



Debates

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Tuesday, 3 August 2021

MADAM SPEAKER (Ms Burch) (10.00): 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.

Minister for Corrections
Motion of no confidence

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (10.02), by leave: I move:

That this Assembly expresses no confidence in Mr Gentleman MLA as Minister for Corrections.

I am compelled to bring this motion before the Assembly today. The series of unfortunate events that has brought us to this point should astound anyone. I, too, would be stunned if I had not become desensitised to this government's incompetent mismanagement of the prison in the short time that I have held this portfolio. In those nine months, we have seen a multitude of failures from this minister, across almost all aspects of the prison.

Let me summarise the serious issues that have led to this motion of no confidence in Mick Gentleman. Over the last nine months, we have seen short staffing in the prison cause excessive lock-ins and overtime hours. We have seen two riots as well as a detainee mistakenly released and at large for close to a week. There have been repeated delays in the rollout of an upgraded database, and a \$20 million bail program that housed only 44 people. There have been unclear policies, the sluggish drafting of vitally important policies, a deferred reintegration centre, disproportionate numbers of strip searches, mass incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and recently an escape.

This motion joins another expression of no confidence. After the detainee escape, AMC staff held a vote of no confidence in a member of management. All officers on duty and roughly 30 officers who came in off shift raised their hands in favour. Clearly, I am not alone in believing that Minister Gentleman and this government are jeopardising the safety of our corrections officers through their careless management.

In November 2020, the AMC experienced its first-ever riot—27 detainees aggressively confronted officers and lit multiple fires, destroying an entire accommodation unit and causing \$5.7 million in property damage. The prison has not fully recovered. The wing can be rebuilt, but we may never know the damage inflicted on the mental health of the corrections officers.

The minister's failures put officers' safety and potentially their lives on the line. As we now know, this government failed to provide adequate emergency management training in the lead-up to the riot. Only 33 per cent of staff reported that they were familiar with AMC emergency instructions, only 23 per cent said that emergency instructions were clear, and only a meagre nine per cent agreed that earlier training had been effective in responding to this incident. Seventy-six per cent of staff said that they had not participated in a training exercise for a similar incident.

Lack of training re-emerged just a few days after the riot, when a cottage was set ablaze, resulting in the loss of 28 beds for several weeks. One corrections officer described the intensity of the fire in this way:

... this fire was so hot that our boots were melting to the tiles and the steel handrails radiated a frightening amount of heat along their full length.

All four officers who engaged the fire had lapsed fire refresher training—another example of the minister putting corrections officers in harm's way.

In the last month, two more incidents have eroded public confidence in the minister's ability to do his job effectively—the mistaken release of one detainee, and the dangerous escape of another. On 20 July, Canberra residents learnt that a detainee had been mistakenly released before his release date. This detainee walked free and was at large for close to a week. The government called it human error. I reject that claim, and this is why: blaming "human error" scapegoats staff for the government's own failings, and I will not stand for it. Our corrections staff put themselves in harm's way on an hourly basis, every single day, and it is shameful for the government to hide behind them. Responsibility for this mistaken release lies solely with Minister Gentleman and his failure to provide corrections staff with appropriate tools.

The government noted that information on detainees is kept on an electronic database that requires manual checks across multiple files. What was not said was that this database's software was developed in 1985 and was considered antiquated when the government bought it in 2004. This database and its recording methods have been criticised since at least 2011. The Auditor-General, in 2015, stated that they make it difficult for corrections staff to respond to a request for information on detainees and noted that:

ACTCS officers, particularly those that had recently worked in other jurisdictions, emphasised the laborious nature of collating data using ACTCS records systems, which are electronic and paper-based.

If the previous reviewers, the Auditor-General and the inspector all regard the government's record-keeping system as unfit for purpose then I reject the government's claim that human error caused the mistaken release of the detainee.

Clearly, it was the minister's fault for forcing staff to rely on an antiquated system known to be flawed. An upgrade to this database was supposed to have been completed by mid-2018, but, of course, this government has failed to make that happen.

The next incident was more serious, placing corrections officers' lives and the general public in danger. Media outlets as far away as Illinois and Sri Lanka reported it, and hundreds of social media users commented on it, making this government's humiliating prison mismanagement truly global. Returning to the AMC from the Canberra Hospital, three corrections officers in a Camry were attacked by a much larger and heavier vehicle. Taking evasive action, the officers deviated from their route, pursued for the entire time. They were forced to run red lights and drive into oncoming traffic, but the sedan was repeatedly rammed like a rag doll, in the heart of our city. After a physical altercation between a corrections officer and the detainee, the detainee escaped. Photos taken afterwards showed the front bumper mostly detached from the vehicle, significant crumple damage to the right-hand side of the car, a shredded front tyre, a boot that could no longer close and a ruined rear bumper. Imagine riding in that vehicle when it was being rammed by a bigger vehicle!

Most Canberrans would be unfamiliar with prison policies, but online commentary overwhelmingly stated it was obvious that a Camry was not suitable for prisoner escorts. Corrections officers also thought that using a Camry was a bad idea. Unsurprisingly, the inspector had earlier found that the Camry was "unsuitable as a general use escort vehicle" and was confused as to "why an at-risk detainee could not be transported safely in a larger-seat capacity vehicle that would provide more room for the detainee and a safe distancing of staff".

Use of the Camry as an escort vehicle for prisoners has been unanimously declared an irresponsible decision by the public, by corrections officers and by the inspector, yet the minister did not stop its usage after the inspector's review. Once again Minister Gentleman failed to keep corrections officers safe on their job, putting their lives and the lives of community members in danger. His decision damns him. There is no-one else responsible for the continued use of the Camry. The recommendations and findings came out under his watch. This is not the fault of the previous minister, nor is it the fault of the corrections staff. Solely, it is the fault of the Minister for Corrections, Mick Gentleman. It is his fault.

Where is his responsibility? One could wonder: is there even any point in having the minister resign from his already abandoned post? His absenteeism indicates he has already abandoned the portfolio in spirit—and perhaps not only in spirit!

After assuming the corrections portfolio and insisting that his predecessor did not leave the portfolio in a mess, Minister Gentleman moved quickly to establish an oversight committee for the AMC to develop a "blueprint for change". At the time, I expressed misgivings about this idea. I was concerned that it would add an additional layer of bureaucracy and slow improvements at the AMC even further. I was also concerned that the oversight committee would allow the minister to take a step back from the prison and adopt a hands-off approach. The minister's recent absence in

relation to the prison indicates he is doing just that. What is the point of having a minister who passes off his responsibility to a committee?

A prison is a place where a government should have the most control and the most opportunity to enact its vision. This government is failing miserably. It has no excuse, and there is no outside force onto which it can shift responsibility. The buck stops with the minister, and he is accountable. In his short nine months as minister, he has repeatedly placed the lives and safety of corrections officers at risk. We have no confidence in him.

I may be the one speaking now, and I may be one of the more vocal critics of the minister, but I am not the only one that the minister is accountable to. He is accountable to corrections staff as well, because they matter and their work environment matters. He owes it to them to ensure that they have a safe work environment and the opportunity to learn new skills to protect themselves.

I speak now to the ACT Greens. The parliamentary agreement for the Ninth Assembly laid out three specific circumstances where the Greens could support a motion of no confidence. These included instances of proven corruption, gross negligence or significant non-adherence to this agreement or the ministerial code of conduct.

In the parliamentary agreement for this Assembly, the circumstances have been expanded. My hope is that this expansion occurred because the Greens members want more freedom to hold this government to account. They can support a motion of no confidence put forward by the opposition where the government engages in conduct that threatens public confidence in the integrity of the government or public administration.

The failures of this minister, crowned by the very public escape of an inmate, not only constitute gross negligence but also have threatened, and do threaten, public confidence in the integrity of this government and its administration of the prison. It would be hard to find anyone in Canberra who keeps a close eye on the news who is confident that the government is effectively running the prison. The Greens are clearly within their rights to support this motion.

This government must do better, and it starts with Minister Mick Gentleman divesting himself of the corrections portfolio. I commend this motion to the Assembly.

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) (10.16): I have always stood up for workers and will continue to do so. I have done this across all of my portfolios, and I took the same approach when I took over the corrections portfolio in November last year.

Managing prisons in any jurisdiction in Australia is challenging. Ours is no different. When I became minister, this was the clear message I received from the oversight bodies, stakeholders, staff, management and the union. During my short time in my portfolio, I have met with corrections officers and staff across the entirety of ACT

Corrective Services. The clear message from them to me has been one of hope. They are confident in the blueprint for change process which I set up shortly after commencing in the portfolio and have a great deal of confidence in the new commissioner.

I have heard the message of hope repeatedly, including recently at a mobile office. This morning the CPSU texted me to again indicate the confidence that their members have in me as their minister. We do need to support staff, and this work is underway. I will continue to support the commissioner in doing this.

I have also had updates on the blueprint for change process from the independent chair. She is confident and hopeful that progress is being made. As minister, I am also pleased to have been able to work with the commissioner and his team to move women detainees back to their purpose-built accommodation. This was another issue raised with me when I took over the portfolio. The message of hope from staff is also echoed by stakeholders. I acknowledge there are improvements to be made to support detainees better, and this work is also underway.

Yes, there have been incidents since last year's election, but prisons are complex and do not come without challenge. What differentiates the AMC from others is the level of oversight that it has. As the Inspector of Correctional Services has remarked to me, the AMC has the most oversight of any prison in Australia. This is a good thing. It means that, as minister, I can obtain independent advice. I have not hesitated to do this, and I will continue to do so.

This independent oversight provides transparency in the management of the AMC. For example, reports from the inspector are tabled in this Assembly by you, Madam Speaker. We must respect the independence of these oversight bodies. It is important that we do not pressure or seek to sway their advice through public commentary as they undertake reviews.

In the case of the escape incident of 9 July, the police investigation has resulted in charges being laid and the resulting matters will be before the courts. I remind members of the sub judice conventions. I also draw the shadow attorney-general's attention to the need to ensure that the proceedings before the courts are free and fair.

The inspector's review will result in a government report which, as always, will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly and will be publicly available. The government response will also be publicly available because this government is committed to transparency. Given the inspector's review and the court proceedings, I have refrained from commenting. I am extremely conscious of the power that our words in this place can have and I do not want to jeopardise our legal processes. However, I look forward to both public proceedings, which will shed light on the incident.

Unlike the opposition, I will support our corrections staff not only in words but also in action. In contrast, the shadow minister has criticised and undermined the blueprint for change process—a process that is welcomed by officers and their union. Let us stop this grandstanding and get on with updates on the pandemic, housing and homelessness.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (10.21): I note that Mrs Kikkert was compelled to bring this motion. She seems to have been compelled to brief the *Canberra Times* yesterday. She seems to have been compelled, but not so far as to actually write down any details in the particular motion; just one line has been brought to this Assembly, with no justification. It is as if the Assembly need to get the vibe of the thing, which is what I was required to do this morning, from reading the *Canberra Times*, where she describes a number of events that have occurred, without necessarily linking them back to Mr Gentleman's performance as minister. But these events took—

Mrs Kikkert interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Kikkert, you were heard in silence.

MR BRADDOCK: These events occurred even before Mr Gentleman actually took over the ministerial responsibility. This litany of events highlights that corrections is a challenging portfolio in any jurisdiction, and Canberra is no exception.

Whilst there is no such thing as an easy portfolio for a minister, jails are hard and horrible places. They involve the application of force and removal of freedoms on people who have a history of noncompliance and violence. Being a prison guard is a difficult and stressful job, and I would like to thank those guards for their hard work and dedication.

Yes, there are problems with the AMC. A lot of these stem from flaws in its original design. These do not lend themselves to quick and easy fixes. They are complex and difficult to resolve.

Mr Gentleman has explained the measures he has undertaken since taking responsibility for this portfolio, and I look forward to seeing how these measures play out. I wish Minister Gentleman the best in this challenging role and look forward, as the Greens spokesperson for corrections, to continuing to work with Mr Gentleman so that we can improve the outcomes for all guards and prisoners in the corrections portfolio. Therefore the Greens cannot support this motion.

MADAM SPEAKER: Can I remind members that this is a serious motion, one of the most serious that we will get in this place. Mrs Kikkert was heard in silence and I expect all members to be heard in silence.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (10.23): This motion of no confidence that Mrs Kikkert brings today is about our corrections officers, our police, our ambulance and fire brigade, our detainees, and our community. The Minister for Corrections has demonstrated time and time again that he is not fit to hold this ministry.

