciliation should characterise all human interactions, embedding these principles will therefore benefit all of us.

An inspiring example of how this can occur comes out of Aotearoa New Zealand. Like Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Canberra, Maori children had long been overrepresented in that nation's child protection system. Reports from the 1970s and the 1980s highlighted issues of institutional racism and one in 1986 recommended a substantial ideological change that would cater to Maori needs.

The government's first response was to propose strengthening child protection teams, essentially doubling down on what it was already doing. A new minister, however, insisted on genuine reform and, in 1989, the family group conference became law. The legal entitlement means that families are supported to solve child welfare concerns before the government can seek a court order authorising child removal.

As a result, the number of children in the care and protection system was cut in half and Aotearoa New Zealand now has one of the lowest rates of children in care in the developed world. This reform was intended to cater to Maori needs and it has done so. At the same time, child protection became better for everyone.

Aboriginal elders in the ACT have been asking to have a similar legal entitlement in this territory. I am committed to seeing this reform happen. Such reform will strengthen First Nations families and then will strengthen all families.

On a personal level, I invite all of us to thoughtfully consider ways that we can embed the principles of reconciliation in our individual lives. This involves knowing the facts about our own communities, both past and present. We also need to care enough



about our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander neighbours to act whenever an opportunity arises. This may include calling out blatant racism or gently correcting false stereotypes. It may require no longer tolerating the kinds of statistics we have grown accustomed to hearing about in Canberra. It will certainly involve being better people. At its core, that is what reconciliation calls on us to be.

## **World Environment Day**

**MS VASSAROTTI** (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (5.51): Last month, like many families, we celebrated Mother's Day. I enjoyed a bit of spoiling and wished my own mum was still around so I could spoil her too. I had a bit of a rebellious thought that wouldn't it be great if we could celebrate mothers every day, not just on one day, because where would we be without them?

World Environment Day surely invites the same rebellion. The environment is not something that is worthy of a bit of tokenism once a year. It is literally our life, our home. We are part of it. It is good for us. There is more and more research confirming all the things that we probably already knew in our gut; getting out and walking in the park, going for an ocean swim or just sitting on a bench at the Lyneham wetlands benefits our mental health.

Like our mums, the environment deserves our love, attention and appreciation every day. This Saturday, 5 June, is World Environment Day. So let us do a really good job of spoiling it on its special day and let us promise ourselves to spend more quality time with it and not give it so much grief for the rest of the year. This World Environment Day, we can commit to appreciating everything it does for us; all the ecosystem services it provides us that we often take for granted. We can do a better job of tidying up after ourselves rather than leaving it in a mess. And we can listen when it nags us about our behaviour through warning signs like bushfires, floods and melting ice. We can also reflect on what we can learn from those who have cared for it most, particularly First Nations people who have cared for our country for thousands of years.

I have probably laboured the Mother's Day analogy enough at this point, but I did want to speak briefly to two specific environmental protections we have undertaken recently here in the ACT. Last Thursday, Mr Gentleman and I launched a new breeding facility for the endangered grassland earless dragons at Tidbinbilla, and we are really appreciative of the Melbourne Zoo for providing the facility with six dragons.

As I said at the launch, we know that Australia is facing an extinction crisis. We need action at every level, from strong national environment protection laws and clear national plans for threatened species to concerted local action. The ACT government understands the urgency of this work and we are taking proactive steps to conserve habitat and protect our threatened species, such as the eastern bettong and the grassland earless dragon.

On Friday, we turned our attention from lizards to cats—not as big a leap as you might think, since we know that domestic and feral cats are one of our biggest threats to endangered native animal species. It was great to join with Minister Steel as we launched the ACT cat plan. This plan has been developed in partnership with the community. It recognises how important the wellbeing of pet cats are to their owners, while acknowledging the responsibility we all share to protect Canberra’s native animals and the environment. It will see broader protection of the wildlife that shares our bush capital home.

On World Environment Day itself, there are multiple events that Canberrans can attend to learn more about the work that ACT Parks and Conservation are doing to support and restore our local ecosystems. You can find out about wombats, brush-tailed rock wallabies, corroboree frogs and wetlands, as well as taking part in guided walks. Enjoy World Environment Day and let us celebrate and protect our local environment every day.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 5.56 pm.**