Under this minister's watch, we have seen the management of our prisons go from bad to worse, and from worse to untenable. The scale of this minister's failures is astonishing, and it is inconceivable that the Chief Minister has allowed this minister to continue in his post.

Headline after headline of the problems plaguing our prisons paint an alarming picture of just how bad this minister's performance is. Madam Speaker, please allow me to share just a few. "Canberra prison riot at the AMC as disturbance prompts emergency response". "Poor discipline and violence inside AMC has guards at breaking point: whistleblower". "Fires lit during AMC riot forces guards to use gas". "Confrontation between officers and 28 prisoners at Canberra's jail". "Prison riot caused by drunk inmates". "Canberra prison staff angry over lack of tools and training, union says". "Emergency services called to another fire at AMC, second incident in a week". "Less than 10 per cent of prison staff effectively trained to handle riot—inspector". "Confusion over who was in charge at Canberra prison—report". "Investigation into prison praises staff, criticises ex-commissioner". "ACT Corrective Services Commissioner suddenly dumped from role". "Ex-ACT prison boss bags \$327k role as riot report tabled". "Canberra prison guards not respected or heard—union". "Guards at breaking point—whistleblower". "Women forced to walk past their domestic violence sexual assault perpetrators in AMC". "Prisoner upkeep cost in the AMC highest in the nation". "Centre to help prisoners reintegrate into society failing a 'running joke', AMC detainees say". "Aboriginal women strip searched in view of male detainees to be probed by Human Rights Commission". "ACT Indigenous women strip searched twice as often at the AMC". "Prison warned Camry not fit for transport two weeks before escape". "'Like a Hollywood Movie'. Woman rams Jeep into police car to free inmate being transported". "AMC inmate mistakenly released from jail". "ACT Government blames human error for mistakenly releasing prisoner". "It's not sustainable. Overtime hours triple for Canberra's prison guards". "Assaults on corrections officers increase five-fold". "Why can't the toxic prison stay out of the news?"

The territory's longest-serving Chief Minister, Labor's own Jon Stanhope, has raised time and time again the significant issues with the management of our prisons. In relation to this government's rejection of our call for an independent inquiry into systemic racism earlier this year, Mr Stanhope said:

The Minister, it appears, has apparently chosen to not believe the woman's claims about her treatment including, it would seem, her belief that racism is an issue within the AMC.

Corrections Minister Gentleman, as spokesperson for the ALP and the Greens, has in both words and actions effectively conveyed that they don't believe her. They don't believe that she is telling the truth or alternatively they don't think her experience, or the concerns expressed by Julie Tongs and the broader Aboriginal community about the pernicious presence of institutional racism in the ACT are serious enough to warrant a detailed and independent response.

Again, I assume, Labor and the Greens opposed the inquiry for political reasons. They were simply not prepared to risk the Liberal Party being recognised for championing a progressive cause.

The only reasonable alternative is, of course, that they don't care.

Coming from the Chief Minister who opened the Alexander Maconochie Centre in 2008, it is quite telling that he would publish such damning comments on the

performance of this minister and the actions of this government. In relation to the abhorrent regime of strip searches conducted at the AMC under the current minister, Mr Stanhope said:

Of 796 occasions of women being stripped in this period (incidentally while being filmed) a total of only 12 or 0.015 per cent were found to have contraband on their persons. In other words, in 784 of 796 searches no contraband was discovered and the consequent trauma, humiliation and degradation suffered by the women was unwarranted and unjustifiable.

If members opposite do not want to believe us, if they do not want to believe the corrections officers and if they do not want to believe the detainees, they should at least believe what our community Aboriginal elders are saying. In response to the minister's refusal to launch an investigation into systemic racism at the AMC, Winnunga Nimmityjah's Julie Tongs said:

This Labor-Greens Government are progressive on selective issues. Unfortunately, Aboriginal disadvantage isn't one of them. It reinforces the belief across the Aboriginal community that their concerns are not a priority with this so-called progressive government.

An Aboriginal person in Canberra is 19.4 times likelier to go to prison than a non-Aboriginal person. Why would any Aboriginal person have any faith in the ACT Justice System.

These are the words, the desperate words, of a woman who has seen the horrendous impact of prison in our community. These are the words, the desperate words, of a woman who knows this government has the power to do something, and is bitterly disappointed and angry that nothing is being done. Ironically, the ACT Greens told us during the 2020 campaign that they would fight for—and I quote:

The criminal justice system to respect the human rights of victims, alleged and convicted offenders.

To end racism, racial bias and racial profiling across the criminal justice system.

For people held in correctional facilities to be provided with a standard of care that ensures they exit detention in good health and with a reduced likelihood of reoffending.

They squandered the opportunity to achieve this last time. I urge them not to squander it today. Is this the "better normal" that they want to see for our city?

Let us not forget that this minister has allowed, through his gross negligence and lack of care, our corrections officers to come into harm's way. This is the same minister who has the responsibility to support and protect our workers in this city. This is untenable.

Mr Braddock talked about the difficulties with managing prisons, and that they are difficult places. That does not give this minister an excuse not to step up. In fact, it is

incumbent on him to take further steps, extra care and extra duty to make sure that our detainees, our corrections officers and our community are kept safe.

I commend Mrs Kikkert's motion to the Assembly. The minister's record speaks for itself, and he must go.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (10.33): The government will not be supporting the no confidence motion outlined by the shadow minister. I want to take the opportunity to express my strong support for Minister Gentleman and the work that he is undertaking in the corrections portfolio.

Minister Gentleman brings experience, compassion and a desire to work with key stakeholders to implement a series of changes within the portfolio. He brings goodwill, a strong, progressive commitment to reform and the capacity to deliver change. He does so in a measured and inclusive way. That is why he has been a minister across many different portfolios in this place for many years. He is experienced; he works well with the ACT public service and with stakeholders.

Anyone who has witnessed his work over many years would appreciate that style and that approach. It is the sort of measured ministerial role you want in a portfolio as challenging as corrections. It stands in marked contrast to what we have witnessed this morning.

This is a difficult and challenging area, but I do not think anyone in the community would doubt Minister Gentleman's commitment as a longstanding representative in this place and as a diligent and engaged minister. Upon taking the portfolio, he has put in place a range of mechanisms and measures to engage with the key stakeholders to deliver a blueprint for change, and he is implementing those reforms.

What we have witnessed this morning, Madam Speaker, is opposition for opposition's sake—the sort of standard negativity that you get from a long-term opposition, bereft of any new ideas of their own and seeking an opportunity to grandstand and score political points off a dedicated and engaged minister.

Minister Gentleman is undertaking a series of difficult reforms, but he has the full support of his colleagues in order to achieve that. I want to thank him for that work. I have a very clear understanding of the challenges associated with delivering it, but I am confident that he will be able to do so with the goodwill of, and in partnership with, the key stakeholders. That is what is needed now, not shouty, negative opposition hubbub for the sake of it, which we see a lot of from the shadow minister. We will not be supporting this no confidence motion.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.37): As Mr Braddock has outlined, the ACT Greens will not be supporting this no confidence motion today. We do not believe it is warranted and we have confidence in Minister Gentleman as the Minister for Corrections.

As he outlined, this is a challenging portfolio, and I feel well placed to make that observation. Corrections is a difficult space. We have people who do not want to be there, in custody, who undertake a range of behaviours that we need to put in place the systems to deal with. Mr Gentleman outlined his focus on improvement for the AMC. Just as when I took the portfolio there were challenges in this space, Mr Gentleman has also come into the portfolio with issues that need to be resolved.

The AMC has been in a process of improvement since it was opened. We still have, compared to places like New South Wales and Victoria, a relatively young corrections system. We do not have the century or so of processes built up and systems in place, but I think the ACT corrections system has made significant steps in the 12 years or so that the AMC has been open. I know Minister Gentleman is committed to continuing that journey of making sure that we have a high-standard, safe, rehabilitative corrections system here in the ACT.

It has been noted this morning that the ACT has one of the most transparent corrections systems in the country. I think that is a good reflection on our jurisdiction. Mechanisms like the Inspector for Correctional Services mean that members of this place probably know more about their corrections system than any other member of parliament in Australia knows about theirs, and that is a good thing.

It is better that these things are out in the open, and I think our community benefits from that as well, in both understanding the complexity of dealing with the corrections system and knowing what the government needs to do to continue to improve it.

I know that Minister Gentleman is committed to working for better outcomes, both for the detainees and for staff, because we need to focus on both sides of the equation in these discussions. We have two really important sets of stakeholders here. At the end of the day, the biggest set of people we have in mind is the community, because if we run a good corrections system then the community as a whole will be safer.

I am certainly committed to working with Minister Gentleman for better justice outcomes overall. It is not just about the jail; it is about thinking about how we invest right through the justice systems to make this community as safe as possible.

In terms of today's motion, we have not heard anything from the opposition which supports their motion. What we have heard is a series of slights that are about the challenges that arise in a corrections system. This is not some fantasy world that the Liberal Party is trying to describe; these things do happen. The question is about what the minister does to respond to it. I have confidence that Minister Gentleman is taking the right steps to continue to drive the improvement we need to see in our corrections system—a journey we have been on over an extended period of time—to get to the best place we can be with our corrections system.

As I say, the Greens will support him to achieve those steps, and we will not be supporting the motion today.

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (10.41): It is astounding that Minister Rattenbury would get up in this place and defend this portfolio when he was the minister who for many years created the mess we are in today. Unfortunately, nothing Minister Gentleman has done in the meantime has changed the game significantly. As a result, we have no confidence in Minister Gentleman.

At least Mr Barr has accepted that there is a problem. That is the first time in this place somebody has come in here in a debate and accepted that there is a problem. He defended Mr Gentleman's ability to resolve the problem. Nonetheless, we at least are at the point now where there is acceptance from the government—begrudging acceptance finally—that there is a problem. There has been a problem for a number of years, and Mr Rattenbury, as he was the minister sitting in cabinet and oversaw this nonsense, has no right to defend this minister.

The people of the ACT do not need to be made to feel stupid by Minister Rattenbury when they come to us laughing and absolutely shocked that a Jeep ramming a Camry has become the biggest joke in this city over the last two weeks. That is the discussion in supermarkets; that is the discussion outside schools; that is the discussion in people's kitchens. Can you believe it? We have become the mockery of the entire country, and rightly so. Because despite what the minister says about us having the greatest oversight of any government of our prisons, the things the inspector says are not implemented. That is the problem here.

We have known the Camry was not acceptable, and yet nothing has been done to change that. And nothing any minister has said today has made us believe anything is being done to resolve that problem before this escape occurred. Why was that Camry still being used? Why is a database designed in 1985 that requires people to check multiple platforms still operating after 12 years? What changed after the last time a prisoner was accidentally let go home? Why was the prisoner then asked to please hand himself in? Someone had been denied bail. What took so long? It took a week for him to be finally escorted back to the prison.

There was a state of emergency last term in the prison, and nothing Minister Gentleman has done has genuinely changed the fear that officers have and have had for many years—that the prison is a tinder box ready to explode. The inmates have far too much power in that place and there is not an appropriate regime or order. There are too many opportunities for people to take illicit substances, harm each other and harm themselves.

There are things that can be done about it. I spent years in this place making suggestions to Minister Rattenbury about things that could be done to improve the situation with sharp implements, lighters, and guards feeling completely abandoned by this government in a very difficult workplace. I have met with more than one prison guard who, over the 12 years this government has been in charge of that prison, have actually started to break down mentally because of their experiences at work.

It is untenable that the Chief Minister, that Minister Rattenbury, that the whole cabinet as well and that the crossbench from the Greens will stand up and back in this

minister, who has not made enough changes since taking over to give anybody the impression that things are turning around. What a joke. What an absolute joke.

Transparency is good, and complexity is used here far too often as an excuse. Nobody sits around in Canberra saying, “Oh it must be very simple to run a prison. It must be simple to run a hospital.” That is not the argument put by any reasonable member of the community. However, it is your job to run it. It is your job as the cabinet. It is Minister Gentleman’s job as the minister for this area to change things so we can see an end to these problems.

Very minimal changes have occurred since Minister Gentleman started in this role. At the very least I support the move of the women—that should have happened years ago—but it is too little and too slow. People are being harmed. Officers’ livelihoods are on the line because they may not actually be able to work anymore after being in these stressful situations. People’s psychological states can only handle so much distress, so much intimidation and so much trauma before they start breaking down.

These are tough people who have put themselves on the line week after week, year after year, in our corrections system as officers. If we do not treat them with the respect they deserve by providing a safe and reasonable work environment, then we do not deserve to be here. Minister Gentleman does not deserve to be here, because there are still grave safety issues and there are still training deficiencies. The prison is still a tinder box, and corrections officers go to work afraid. Any of us who have family who have worn a uniform to a difficult job at work know that eventually, when the psychological state of our ACT government employees starts to break down, that needs to be put fairly at the feet of the minister.

In this case Minister Gentleman has not acted fast enough to change. At least we now have as an agreed position that the prison has a lot of problems. Cannot blame anybody else. Cannot say it is okay—it is not okay. I would like to see a much swifter change so we do not see prisoners escaping and being let on the loose when they should not be. I would like to see enough change in that prison system so there is a daily program so people are not bored, so we can start to address the fact that they all have lighters, and so they do not have sharp implements to harm each other with. They are bored all the time, which has been a problem ever since that facility opened.

Money flows too freely around there and there are drug problems, as the minister well knows. He has not convinced us or the Canberra people that he is addressing this appropriately or fast enough. Therefore, he should go.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (10.48): I want to speak briefly on this motion and extend my support to my colleague Mick Gentleman, who I have known for a number of years before coming into this place. I know of his care and his careful consideration in roles like this one. That is why he put his hand up to be the Minister for Corrections in the ACT. He has a dedication to that job and to the corrections officers as well as to the detainees, so much so that a couple of weeks ago

after the well-known incidents that have been discussed in this place occurred, Minister Gentleman and I visited the AMC. Minister Gentleman spent that time talking to as many of the correctional officers as possible, listening to them about their concerns and trying his very hardest to extend some hope to those officers, rather than coming in here and making a huge fuss about something that needed a dedicated minister to start paying attention to those corrections officers in the way that Mick Gentleman did.

I support him for that work. While we were there, Minister Gentleman and I spoke to the female detainees who, under Minister Gentleman's leadership, have moved to the purpose-built women's care centre accommodation facility. We got to speak to and listen to the female detainees about their experiences, of course, understanding very clearly that they have experienced complex trauma, family and sexual assaults, as well as coming from complex and complicated lives. Minister Gentleman's caring nature in that environment was felt by the female detainees, and they were grateful for his visit to talk to them and listen to their concerns.

In addition, working with Minister Gentleman in his role as Minister for Corrections, I have been able to extend the women's return-to-work grants to female detainees in the AMC. We got to speak to and hear from one of the female detainees who had been a successful applicant of that grant and how she had used that grant to further her education for employment when she is able to return to the community after her time in the AMC. She was eternally grateful for the support Minister Gentleman and I have provided through that return-to-work grant and hoped that could be extended to other female detainees. Minister Gentleman and I will work on that process to ensure that female detainees can get the work experience and training they need so when they return to community they can stay there and out of the justice system.

Finally, Minister Gentleman also developed a new women offenders framework, which ensures that staff are provided with best-practice principles to better support female detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. So in the very short time of working with Minister Gentleman in his role as corrections minister, he has been forthright, caring and considerate in how he has worked with the female detainees, with my office and the Office for Women. Importantly, he has provided corrections officers in that place some hope that he will work with them and with their union, the CPSU, and Minister Gentleman described this morning how he received a text from them indicating their support and confidence in him in that role. In that vein, of course we do not support the motion today.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (10.51), in reply: Mick Gentleman says he has always stepped up for our workers. If that were the case, if that were correct, he would not allow corrections officers to use an unsuitable vehicle and he would give training to corrections officers so they are prepared for riots. He is not stepping up for our workers; he is waking up from his sleep as the Minister for Corrections for nine months. That is what you are doing—you are not stepping up; you are waking up from your sleepy sleep.

The minister met with the staff and he commented on the message of hope. Let me reassure you that the message of hope is for you to step down as the Minister for

Corrections. The reason the AMC has an independent oversight body is because you cannot implement a very simple—

Ms Berry: Madam Speaker, a point of order. I understand that discussions on motions in the Assembly are to be directed to the chair and not to the minister.

MADAM SPEAKER: It is through the chair, thank you, Mrs Kikkert.

MRS KIKKERT: Thank you, my apologies. The Minister for Corrections has mentioned that the AMC has an independent oversight body, but that is because the minister cannot implement a simple recommendation such as providing adequate emergency training for our corrections officers. He needs training wheels from the oversight committee to tell him to provide training for the corrections officers. Please do it. That is not an experienced minister's attitude; that is the attitude of an inexperienced and sleepy minister.

The minister also refrained from commenting on a serious event. This is a sign of his weakness and uselessness. That is not how an adult works in the real world when a serious incident happens under his watch. His behaviour is immature, and he is not fit to be the Minister for Corrections.

In response to the Greens spokesperson for corrections, Andrew Braddock: go back and read my speech and be educated on why this is a valid motion. The Chief Minister talked about political points. This is not about political points; this is about doing the right thing—the right thing for our corrections officers.

The government has been in government for so long that they are blinded and are fixated on their mismanagement that they think all is well and good. That is not reality. They have demonstrated that even though they have been in government for years, they are still babies on a dummy who do not know how to govern a prison. And when you cannot govern a prison, you cannot govern a territory.

This motion is long overdue. Some may say that Mr Gentleman has only held the portfolio for less than a year and that many of the little fires he has had to put out were ultimately the fault of Mr Rattenbury. I say that the years' long failings of the AMC are the responsibility of the entire government. Since the opening of the prison, this government has stumbled its way from crisis to crisis. Its response to its errors in the past has been the same as it was today—to dodge responsibility and pass it on to someone else. When will this government take responsibility for the sad state of our prison?

This motion may be defeated but it will still serve at least one purpose—to ensure this government knows that the opposition and the people of Canberra have no confidence in Minister Gentleman and that his miserable management of the AMC will no longer be tolerated.

The government's failings are no longer contained to the prison, where the government can hope that fences will hide the problems within. Its failings were in full view on 9 July all over Oxley Street, Hindmarsh Drive and Canberra Avenue.

And let us not forget the previous escapes from the prison of two detainees in 2016, one of whom was at large for eight days.

I am disappointed this motion is not supported by the Greens, who continue to show themselves as spineless, useless MLAs. I know I am joined by many Canberrans who were hoping the Greens would actively condemn government's shortcomings and not just blow hot air. Unfortunately, the so-called crossbench have showed themselves only capable of crossing Canberrans who had a sliver of hope that they would use their influence to hold the government to account.

I want to mention a group often forgotten. Minister Gentleman is accountable to officers' families and loved ones. Everyone who goes to work has the right to come home safely. Corrections officers have the right to know that when they say goodbye to their loved ones they will see them home safe again. The minister disrespects these families by not placing the safety of their loved ones as a priority. I worry for our corrections officers and the staff at the AMC, who must continue to endure a government that does not put their safety first and does not appreciate the work they do. I wish for them to know that I and my colleagues will continue to have their backs and listen to their concerns.

I also worry for the safety of our community. It is not just detainee escapes that endanger Canberrans but also the failings of this government to rehabilitate detainees and prevent further reoffending. To Canberrans I say: the Canberra Liberals are the only party that will take meaningful actions to hold this government to account and improve community safety.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 8

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

Noes 15

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
Ms Vassarotti

Question resolved in the negative.

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to Ms Lawder for this sitting week for personal reasons.

Petitions

The following petitions were lodged for presentation:

Planning—Gungahlin town centre—petition 16-21

By Mr Braddock, from 714 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:

Gungahlin residents have completely lost confidence in the ACT Government planning system to deliver employment, retail, entertainment and community services for the GTC.

The remaining land within the GTC will be sold in the coming financial year, so urgent action is required to address these concerns.

These concerns consistently raised with the Government over more than a decade, with no action.

Residents would like to achieve more balanced development and job creation in the GTC. At present it is dysfunctional, and the Government does not have a plan for the GTC other than more mixed-use sites that are often apartments.

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

Request Suburban Land Agency and Minister for Planning to immediately suspend the auction of four mixed-use sites scheduled for 12-May-2021 and the sale/auction of any other sites in GTC, until:

- All recommendations of the GTC Planning Refresh Community Engagement Report are addressed as a matter of urgency
- Draft Variation 364 has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services
- Completion of the actions in the Assembly resolution on ‘Development in the GTC’ passed on 10-Feb-2021
- Provide a clear statement of the objectives of the Assessment of Community and Recreation Facilities in Gungahlin
- Develop a strategy to encourage businesses to be established in the GTC
- Hold genuine community consultations about future land use; and
- Investigate the justifications in the significant reduction of commercial zoning resulting from DV364.

Sport—Nicholls Oval—petition 22-21

By Mr Pettersson, from 509 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:

Nicholls Enclosed Oval is a hub of community activity, and has been since the mid-1990's. The precinct remains untouched for more than 20-years, leaving no changing facilities for females, plus a playing surface that is unsafe.

Females who wish to play sport in the Gungahlin area are discouraged to participate. This is due to lacklustre and unsafe facilities; therefore, Nicholls Enclosed Oval can't grow or sustain a genuine grassroots program for any sport or activity.

More than 30 teams can use the facility in one day for one sport. This has resulted in teams, of both females and males, getting changed in storage containers, or in plain sight with no privacy whatsoever. This is highly inappropriate and humiliating for the clubs, teams and individuals involved.

The surface imposes multiple safety risks to participants. A physical and chemical analysis of the oval (conducted by Transport Canberra) indicates excessive compaction issues, low soil aeration, low infiltration and hydraulic conductivity rates causing shallow rooting and overall lack of vigour and resilience of the turf.

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

Fund a significant upgrade to the Nicholls Oval amenities, to cater for more participants, primarily females.

Build a suitable centre that caters for a range of community events, to help foster a self-sufficient facility that encourages community activities.

Overhaul and upgrade the fields to suit premier division sport, and harsh conditions.

Planning—Red Hill—petition 24-21

By Mrs Jones, from 1527 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:

- ACT residents have been fighting housing development proposals on the Federal Golf Course and loss of adjacent green space for over 30 years.
- This fight led to a petition signed by over 3 100 concerned residents in 2017, calling on the ACT Government to develop an Integrated Plan that genuinely protects existing green space in Hughes, Garran and Deakin; and protects the Federal Golf course lease area.
- In response, a Legislative Assembly Resolution required that the Plan limit development to proposals that have a reasonable likelihood of majority community support.

- The Red Hill Integrated Plan released in 2021 fails to deliver on the petition or Resolution by including a retirement village on the Federal Golf course, despite the EPSDD's Engagement Report finding the retirement village failed to receive the required majority community support.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call on the ACT Government to amend the Red Hill Integrated Plan to remove the retirement village .on the Federal Golf course and access road off Kitchener Street.

We also request the Assembly reject amendments to the Territory Plan that would enable housing development on the site of the Federal Golf Course.

Planning—Griffith—petition 28-21

By Ms Lee, from 516 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, and requests that the Assembly:

Note that:

- Draft Variation 375 is being introduced so that a 4-unit, 2-story Manor House with 9 car parks, can be built in Griffith.
- Without this DV, the Manor House could not be built.

Recognise that:

- If DV 375 is approved, Manor Houses or their equivalent could be built in any low-density residential zone, in the ACT
- Canberra residents require certainty and trust, regarding what can be built near them; random rezoning of single blocks is bad planning.
- Draft Variation 375 is inappropriate for this part of Griffith and does not meet community expectations for the suburb.
- The proposal should be built on an RZ2 block, rather than in RZ1.

Your petitioners request the Assembly reject Draft Variation 375 so the character and amenity of Griffith can be maintained.

In accordance with standing order 99A, these petitions will be referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services.

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

Ministerial responses

The following responses to petitions have been lodged:

Planning—Chisholm—petitions 10-21 and 11-21

By **Mr Gentleman**, Minister for Planning and Land Management dated 14 July 2021 in response to petitions lodged by **Ms Burch** on 20 April 2021 concerning the proposed development of Chisholm Village.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 20 April 2021 providing Petitions No 10-21 and 11-21 lodged by Ms Joy Burch MLA and received by the Assembly on 20 April 2021, regarding the development at Chisholm Village shops.

I note that related petitions 19-19, 22-19 and 12-20 have previously been received by the Assembly.

The recent proposed development at the Chisholm Village Shops has included Development Application (DA) 201935300 which involved two separate public notification and representation periods.

Many community members have expressed their views to the Government about the proposed development for the Chisholm shops. In considering matters including feedback received, I have declined the developer's request for direct sale of a parcel necessary for the proposed development.

The Government is not involved in the operations of private leases at Chisholm Village Shops. However, in response to the current petitions, the Government recognises and has considered the many community representations and concerns with the proposed development. Any future government involvement with the Chisholm Shops will have regard to community concerns.

Thank you for providing these petitions to me.

Yerrabi electorate—Yerrabi Pond—petitions 5-21 and 14-21

By **Mr Steel**, Minister for Minister for Transport and City Services, dated 29 June 2021, in response to petitions lodged by **Mr Pettersson** on 20 and 23 April 2021 concerning proposed upgrades to Yerrabi Pond.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letters dated 20 and 23 April 2021 regarding petitions 5-21 and 14-21 respectively, lodged by Mr Michael Pettersson MLA. Both petitions have requested improvements to the Yerrabi Pond recreation area, as such, my combined response to the petitions is detailed below.

In relation to the request for more facilities and upgrades to the playground, Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) recently sought community feedback, via a survey on the ACT Government's YourSay website, on how people use the Yerrabi Pond recreation areas and suggested improvements.

Consultation commenced on 23 April 2021 and closed on 4 June 2021. Pop-up sessions at Yerrabi Pond were held on 1, 6 and 11 May 2021 to provide additional opportunities for people to give feedback and talk to TCCS staff.

Over 1,000 survey responses or other feedback was received. Results of the survey will be published on the YourSay page in July 2021 after the results have been analysed.

Feedback, including the matters raised in the petitions, will be used to inform relative priorities and future improvements at the Yerrabi Pond recreation area. The Government has provided \$300,000 to enable implementation of on-ground improvements.

Noting the request for support to establish a Friends of Yerrabi Pond group, I can advise that, on 7 May 2021, TCCS staff met with the principal petitioner for petition 5-21, John Beagle, and other community members, to discuss the process for establishing a Friends of Yerrabi Pond group and the roles and responsibilities of volunteers. Discussions between TCCS officers and community members are also well underway to inform enhanced maintenance activities. To date, a number of additional activities have been undertaken including remediating water flows that were impacting on shared paths, repair of bollards, upgrades to garden beds and replacement of playground soft-fall.

In relation to maintenance of the area around Yerrabi Pond recreation area, regular maintenance of the Yerrabi Pond recreation area includes mowing, cleaning, pest and weed management, pruning, servicing of bins, repairs to assets such as furniture and play equipment and graffiti management. Maintenance of the pond is undertaken four times a year and includes litter-picking and removal of debris. The Conservator of Flora and Fauna has advised that a vegetative buffer should be provided on the fringes of ponds to protect and enhance habitat and water quality. Ongoing concerns about maintenance can be reported to Fix My Street at www.act.gov.au/fixmystreet or Access Canberra on 13 22 81 for appropriate actioning.

There are currently no plans to install additional pedestrian or dog related signage, noting that signage alone is often ineffective in influencing behaviour and the Government has a range of education and awareness activities to inform the community about responsible pet ownership, however the Government will continue to undertake educative activities in the area.

I trust the information provided above has been helpful.

Motion to take note of petitions

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

That the petitions and responses so lodged be noted.

Planning—Griffith—petition 28-21

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (11.03): I seek leave to table an out-of-order petition of 337 signatures to supplement the petition lodged in my name.

Leave granted.

MS LEE: I table the following out-of-order petition:

Petition which does not conform with the standing orders—Planning—Griffith (337 signatures).

I speak on the petition by the Griffith Narrabundah Community Association—the GNCA—calling on the Assembly to reject draft variation 375. The petition and the out-of-order petition are signed by a total of 853 residents. I want to be clear that, despite the spin by the Minister for Planning, the Canberra Liberals do not oppose demonstration housing. The demonstration housing project, which includes Manor House in Griffith, plays an important role in showcasing different types of development and giving Canberrans more agency to choose from different ways of living.

What the Canberra Liberals do oppose, however, is poor planning. We have seen some of the worst cases of poor planning under this Labor-Greens government. And we share the concerns of the community about an RZ2 development happening on an RZ1 block. The community is fed up with planning decisions that go against what the community wants and what the community expects. And, more importantly, the community is fed up with a government that does not comply with its own planning rules.

The petitioners contend that spot variations to the Territory Plan, should not be used as a mechanism to allow dense development on RZ1 blocks, and we share those concerns. There has also been some commentary in the media that the minister has labelled this petition a ‘deliberately misleading scare campaign’. This is a huge slap in the face for—and shows huge disrespect of—the members of the GNCA and the over 850 residents in my electorate who are raising genuine concerns and expressing a genuine no confidence in the minister’s ability to adhere to the government’s own planning laws.

As a local member, I cannot ignore the more than 500 objections that were raised to the draft variation back in April. As an Assembly, we cannot ignore the 850 signatures to these petitions nor the concerns about this issue. That is why the people elect us—to represent their views in this place. And that is why I sponsored this petition. The Canberra Liberals support development that is in line with community expectations. Only in the last month, the Minister for Planning announced that we need to start again with our planning laws. That is long overdue, but it is an inconceivable admission of this government’s longstanding failures when it comes to planning in our city.

We know that the Canberra community have little confidence in our planning system, and this is yet another way of undermining community expectations of what they will see in our suburbs. I implore all members in this place, especially the members of the committee that this draft variation will be referred to, to remember the 853 residents who signed this petition. I note that as a variation to the Territory Plan, DV375 will be

referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services and I sincerely hope that the committee looks into this draft variation. When they do so I hope that they also remember the wording of the petition and the 853 residents who signed it. We are, after all, here to serve the community.

Finally, I thank the Griffith Narrabundah Community Association and in particular, their chair, David Denham, for his work in collecting the signatures, engaging with members of the community and bringing this important matter to the Assembly.

Sport—Nicholls Oval—petition 22-21

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.07): I rise today to thank the Gungahlin Eagles Rugby Union Club and the wider Gungahlin community for their hard work in bringing forward this petition about Nicholls Oval. They have done an amazing job to collect over 500 signatures.

The Nicholls Oval has served as the local sporting hub for the community of Nicholls, but also the wider Gungahlin district, for over 20 years. Most importantly, it is also home to the Eagles. The local community would like to see their facilities improved, and I think they are right. A little bit of TLC at Nicholls Oval would be very appreciated. The central issues that the community would like to see addressed are with the change rooms and the turf quality. In the past 20 years the amenities at Nicholls have not changed. Twenty years ago we were not building facilities with quite the same wisdom as we do now; we did not build any female change rooms. It is pretty obvious that if you do not have changing facilities for women, it makes their participation more challenging. Earlier this year I wrote to Minister Berry on behalf of the club to request this upgrade, and the minister has noted the request and will consider it amongst competing priorities. I believe that this petition should showcase just how much community support there is for the project.

The second issue that the community would like to see addressed is the turf quality. A recent TCCS physical and chemical analysis report showed that there are a number of issues with the field. The report indicated excessive compaction issues; low soil aeration; and low infiltration and hydraulic conductivity rates, causing shallow rooting and a lack of vigour and resilience in the turf. The recommendations made by TCCS were for either a complete reconstruction or the option to install suitable drainage over the entire site. I believe that this work is still in the works; but the community would like to see it resolved, as turf issues cause injuries. No-one wants to play on an unsafe ground. I am hopeful that we can make Nicholls Oval a top-notch facility once again. I want to, once again, thank the Gungahlin Eagles for bringing this forward.

Planning—Gungahlin town centre—petition 16-21

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (11.09): I wish to speak to the petition lodged in my name on the suspension of sales in the Gungahlin town centre. It may be of no surprise to the members here that I have an intense interest in the future of the Gungahlin town centre and ensuring that the community gets a town centre to be proud of—a town centre that serves the community, a town centre that the community

has helped shape. In this spirit I am proud to present this petition and thank the Gungahlin Community Council for the work it has done in obtaining signatures to it.

I would like to note that petitions like this are a symptom of a diminution of trust. When the community does not have trust in the planning system, they have no choice but to resort to absolutes and call for all sales to stop. I support community members in their frustration, their disillusionment, their weariness and their exasperation in a system that has repeatedly failed them. As a community, we are facing a time imperative. As the final blocks are sold and built on, the door of opportunity closes. The door closes on our ability to craft a town centre that works for everyone and that provides a sense of place, employment, services, community and economic activity.

My motion, passed by this Assembly, forms just one block in helping rebuild that trust in the community by ensuring that future sales are more in line with community views. The Planning, Transport and City Services inquiry into Draft Variation 364 is also currently underway and is another block to rebuilding that trust. I hope that this petition gives the committee members food for thought about the opinions of Gungahlin residents and that, with one block after another, we rebuild that trust. If we do not, we are left with nothing but absolutes. Thank you.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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) (11.11): I rise to provide an 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.

The COVID-19 situation across the country is constantly changing, and over the past month millions of Australians have been affected by travel restrictions, stay-at-home orders and clusters in their local regions. Fortunately, the situation in the ACT remains strong, with no new locally acquired cases and a high uptake of vaccination appointments. This is in large part thanks to the incredible efforts of our public health officials and the Canberra community right throughout this pandemic. So, while we continue to be well placed in our COVID-19 response, we cannot afford to become complacent.

The COVID-19 situation across Australia has changed significantly since my last update on 22 June 2021. We have seen outbreaks in New South Wales and Victoria, as well as new locally acquired cases in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Each of these jurisdictions has tightened its public health restrictions and implemented stay-at-home orders in an effort to slow the spread of the virus. The ACT government has been closely monitoring the situation in each jurisdiction, and our health and compliance teams have been working tirelessly to protect Canberra from any potential outbreak. This has generally involved

mirroring the restrictions in place in other jurisdictions, to support their public health responses and protect the ACT community from the risk of seeding.

I am pleased to report that there have been no positive cases detected in the ACT despite the increased risk of incursions, particularly from New South Wales. We have seen our testing rates increase in response to new cases and outbreaks across the country, and I want to thank the entire community for continuing to do the right thing to keep Canberra safe and strong. The COVID-19 situation in New South Wales is continuing to evolve, with a range of public health restrictions having been put in place across the state, including stay-at-home orders for the Greater Sydney region and some areas within regional New South Wales, in response to ongoing community transmission.

On 16 June 2021, a positive case was recorded in a worker transporting international flight crew. This case led to the identification of several exposure locations in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, and case numbers began to increase as more people were confirmed as close and casual contacts. As a result, the New South Wales government introduced stay-at-home orders for the local government areas of City of Sydney, Waverley, Randwick, Canada Bay, Inner West, Bayside and Woollahra from 4 pm on 23 June. The ACT mirrored these stay-at-home requirements, with ACT residents required to complete an online declaration and non-ACT residents required to seek an exemption before travel. On 25 June, following an assessment of the situation in Sydney, the ACT extended the existing stay-at-home requirements to cover all local government areas in metropolitan Sydney. The following day, the New South Wales government announced that the stay-at-home order would be expanded to cover all of Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour for anyone who had been in these areas since 21 June 2021.

The ACT acknowledged the increased risk of the situation in New South Wales to the Canberra community and moved quickly to expand stay-at-home requirements for all travellers who had left the Greater Sydney region from 21 June 2021. In response to a rise in locally acquired cases in the Greater Sydney region, particularly as cases continued to be in the community while infectious, the ACT declared Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour as COVID-19 affected areas from 11.59 pm on 9 July. Anyone who left these COVID-19 affected areas on or after 11.59 pm on 9 July and travelled to the ACT was required to enter quarantine for 14 days upon their arrival to the ACT, rather than adhering to stay-at-home requirements.

These travel restrictions remain in place, with ACT and non-ACT residents seeking to travel from these COVID-19 affected areas required to apply for an exemption from ACT Health prior to their travel. Returning ACT residents are granted an exemption once there has been verification of identity and residency in the ACT, and confirmation of the location and suitability of a quarantine premises. However, we strongly advise Canberrans not to travel to Greater Sydney, Central Coast, the Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Shellharbour regions of New South Wales at this time.

On 13 July, ACT Health was informed of a positive COVID-19 case in an individual who worked on a construction site in Goulburn on 9 July and that a number of

contacts were potentially residing in the ACT. In response to this, ACT Health worked closely with NSW Health to identify 26 contacts in the ACT who were all classed as casual contacts, based on risk assessments. ACT Health supported these individuals to get tested and remain in isolation until they received a negative test result. Fortunately, all 26 casual contacts returned negative tests and were subsequently released from isolation.

In addition to the travel restrictions for the Greater Sydney region, stay-at-home requirements were implemented for anyone travelling from the local government areas of Orange, Blayney and Cabonne on or after 21 July, after an individual transited these areas of regional New South Wales on 17 July while infectious with COVID-19. Several exposure locations were identified, and the New South Wales government instructed people in these local government areas to follow stay-at-home orders until 12.01 am on 28 July. The ACT lifted its stay-at-home requirement for Orange, Blayney and Cabonne LGAs following the conclusion of the New South Wales government's orders. The ACT government will continue to monitor the situation in New South Wales, and in particular the surrounding region, and we may introduce further travel restrictions if they are needed to minimise the risk of virus transmission in the ACT.

Since my last update to the Assembly, the states of Victoria and South Australia and local government areas in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland have been under stay-at-home orders for periods of time due to outbreaks linked to interstate incursions of COVID-19. In response to these stay-at-home restrictions, the ACT government mirrored the requirements set by the jurisdictions, with ACT residents required to complete a declaration form within 24 hours prior to entering the ACT from the impacted jurisdiction, and non-ACT residents only permitted to enter with an approved exemption. Once in the ACT, impacted individuals were required to stay at home except for essential purposes and to wear a mask when leaving home.

On Saturday, 31 July, a stay-at-home order was introduced for 11 local government areas identified by the Queensland government. Given the risk associated with the fact that there is a missing link for an overseas traveller to the known cases in South East Queensland, the ACT has implemented a stay-at-home requirement for anyone who left these LGAs on or after 21 July. Yesterday, in line with a Queensland government announcement that its stay-at-home order would be extended until Sunday, 8 August, the ACT's stay-at-home requirement was also extended. We are closely monitoring the situation in South East Queensland and will continue to assess the risk to Canberrans as it evolves.

The ACT government encourages Canberrans to minimise interstate travel at this time, and to be prepared to reconsider plans at short notice. We understand that this is a difficult time for many people in our community and we acknowledge the impact that travel restrictions have on families, workers and our border communities. The Chief Health Officer will continue to assess the risk of interstate outbreaks to the ACT and amend our travel restrictions, as necessary. With state outbreaks continuing to occur across the country, it is also once again a stark reminder for all of us to maintain our COVID-safe behaviours and keep up to date with the latest health advice, to protect our community. This includes staying home if you are unwell; getting tested for

COVID-19 if experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms; physically distancing from people you do not know; practising careful hand and respiratory hygiene; using the Check In CBR app for contact tracing purposes when out and about; and booking your COVID-19 vaccination appointment when eligible to protect yourself and the community.

Our fantastic digital team continues to refine and update the Check In CBR app, responding to feedback and suggestions from the community. The latest version of the app was released on 21 July and included the ability to check in offline, which allows check-ins to occur without a data connection. This means that if there is no signal or a user does not have phone data and cannot access wi-fi, people can still check in and the data will be uploaded when the phone next has access to data.

The update also included improved user functionality, such as frequent location check-in and a flashlight toggle for check-ins in poorly lit places, as well as allowing the app to redirect to the New South Wales check-in web form when scanning New South Wales codes.

The digital solutions team who built the app will continue to work with the community to ensure that the user experience is excellent, while keeping us safe and allowing efficient and effective contact tracing.

The COVID-19 vaccination program continues to progress steadily in the number of vaccines administered in the ACT. Delivering a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine program is the priority for the ACT government. Today we can report that we have reached 50 per cent of adults in the ACT having had a first dose of vaccine and 25 per cent fully vaccinated.

In addition, those in the oldest age groups have high levels of vaccination, with almost 92 per cent of those aged 70 and over vaccinated with one dose and more than 50 per cent covered with two doses, including 50 per cent of 70- to 79-year-olds and 53 per cent of those aged 80 and over.

Vaccination is a priority that was reinforced by the Doherty Institute modelling work discussed at national cabinet on Friday, 30 July, which outlined that the pathway to reduced restrictions, reduced likelihood of stay-at-home orders and reduced impact on people's lives is to have more than 80 per cent of eligible Australians vaccinated with both doses.

We are working hard to make that a reality and to ensure that Canberrans, and those from the surrounding region, can readily access the vaccine as it becomes available from the commonwealth.

The ACT government is anticipating a significant increase in vaccine supply from the commonwealth, putting the ACT in a good position to open more appointments to eligible Canberrans. Indeed, today we have been able to announce that appointments at ACT government vaccination hubs are now open to 30- to 39-year-olds.

Through an improved clinic model, our clinics have increased capacity to administer more than 14,000 doses per week. Half of the additional 4,000 vaccine appointments per week are reserved for high-risk eligibility groups, including healthcare, disability and aged care workers. The ACT government is continuing to implement program changes, with efforts focused on improving the uptake among these high-risk groups.

The access and sensory COVID-19 vaccination clinic for people with disability at Garran continues to be well received by the Canberra community. Through some successful innovation in clinic flow, Canberra Health Services has been able to double the number of appointments each week without compromising its service to individuals and their carers.

The ACT government has been focused on ensuring equity of access to vaccines for those Canberrans unlikely to engage with health services. This may include homeless and housing insecure populations; culturally and linguistically diverse communities; people living with drug and alcohol dependencies or mental health challenges; and some congregate living arrangements, including secure facilities, supported accommodation and refuges. To ensure that we are reaching these Canberrans, we are working with key stakeholders to develop and implement programs to support COVID-19 vaccination.

At the end of June, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, AHPPC, recommended to national cabinet that the residential aged care workforce be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of working in residential aged care facilities.

To assist in facilitating this requirement, our health officials are continuing to liaise directly with residential aged care facilities and community groups to further promote uptake of vaccinations to workers, as well as offering any workers the option to be contacted directly to book their vaccination appointment and skip booking lines.

On Thursday, 22 July, the Prime Minister announced that all community pharmacies across Australia will be eligible to request involvement in the AstraZeneca rollout. The Prime Minister noted that it was expected that pharmacies should be able to begin administering AstraZeneca from mid-August. The Chief Health Officer has recently amended the relevant regulation to support this decision.

The supply of vaccines to primary care is also increasing substantially. There are currently 21 general practices with access to the Pfizer vaccine and another five practices coming online in the next week. Weekly supply to primary care is estimated to increase to 6,300 Pfizer doses in the first week of August, increasing to 7,200 doses in the last week of August. For AstraZeneca, there are more than 80 participating GP and commonwealth-led respiratory assessment clinics administering this COVID-19 vaccination in the ACT.

Thank you to Canberrans who have already stepped up to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. I encourage all Canberrans to get vaccinated when they are eligible.

Since my last update to the Assembly, the ACT government has implemented two new public health restrictions in response to the increase in COVID-19 cases across the country and the risks associated with more infectious strains of coronavirus, including the delta variant.

Following the implementation of stay-at-home orders across the greater Sydney region and tighter public health restrictions for regional New South Wales, the Chief Health Officer advised the ACT government of the need to mandate the use of face masks in indoor settings in the ACT where physical distancing was difficult or not possible.

This resulted in a new public health direction coming into effect from midnight on 28 June 2021, requiring anyone 12 years of age or over to wear a face mask in indoor settings, including supermarkets, shopping centres, retail, hospitality venues, public transport, taxi and rideshare services, hairdressers and personal services, gyms and high-risk settings such as health and aged care facilities.

Although this was the first time throughout the pandemic that Canberrans were required to wear masks, our community wholeheartedly embraced this important public health measure.

With the COVID-19 situation in regional New South Wales stabilising and no cases identified in the ACT, the ACT government was able to lift the mask requirement from 11.59 pm on 9 July. The government is still encouraging Canberrans to wear face masks when they are in indoor spaces where physical distancing is not possible, such as public transport or crowded indoor venues, to help protect our community as we continue to respond to the risk of COVID-19.

The use of the Check In CBR app became mandatory for all retail settings, public transport and taxi and rideshare services from 15 July, in addition to restricted businesses and venues. In addition, the 15-minute period when check-in was not required upon entry to a business or venue has been removed. This means all patrons must check in when entering a premise with Check In CBR, regardless of how long they are planning to spend in the venue.

As of 31 July, more than 17,000 venues had registered with Check In CBR, more than 30 million check-ins had been recorded, and the app had been downloaded 912,000 times. We have seen the benefits of the widespread use of contact tracing apps in responding to outbreaks, and these new changes to Check In CBR will enable ACT Health's contact tracing teams to respond even more quickly and effectively if a case is identified in the ACT.

The ACT continues to support the return of government officials, diplomats and their families, with a total of 2,300 individuals completing quarantine at home or in managed quarantine facilities as at 29 July.

In preparation for this week's federal parliamentary sitting, ACT Health has worked closely with the Australian government Department of Health and the parliamentary

Presiding Officers to implement risk mitigation measures within Parliament House. These measures include reduced occupancy limits across the building, restricting public access, requesting parliamentarians to reduce the number of staff present in their offices, and increased cleaning and sanitising of communal areas.

With several states still recording new cases of COVID-19 and Greater Sydney still in lockdown, ACT Health will continue to work closely with commonwealth parliamentary and medical officials to address the risk that parliamentarians and staff may seed cases into the ACT.

On 10 July the Chief Health Officer provided her latest report to me on the status of the public health emergency due to COVID-19 in the ACT. This report outlined the COVID-19 situation here in the ACT and across Australia, including operational activity that has been undertaken in the ACT by the ACT's health and compliance authorities. The Chief Health Officer recommended that the public health emergency remain in place at this time due to the ongoing risk of COVID-19 to the Canberra community.

The current situation in Australia is a serious challenge for all of us. It is vital that we continue to work together as a community to minimise the risk of transmission within the ACT and all do our part to support the ongoing public health response.

I present the following papers:

Status of the Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19—Chief Health Officer Report 16—10 July 2021, dated 3 August 2021.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)—ACT Government response—Ministerial statement, 3 August 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Crime—forensic sexual assault services Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (11.29): On 31 March 2021, the Assembly supported a motion about improvements to services for people who have experienced sexual assault. That motion was brought forward by Mrs Jones, and I want to acknowledge again the shared commitment that was evident across the chamber to improving the services and outcomes in this space. The resolution, as passed, called on the ACT government to investigate the accessibility and availability of the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and Canberra's Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care, FAMSAC, service. The government committed to report back to the Assembly on the progress of matters regarding the Assembly resolution of 31 March by the first sitting day in August 2021.

First, I am pleased to report that information on how to access ACT government sexual assault care and support services was updated on the ACT Health website on 1 April 2021. This update ensures that appropriate and consistent contact points are easy to find in what is a traumatic and difficult time for victim-survivors.

It is important to emphasise that access to appropriate health services following sexual assault follows a “no wrong door” approach. A person can access services by presenting to an emergency department, calling the numbers that are provided online, or via their contact with ACT Policing should they choose to report the matter to police. The service offered by FAMSAC is free to all patients, and information and treatment are strictly confidential.

I note Deputy Chief Minister Berry’s recent announcement, on 29 June, of the increase in the safer families levy. This commitment to an increase in funding of \$2.2 million over four years for more front-line domestic violence and rape crisis services in the ACT will enable the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service to meet increased service demand.

As I did in the earlier debate, I want to acknowledge the work of the FAMSAC service and recognise this service as the gold standard when providing medical care and/or forensic examination to people following sexual assault. The FAMSAC team ensure that they offer a safe and caring environment for victim-survivors of sexual assault, and they lead Australia in accessibility, service provision and expertise.

The philosophy embedded in the treatment and care provided by the doctors and nurses in the FAMSAC team is to ensure that they are meeting the patients’ needs and respecting their choices. A person who has experienced sexual assault and presented at an emergency department may not be sure of what they want to do next, so the FAMSAC service makes sure that they are supported to make the choices that are right for them. FAMSAC does this by working closely with other organisations that support people in the Canberra community, following sexual assault, such as the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre.

Everyone who accesses FAMSAC is offered medical support, and this treatment and care are provided through a trauma-informed care lens. Currently, FAMSAC is accredited as a training facility for specialist staff by the Faculty of Clinical Forensic Medicine within the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia. FAMSAC is committed to providing the best evidence-based care that they possibly can, and I commend them for the work they do in supporting the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

I would also like to acknowledge the important work of the ACT Policing Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Team, SACAT. While all detectives within ACT Policing are trained to investigate sexual offences, SACAT is a specialised team, whose primary function is the investigation of sexual assault offences against adults and children.

SACAT also provides a 24-hour response and works closely with the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and Canberra Hospital's FAMSAC team. Its first priority is always to ensure the mental and physical safety and wellbeing of victims and survivors of sexual assault.

Between July 2020 and June 2021, there were 508 sexual assault offences reported to ACT Policing. ACT Policing acknowledges that not all victim-survivors want their reports to proceed to prosecution in the courts, and that for those victim-survivors who do, it can be a distressing and difficult process.

ACT Policing works closely with the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, which provides confidential counselling services free of charge and can assist victim-survivors with attending hospital, provide advice and support through criminal justice processes, and offer referral to practitioners to assist in recovery.

SACAT detectives undertake specialist sexual assault investigation training. ACT Policing is continuing to develop relevant skills and expertise within SACAT and across ACT Policing more broadly. Additionally, both SACAT and FAMSAC offer training programs to other organisations to facilitate a collaborative approach to providing support to victim-survivors.

All SACAT investigators must undertake a mental health review every six months, to ensure their own mental wellbeing when investigating these crimes. Supporting our workforces to provide these services is a vital part of delivering specialist support to victim-survivors.

ACT Policing has recently commenced a review of SACAT to identify if current practices and policies within SACAT can be enhanced. The review will look to identify structural, procedural or policy changes that could increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the area, including ensuring that the team is best placed to continue to support the strategic direction of ACT Policing and the mental health and wellbeing of the investigators in the area.

Since the Assembly resolution, the ACT government has initiated a large program of work that looks at all matters related to sexual assault in the ACT. An event was held by the Deputy Chief Minister on 28 April to announce the establishment of the sexual assault prevention and response program. The event was attended by relevant ministers, other MLAs, all directors-general and key community stakeholders. The program is being overseen by a steering committee and three working groups, which are focused on prevention, response and law reform in relation to sexual assault in the ACT.

Over the next three to four months, the steering committee and the working groups will consider what reforms are needed in the ACT to improve prevention and responses to victim-survivors. Before the end of the year, the steering committee will provide its recommendations to the government for consideration.

The work of the steering committee is incredibly important. In the context of a difficult year that has heard many crucial conversations across the world, this work will be key to ensuring that the accessibility of services for victim-survivors is and continues to be a priority across government. Both organisations that were subject to the Assembly resolution, FAMSAC and the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, are stakeholders in this work and are represented on the steering committee.

As part of the sexual assault prevention and response program, a response working group has been established to focus on service provision and police response, informed by victim-survivor experience. The ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services are committed to working with the sexual assault prevention and response program on how the health system can better support victim-survivors of sexual assault.

I present the following paper:

Canberra Rape Crisis Centre—Update on resolution of the Assembly of 31 March 2021—Ministerial statement, 3 August 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (11.36): I thank the minister for her statement to the Assembly regarding the resolution which now has presumably been essentially completed.

I note the addition of phone numbers to call on the website of ACT Health, which is associated with the minister's mentioned changes to the website. That is one of the specifics that was called for during the debate. I thank her for that improvement.

I look forward to seeing the work of the steering committee on sexual assault. I will be putting a lens over that work when it is completed, to analyse whether, from our perspective, the case of someone who experiences rape in the ACT, and their ability to be forensically tested if that is their choice, is as smooth as it possibly can be. We look forward to that continued work.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Molonglo Valley Community Council Ministerial statement

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (11.37): Following a motion in the Assembly by Dr Paterson, I am pleased to be able to announce that the ACT government will provide annual funding to support the establishment of a new community council for the Molonglo Valley. The valley is a rapidly growing part of the city. By the end of this year, it will be home to around 10,000 Canberrans; once

fully developed in the coming decades, the population of the valley is anticipated to reach around 60,000.

To date, the views of Molonglo Valley residents have been represented by a small number of residents on the Weston Creek Community Council. I acknowledge the Weston Creek council for its work in support of the Molonglo Valley community, but the time is now right for the Molonglo Valley to have its own local community forum.

The ACT government is engaging in a busy capital works program for the Molonglo Valley. It includes, amongst other things, the construction of new schools, a new commercial centre and the Molonglo bridge. As the territory government expands the delivery of works in the region, we recognise the need to encourage further community engagement through a community council.

Since becoming incorporated in March 2021, the Molonglo Valley Community Forum has held five monthly public meetings, attracting a combined audience of around 500, so it is off to a good start. Pleasingly, the forum has taken the view that it needs to actively engage with young people in the region. The June meeting focused on identifying the needs of young people in the Molonglo Valley. The forum is seeking the active participation of students from the Charles Weston School, and I congratulate it for doing that.

As with all community councils, we encourage the new community forum to engage widely with what we know is a diverse range of communities who live and work in the Molonglo Valley. This includes younger residents, time-poor families, families with English as a second language, and people who may be less inclined than others to engage in traditional community events.

There is a significant program of investment underway in the Molonglo Valley and construction continues at pace. The ACT government looks forward to working with the new forum and its members on our plan for the region. I again thank Dr Paterson for her leadership and representation of this community and in bringing to the Assembly the motion that has allowed for the support and creation of this new community forum.

I present the following paper:

Molonglo Valley Community Council—Ministerial statement, 3 August 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.41): I thank the Chief Minister and congratulate him on supporting the motion making the Molonglo Valley Community Council a reality. I also thank my colleagues in the chamber for their support of this motion.

Most of you will remember that this was the first motion I moved in the Assembly, in February this year. It called on the ACT government to support the establishment of a community council for the Molonglo Valley. I moved the motion following requests from passionate and inspired community residents. These individuals were already leading change and building a strong sense of community in Molonglo. They recognised that the area had unique needs, distinct from other areas across Canberra, and needed its own level of representation.

Molonglo Valley is the ACT's newest greenfield development and fastest growing suburban area. Residents of Molonglo Valley sought positive, constructive solutions and worked with me, as an elected representative, and the ACT government to work out how to best represent and benefit their community now and into the future. I am so pleased to have been part of this journey, to date. I look forward to continuing to support this group and the community as they begin to evolve.

The establishment of the Molonglo Valley Community Council is a great example of democracy in action. Community members came forward and presented an idea to government; tripartisan support was provided; and the community, ACT government staff and elected members here in the Assembly worked hard, and worked together, to make it happen. Examples like this demonstrate the difference and impact members of our community can have in helping to shape their future and that of their friends, relatives and neighbourhoods. I want all members of the ACT community to never underestimate the power and opportunity they have as democratic citizens by working collaboratively and constructively with elected members and the ACT government.

Across the ACT, community councils are a great way for residents to get involved in what is happening in their area and to advocate to government to shape positive future outcomes. Across the ACT there are now eight community councils. These groups operate as non-political, not-for-profit organisations, representing a broad range of interests and the needs of their community.

The community councils often feed back to the ACT government on issues affecting planning, traffic and transport, community safety and the environment, amongst other matters. Most community councils meet monthly to discuss matters important to them and receive presentations on specific areas and topics of relevance. The meetings are open to all residents, and anyone can participate by attending meetings, staying up to date and providing comment and input through Facebook pages, websites, newsletters and other communication channels.

The more diverse the range of community members participating in community councils, the stronger the outcome that can be achieved and the more they reflect the diversity of our communities. In establishing the Molonglo Valley Community Council, the ACT government has sought to ensure diverse membership that is reflective and inclusive of the area's broad population and demographics by encouraging the council to explore innovative engagement methods.

I have seen this already occurring. I commend the group, in its less formal role as the Molonglo Valley Community Forum, for engaging with students at the local school to

provide a welcome and introduction to each meeting. They have also provided an opportunity where students ran their own meeting. What a great way to involve, inspire and empower future community leaders. In attending each of the group's meetings this year, I have been impressed by the wide range of issues discussed, the diversity of guest presenters, and the energy and passion of residents wanting to help shape the future of the area.

I understand that the election for positions on the Molonglo Valley Community Council will be held in October. I encourage local residents to nominate and to attend the meetings, to have their say and to get involved.

I also want to stress the importance of Molonglo Valley residents' engagement in the census. The next census is due on 10 August. Currently, residents are receiving letters to inform them that they can fill out the census now in respect of their living situation on the night of 10 August.

The census gives government, businesses and not-for-profits data to help make important decisions. This information is important to identify the needs of a growing community and to anticipate and plan for future trends. Given that the last census was conducted five years ago, it is critically important that Molonglo residents' data is recorded so that their current situation can be reflected in government policy.

I acknowledge the support of the Weston Creek Community Council in supporting Molonglo over the years to get to a point where, now, it has its own council.

I again congratulate everyone involved in this outcome. I look forward to working with the Molonglo Valley Community Council now and into the future.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (11.46): I welcome the opportunity to talk about Canberra's newest community council, in Canberra's newest region. I recall speaking on Dr Paterson's motion in February, her first in the Assembly, which called on the government to establish a community council for the Molonglo Valley. I am really pleased that this has come to fruition, both for the Molonglo community and as an example of what a good local member like Dr Paterson can achieve in this place.

The Molonglo Valley is not just our city's newest region; it is also the fastest growing one. When I first spoke on this topic in February, the population was around 9,500 residents. We can expect that it is now probably over 10,000. It will grow much larger in the coming decades. Every day, more people are choosing to make their home in the Molonglo Valley.

It is great to represent a community that has its whole future ahead of it. When I talk to people in the Molonglo Valley when I am out in the community, I hear much optimism about their new community and many great ideas and aspirations about how they would like to make the region's facilities, services and infrastructure the best that they can be.

Back in February, Dr Paterson's motion outlined the importance of the Molonglo Valley having a representative community council, a body that can provide representative stakeholder voices as the government consults on a wide range of significant infrastructure projects, and also services and programs, that are already shaping the region.

I recently gave an update to the Assembly about the transport infrastructure investments that the government is making in the Molonglo Valley that are either underway or being planned at the moment. We know that the new Molonglo Valley Community Council will play an important role in helping to provide information to their own community about those projects and also get involved in the planning and design of those projects, going forward.

There are a lot of big pieces of work to come in the infrastructure space, with the completion of John Gorton Drive, among others. The new bridge over the Molonglo River is a top priority. There is also a whole range of other work, particularly in the planning space, with new estate developments. No doubt they will have a role in helping to inform those, particularly in relation to the Molonglo commercial centre, which is going to be an important hub for the Molonglo Valley. And there are all the other things that make a community, like new public schools that are being planned in the Molonglo Valley and new community facilities. They have already played a really important role in helping shape the Coombs and Wright Village on Fred Daley Avenue. We would like to engage with them in terms of co-design for a new library and community centre in the future, located in the commercial centre.

The Molonglo Valley Community Forum have already demonstrated their valuable role in engaging with us on what we can do in the interim to provide community facilities. I was really pleased that they were able to work with the community to identify a range of groups that wanted to use a community space in the interim. They demonstrated that the size of the facility that was needed would be around 300 square metres and that it would be used regularly by many different community groups. That has contributed to a great result in the Molonglo Valley.

These are the kinds of things that good local community councils and government can achieve when we work constructively together to understand communities' needs and find collaborative solutions. I am looking forward to further engagement with the group in its new form as a community council.

I have been to several of their meetings. It is great to be able to engage with such a mature group. Even though they are a new group, they have demonstrated real maturity in their ability to work constructively with government and the many agencies they deal with, particularly in a growing area like the Molonglo Valley—with the Suburban Land Agency in particular—to get really great outcomes. I will be very pleased to work with them in their new form.

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (11.51): I rise to add my voice to the positive discussion today with regard to the new Molonglo Valley Community Council. I thank members present for all the work that has gone into setting that up, including

the Chief Minister, in making that decision as Treasurer to fund it. Money is a necessity to make the community work and that is why we pay our rates and our taxes, so that exactly this sort of activity can occur. I also put on record my thanks to Weston Creek Community Council for their additional effort over many years in advocating for the needs of this area, particularly previous chair Tom Anderson and deputy chair Pat McGinn.

We all know that the issues associated with the oncoming commercial centre, the bridge, the driver behaviour on the main road and the need for many more facilities will go on. I am so pleased that the humble but determined Monique Brower, detailing Ryan Hemsley and all members of the executive team have committed to this work, and I am really looking forward to working with them as they go forward in this very important community work.

I put on record that my concerns for the area have started to peak again over traffic, given the delays that we now know will come with stage 2A and all the major arterials coming from the south side into the city. I hope that there is early work being done to manage that traffic flow, given that the bridge is not yet here across the river.

Given that Minister Berry is here, I thought it would also be worth putting on record conversations that I have had with members of the community council about the Evelyn Scott School. It would be awesome, once they have their hall open, if they could open it to events as well.

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.52): It is wonderful to hear that the Molonglo Valley Community Forum is being supported to become a community council. The role of community councils is important in enabling local residents to have their voice heard on issues relating to planning and development, as well as local services, social inclusion and strengthening communities. As an MLA for Murrumbidgee and a regular at local community council meetings since 2006, I am very pleased to see the Molonglo Valley Community Forum recognised and funded as a community council for the growing suburbs of the valley.

Every community council develops its own way of engaging with the community and advocating on issues to government. While still a very new community council, Molonglo Valley Community Forum has already shown that it is a council seeking to raise the voices of a diversity of residents across different age groups, cultural backgrounds and interests. Meetings have been streamed live for those unable to participate in person, an important way of supporting participation from people with caring responsibilities or physically distancing because of COVID.

The different approaches taken at some of the meetings include panel discussions, presentations from directorates and MLAs and workshopping ideas. This has led to some very interesting and engaging meetings and, I believe, has contributed to some of the successes they have already achieved in successfully advocating for access to community facilities and improvements in planning and development. I look forward to continuing to engage with the Molonglo Valley Community Council on a range of issues. While many community councils have a focus on planning and development it is important to remember that a community is its people, first and foremost.

Having spent many hours in my previous work on data analysis of social determinants of health, social inequality and pathways into the justice system, there are a few issues I would very much like to hear about from the Molonglo Valley Community Council. These include public transport and active travel access; sports, recreation, arts and cultural activities and their role in social inclusion and strengthening communities; employment and education opportunities; and access to health and wellbeing and community support services.

As a new community council, it is exciting to see them develop their own unique community council culture under the guidance of Ryan Hemsley and Monique Brower, and I look forward to seeing their hopes for a better future for everyone in the Molonglo Valley community come to fruition. I leave you with a quote from General Leia Organa:

Do me a personal favour? Be optimistic.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Public housing—renewal program

Ministerial statement

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (11.55): I am happy to provide an update to the Assembly on the government's Growing and Renewing Public Housing program at the beginning of its third year of operation. I am proud to be leading the government's work in providing safe and secure social housing for those in our community who need it most and, of course, the incredible work Housing ACT does to achieve this.

This government has established an unparalleled program of public housing renewal, representing more than a \$1.2 billion investment over the 10 years from 2015 to 2025 and the renewal of over 20 per cent of the ACT public housing portfolio, firstly through the Public Housing Renewal Program, where the ACT government invested \$608 million in renewing the public housing portfolio through the construction and purchase of 1,288 replacement dwellings for those tenants who were relocated from older homes at the end of their building life cycle.

I then announced the Growing and Renewing Public Housing program in May 2019 as part of the ACT housing strategy, focusing on improving tenant outcomes by continuing to upgrade Canberra's ageing public housing stock and, in doing so, support the broader renewal of Canberra's city and urban areas. In August 2020 the government announced the expansion of the program, providing a longer term economic stimulus through the allocation of an additional \$52 million to fund land purchases and construction of 60 additional new public housing dwellings. This also included the expansion of the program for a sixth year, to 30 June 2025.

I can advise the Assembly that the additional land allocated under stimulus actions has now been fully expended and is being prepared for the delivery of new dwellings. Additionally, in November 2020 the government committed to a further expansion of the program by delivering an additional 140 new public housing dwellings through the Tenth Assembly parliamentary and governing agreement.

In total, the revised growing and renewing program aims to renew 1,000 dwellings and add an extra 400 dwellings to the public housing portfolio by June 2025. It will deliver these by redeveloping approximately 700 new dwellings on existing Housing ACT sites; building approximately 420 new dwellings, inclusive of the additional 60 dwellings announced as part of the economic survival package in August 2020 on land acquired in both new and established suburbs across Canberra; and delivering 280 dwellings, inclusive of the additional 140 dwellings announced in the parliamentary and government agreement, through the acquisition of private dwellings or expression of interest processes.

The program is progressing well, and the structures developed over the last two years will underpin the successful delivery of the expanded program. From the start of this commitment in July 2019 through to 30 June 2021 the program has purchased 89 land sites to construct on, demolished 125 public housing dwellings to allow for renewal, delivered 126 dwellings through the construction program and acquired 71 dwellings from the market.

This is a very substantial program, and the current pipeline has the program team working on the construction of approximately 272 dwellings, the design of 545 dwellings and the demolition of approximately 70 dwellings. In 2020-21 Housing ACT, through Tenders ACT, implemented an expression of interest process seeking proposals from builders, developers and the public for land, house and land packages, multi-unit developments and any other proposals that would meet the requirements of the program. Housing ACT is currently assessing proposals received through this process.

As has occurred under the previous Public Housing Renewal Program, Housing ACT has a dedicated team of staff that are working with tenants to ensure that they are receiving support and assistance during the relocation process as well as post relocation. Tenant relocation officers work closely with tenants to understand their needs prior to relocation in order to match a tenant to a suitable property. The relocation officers aim to support tenants to have continuity of services and supports to make a smooth transition and further assist by ensuring tenants are settled into their community. Some of the ways the tenant relocation officers do this are by introducing tenants to local amenities if necessary and connecting tenants to additional support services when required.

Public housing not only provides people with a home but new friendships as well. I became aware recently of the lovely story of a group of women who lived on the same street for many years but not all were known to the others until they moved into the same complex. When they met up they quickly discovered a shared love of gardening and brought that shared passion into the new housing development. At the opening of

the complex in Dickson I was warmly invited into their homes and I could see the love and care they had brought and the great work already underway with the new garden, barely a week after they moved in.

As at 30 June 2021 the program has seen relocation offers made to over 485 households, with 190 households already living in their new home and a further 102 households waiting for a suitable property in order to relocate. While the expanded program sets targets to renew 1,000 properties and grow the portfolio by at least 400 homes, achievement of these targets will not be linear and the program will be flexible in its delivery to ensure the needs of current and future tenants are being appropriately met.

The program supports the provision of safe, affordable and appropriate housing to help those most in need in our community to secure and sustain long-term and appropriate housing, contributing to a safer and more inclusive community. I present the following paper:

Growing and Renewing Public Housing—Update—Ministerial statement,
3 August 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Homelessness—government support Ministerial statement

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (12.02): As we enter our homelessness week I provide an update to the Assembly on new programs to address homelessness in the ACT. The experience or risk of homelessness is one of the most distressing and difficult occurrences that can happen to someone. When we lose our home, we lose our sense of security and stability that helps us make decisions about other things in our life. The people that work in Canberra’s specialist homelessness sector understand the complexity and the distress that face people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Canberra’s specialist homelessness sector is passionate and hardworking and offers person-centred services. They understand that when you are working with people who are often managing complex situations it is not a one-size-fits-all. They often play an essential role in our efforts, as government, to end homelessness across the ACT. Through OneLink, the territory’s central intake provider for homelessness services, people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness discuss their situation with OneLink’s trained staff and are linked to appropriate specialist help, whether that is primarily accommodation or other concerns.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the ACT government worked quickly and closely with sector partners to provide the support they required so that they could keep delivering essential services.

In March 2020 Housing ACT participated in three focus groups to look at issues specific to women's services, chaired by Toora Women Inc; rough sleepers and homelessness, chaired by CatholicCare; and congregate or shared living accommodation settings, chaired by Havelock Housing Association. Discussed in all groups was the provision of suitable accommodation for those experiencing homelessness, domestic and family violence or living in shared accommodation settings, particularly if anyone in those situations was affected by COVID-19 and needed to self-isolate or quarantine.

Based on this collaboration with the sector, in April 2020 the ACT government provided \$3 million to meet the anticipated increased demand on services from the impact of COVID-19 and to support new initiatives. Through this, we have delivered: a client support fund of \$330,000 for the existing central referral agency, OneLink, to respond to increased demand on the homelessness services sector. As of 30 June 2021 approximately 73 individuals and families had received support through this service.

An example of this fund being used is a partnership with the YWCA Canberra and A Gender Agenda, through which OneLink filled a service gap for transgender people at risk of or experiencing homelessness and established a 12-month shared housing model of supported accommodation.

We delivered \$832,000 for emergency and long-term accommodation support for men, women and children to keep people COVID-safe. This resulted in innovative and responsive solutions, including expanding the Axial Housing pilot to house rough sleepers during COVID-19. The program is based on housing-first principles and provides wraparound support that is needed to sustain a tenancy and not result in exits into homelessness after COVID-19. As of 30 June 2021, 26 people are currently engaged with the program.

There was the upgrading and opening of the Winter Lodge, run by Argyle Community Housing, as temporary accommodation for men experiencing homelessness during COVID-19. From May to October 2020 the lodge provided temporary accommodation and appropriate exits for 121 men experiencing homelessness during the colder months. Importantly, 44 of these clients were able to exit into longer term housing such as Havelock House, Ainslie Village or into the private market. As at 30 June 2021 a further 28 men have been accommodated since the service recommenced on 3 May 2021.

Funding has been provided for CatholicCare to provide safe housing for women and children experiencing homelessness during COVID-19. As at 30 June 2021 MacKillop House has housed approximately 56 clients and provides support services to build their capability to live independently.

Funding for OneLink has increased its capacity to coordinate referrals for temporary accommodation options such as hotelling, including for service providers of congregate living accommodation where a client needs to self-isolate or quarantine. This program assisted 140 individuals and families up to 30 June 2021.

We have also provided funding to upgrade and furnish existing public housing to operate as crisis and shelter accommodation. Through listening, collaboration, innovation and planning we are supporting the community and mitigating some of the impacts of COVID-19. But our work is not done.

Through the parliamentary and governing agreement the ACT government has committed a further \$18 million over four years to further expand the capacity of the specialist homelessness sector. In the first tranche the ACT government has delivered \$1.95 million to bolster the sector, including expanding the Early Morning Centre to a seven-day-a-week service with an additional \$300,000 over two years. It was a pleasure to attend the launch of this service with my Assembly colleague Mr Mark Parton.

We have increased emergency support and accommodation funding to OneLink by \$450,000 over two years to continue to provide further tenancy and client support services. For the continuation of MacKillop House and Winter Lodge services that were established in response to COVID-19 and the successful Axial Housing program, we have provided a combined \$1.2 million over two years. In addition the ACT government has provided \$700,000 over four years to ACT Shelter to increase its capacity as the peak body providing systemic advocacy and policy advice on social housing, homelessness and affordable housing.

The government remains committed to collaborating with the sector through a joint planning process to not only support new contract arrangements post 2023 but also to continue to build upon and improve outcomes under the ACT housing strategy so that more Canberrans have access to a safe, secure home.

In May this year the government agreed to service funding agreements for the ACT's 27 funded, specialist homelessness service providers being extended to June 2023. The extension of funding agreements for a further two years means more collaboration between government and service providers, including the development of a shared outcome-based framework. This includes working together to move human services to a commissioning-for-outcomes environment over the next several years. Commissioning is about a genuine partnership and co-design between government, sector partners and the community to plan, improve and, where necessary, redesign services to meet people's needs.

As the first of many in this strategic partnership, Minister Berry and I hosted a ministerial roundtable with homelessness sector CEOs and related peak bodies on 6 July this year. The meeting was an opportunity to deeply listen to and discuss the values underpinning this strategic partnership, key planning elements, time lines, sector engagement and governance options for the next 18 months.

The service funding agreement extension includes a community sector sustainability review, jointly funded by the Community Services Directorate and community services sector, due to be finalised at the end of 2021. The review will be used to examine the level and cost of services, outputs and outcomes and the needs of all the sector stakeholders to inform future service design and service system enhancements to improve outcomes for the sector and the community.

As we move forward, it is important that our services can continue to meet the needs of existing cohorts and are prepared to respond to emerging needs. The sector has demonstrated its capacity to respond rapidly to changing needs and circumstances during COVID-19. The ACT government thanks them for their selfless, hard work.

While I have spoken about new initiatives focused on supporting our community, it is important to recognise the services that have worked tirelessly to help people experiencing homelessness throughout this ongoing pandemic. Street to Home provide daily support and case management to Canberrans experiencing homelessness. Workers actively seek out those sleeping rough and engage with them to build relationships, and this is based on understanding and respect.

Red Cross Canberra Roadhouse, the Early Morning Centre and the Blue Door at Ainslie Village all provide free food services. Red Cross Canberra Roadhouse and the Early Morning Centre provide dine-in options for patrons and guests in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. The Early Morning Centre also hosts several inclusive and skills-building support services, including arts and craft classes, phone, computer, and internet access, some of which have been able to be recommenced since May 2021.

I thank these services for their commitment to and support of the COVID-19 physical distancing restrictions. This includes providing face mask help and checking in through the Check In CBR app for people sleeping rough who may not have access to a mobile phone.

I also mention and thank Housing ACT staff who continue to deliver and adapt services to the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in line with the restrictions. While standard face-to-face visits were on hold from March 2020 to 2 June 2020, Housing ACT made phone contact with public housing tenants to check on their health and wellbeing. The start of the pandemic caused a lot of financial stress for Canberrans and hit public housing tenants particularly hard.

One of the ACT government's first responses was to provide one-off \$250 payments to public housing households. Housing ACT worked diligently to ensure that all households received this funding. The central access point for tenants, located at Nature Conservation House in Belconnen, has remained open to ensure that everyone has a degree of face-to-face support.

Importantly, this period signified true collaboration across our government, with Housing ACT, ACT Health and the Community Services Directorate undertaking logistical planning and preparedness for outbreak management. The local response

team action plan outlines Housing ACT's response in the event of an outbreak in a multi-unit complex and is updated regularly.

The programs that were developed and implemented increased the level of collaboration and innovation within the sector to improve outcomes for at-risk Canberrans and the community. COVID-19 has left a significant mark across Australia. The responses, programs and services highlighted today demonstrate that Canberra remains prepared to face the challenges and respond with the community at the centre of decision-making. As we continue with the lingering impact of the pandemic, we must build upon this progress so that all Canberrans have access to a safe and secure home. I present the following paper:

New programs to address homelessness in the ACT—Update—Ministerial statement, 3 August 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health) (12.16): I thank Minister Vassarotti for outlining the ACT government's plans to support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in our city and the expansion of services at the Early Morning Centre, including meals for people in need. As the assistant minister for families and community services, I will provide some additional information about food relief services.

When a household is in housing stress, paying more than 30 per cent of their income in housing costs such as private rent or mortgage repayments, the risk of homelessness increases. For Canberrans who have no choice but to pay more than 30 per cent of their income on housing, food relief is a vital support.

A 2019 report by ACTCOSS, *Food security, food assistance and the affordability of healthy food in Canberra*, found that 3.6 per cent of Canberrans were living in a household that in the past 12 months had run out of food and not been able to afford to buy more. This is about half the number of people who were living in poverty in February this year and demonstrates the direct relationship that poverty has on food security. Cuts to JobKeeper and the completely inadequate rate of JobSeeker will have increased the number of Canberrans experiencing food security problems since February.

The Women's Health Matters 2018 report on physical activity and healthy eating said that some women found food-bank services helped their household to eat healthily by having access to low-cost fruit and vegetables. Some of those accessing food-bank services include people experiencing insecure work, people with chronic health conditions who have additional medical expenses and reduced ability to earn income, and people who do not have a permanent residency visa. One of the women who participated in the research for this report said:

With three kids to feed, the only way that I can afford to get them vegetables at every meal and meat three times a week, and fruit to take to school, is to come to these places.

Women talked about the need for more support for local food-bank services, including community education to know where they are, how to access them and easier to access locations for people who do not drive.

Food relief is provided throughout Canberra by community organisations, including Communities@Work, Woden Community Service, Companion House, YWCA Canberra, Holy Cross Tuckerbox, Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation and many others.

In March 2020 the Canberra Relief Network was established to respond to an urgent food security need, and was extended until 30 June 2021, related to availability and affordability of food and basic household supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Canberra Relief Network has provided vital support to more than 2,800 Canberra households through delivery of more than 14,700 food hampers and more than 8,500 hygiene hampers, including baby items. While the economic impacts of the pandemic continue, the way in which we respond to the need for food relief is changing to reflect the barriers experienced by Canberrans who are struggling with affordability. Localised food relief from services people know and trust enables support not only for access to food but also connection to other supports that may be needed such as housing, mental health, family services and more.

In the weeks leading up to the closure of the Canberra Relief Network, people who contacted the CRN were given the details of how to receive food support through other community organisations after 30 June. Community partners were also provided information about the ceasing of the service and were reminded to ensure their clients knew they needed to seek alternative support services and where to find them. The CRN call centre phone number is still active and will be until the end of September so that anyone who contacts the service is able to be connected with a community organisation that can offer support.

Following the end of the Canberra Relief Network, the ACT government has been working with a network of community sector food-relief providers on ways we can improve food relief in the ACT long term. Strengthening food-relief services in the ACT includes ensuring autonomy for those accessing support such as the ability to choose what they access rather than being supplied with a standard box, multiple access points geographically as well as opening days and times, and linking food relief to other social services and supports.

I look forward to providing the Assembly with more details about long-term support for Canberra's community sector food-relief providers as our work with the network progresses.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 12.20 to 2 pm.

Questions without notice

ACT Corrective Services—detainee transfers

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, on 9 July, a detainee escaped custody in broad daylight within a few hundred metres of schools and playgrounds after the Toyota Camry he was travelling in was intentionally and repeatedly rammed. The Inspector of Correctional Services had months ago found the Camry unsuitable for escort purposes. Moreover, Court Transport Unit, or CTU, officers described it as “unfit for purpose” and had stopped using it. You have now halted the use of the Camry despite initially defending it. Minister, how did we get to the point where this detainee was able to escape?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Lee for the question. First of all, let me commend the bravery of the corrections officers who were involved in the incident on the day. I have met with them personally. The foresight, courage and skill that they put forward during that incident should be well commended. Our staff do a brilliant job, and a very difficult job as well. I thank them for the work that they do, especially when something like this happens.

The matter is subject to a police investigation, as well as being before the courts. ACT corrections is undertaking an internal review, and it has been referred to the Inspector of Correctional Services as a critical incident. When these investigations are concluded, I will be able to make a further statement as to what occurred.

MS LEE: Minister, why did it take a brazen daytime assault on corrections staff in a busy Canberra suburban street to finally convince you to stop using Camrys, in line with the inspector’s finding back in November 2020?

MR GENTLEMAN: I should point out that the inspector’s research was particularly on the Court Transport Unit, not the Camrys used for transport to hospital. It was after the event and the discussion with the commissioner that I gave the advice to cease using the Camrys unless in exceptional circumstances. Of course, that is procedure put in place.

MR HANSON: Minister, given that the detainee was able to sprint from the crime scene, why was he not adequately restrained? Are you now reviewing the risk assessment procedures for escorts?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, we are reviewing, of course, the operation of that escort. He was restrained, I understand, by custodial officers. The rest of that will be a matter for the corrections inspectorate and ACT Policing.

ACT Corrective Services—detainee transfers

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. As we know, in July, as mentioned, a detainee was able to escape from custody. The Camry he was being transported in had been declared by the Inspector of Correctional Services unsuitable for transporting inmates. The inspector also said that another vehicle court transport

unit must be replaced as soon as possible. Two more vehicles were also being considered for replacement. The procurement of an additional vehicle followed inappropriate practices, and WorkSafe ACT had to issue a prohibition notice for it.

Minister, what does it say about your performance and your predecessor's performance that as of November 2020 all CTU vehicles were either: being assessed for replacement, being replaced, under a WorkSafe prohibition, deemed unsuitable or had a series design flaw?

MR GENTLEMAN: The 2020 Court Transport Unit review focused on the Court Transport Unit's fleet of vehicles. Following that review, ACT Corrective Services has implemented updated and improved procurement procedures for court transport vehicles. The CTU report did make a comment that the Camrys were unsuitable, largely due to their size, for the transport of detainees. It did not however make a formal recommendation in relation to the safety of the Camrys and it did not review AMC transport vehicles.

MRS JONES: Minister, does it take a formal recommendation for common sense to prevail? How many Camrys were being used by the CTU? What will happen to them now that they are no longer being used?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do not approve the use of the vehicles. That is done particularly by corrections operational procedures. I do not think it comes down to me to allocate them what vehicles they should use. Of course, Camrys are an ANCAP five-star rated vehicle, quite safe on ACT roads, and they have, of course, been the subject of human rights recommendations for the way that detainees should be transported, particularly in these circumstances, to medical facilities.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, how much does the government pay SG Fleet to lease each individual CTU vehicle?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will have to take the question of that detail on notice.

Youth—mental health programs and resources

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, I was delighted last week to see that headspace has opened up a brand new facility in my electorate of Brindabella. Can you please update the Assembly on what you are doing and what the ACT government is doing to support the mental health and wellbeing particularly of young people in Tuggeranong.

MS DAVIDSON: I thank Mr Davis for the question. Headspace Tuggeranong will be an important addition to the mental health service system in the ACT, particularly for children and young people on the south side. It is a very well-integrated part of the ACT's mental health sector. It offers an important step for children and young people who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health concerns.

Schools in Tuggeranong can also offer the Black Dog Institute's Youth Aware of Mental Health program. This is a free program that is offered to year 9 students, and

gives them a toolkit of skills that they can use to look after their mental health and wellbeing and to look out for signs of mental illness or distress in themselves or in their peers. I note that there has now been more than 3,000 young people in year 9 who have participated in that Youth Aware of Mental Health program, which means that more than half of the 15- and 16-year-olds in the ACT will have had access to that program. That means that either they or someone in their social network will have been given those skills and will be able to look out for mental health in their peers.

MR DAVIS: Minister, earlier in estimates I heard about the youth navigation portal which your office is leading. Can you explain in more detail what that portal will do and advise when it will start?

MS DAVIDSON: Yes. The youth navigation portal is a very important tool to help young people in finding and accessing the right services and supports for their needs at the time. Where it is up to at the moment: following a procurement request for quote process, Marymead has been selected as the community organisation to lead and manage the portal. The office for Mental Health and Wellbeing and Marymead are working closely to continue stakeholder engagement and consultation with children and young people, with parents and carers and with service providers.

In early July of 2021, Capgemini was selected to build the IT component of the portal. That was through a separate request-for-quote procurement process, and the design process is underway. It will have an iterative release, and the first release will be in late September of 2021.

MRS JONES: How much of headspace Tuggeranong is funded by the ACT government and how much is funded by the federal Liberal government?

MS DAVIDSON: Headspace in Tuggeranong is a commonwealth program. It fits into a broad and diverse range of mental health services within the ACT, and we are very happy to have it here.

ACT Corrective Services—release process

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, on 20 July this year, Canberra found out that a detainee had been mistakenly released from jail before completing his sentence. This detainee is a repeat offender who had already been denied bail. After being told to hand himself in, he said that he would “try”! But, ultimately, close to a week later, a warrant had to be issued for his arrest when he failed to turn himself in. You blamed human error caused by a database that requires manual checks across multiple files. This database system dates back to 1985, and the inspector of corrections said it was probably antiquated when the government bought it. Minister, for how long was this detainee at large under your watch?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Hanson for the question. The accidental release was due to human error. Detainees can often be sentenced for a charge while also being on remand before either the Magistrates Court and/or the Supreme Court. The current release processes require manual checks of documents to occur. Due to the human error in this case, information in relation to this detainee’s remand was missed.

Unfortunately, sometimes this does happen. None of us are perfect; we all make mistakes, but we do learn from them. Of course, we will review this situation and put in place practices that will make it safer for detainees and the Canberra public.

MR HANSON: Minister, why do you stand by your decision to blame ACT Corrections staff, given the database that they were forced to use is described as antiquated”?

MR GENTLEMAN: That was the advice provided to me by the briefing from our corrections chief officer.

DR PATERSON: Minister, could you outline how you are working with corrections officers to review these incidents?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Dr Paterson for the question. There have been a number of reviews of particular cases and the AMC over many years—many recommendations which the government has agreed to. We are working through those recommendations through the blueprint for change program and the committee that is in place, headed by Ms Nixon, who has a vast background in corrections and other policing matters. She has already reported back to me that she is pleased with the results so far and the input, particularly from corrections officers, and feels that it is going well.

I look forward to the rest of the recommendations from the committee, and the implementation of those, so that there are better opportunities for our staff into the future and better conditions for detainees at the AMC.

Light rail—stage 2

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, can you update the Assembly on the expansion of the light rail network to Woden?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Orr for her question and her interest in light rail and the benefits it will provide in expanding to Woden, for Gungahlin residents as well as for the rest of the city. Certainly, it comes at an interesting time for the light rail project. It is our city’s biggest ever infrastructure build.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that key preparatory works are already underway. The first physical works on the project are planned to start before the end of this month. We have commenced works to translocate the gold sun moth population from the northern part of the median on Commonwealth Avenue, and we recognise that protecting Canberra’s environment and heritage throughout this project is essential.

Early works to relocate utilities will commence shortly. This 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. This will pave the way for London Circuit to be

raised to an at-grade intersection with Commonwealth Avenue. Major works on this part of the project will commence in the first half of next year.

Delivering light rail to Woden will create over 6,000 jobs. It will give Canberrans on the south side more convenient and reliable transport options and help prevent the future traffic gridlock and cut transport emissions for a cleaner environment.

Stage 2 of light rail will ensure that Canberra grows to be a more vibrant, sustainable and connected city. It is important that we get on with delivering this future-focused investment now as we deliver a better public transport system, before our city experiences the same traffic problems that other cities face.

MS ORR: Minister, what is the ACT government doing about the disruptions associated with the project?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary. The ACT government is being up-front with the community that the construction of light rail will be disruptive for Canberra's road network while we build a more vibrant, sustainable and connected city. Because of this project and parallel work that is being undertaken by the National Capital Authority, lane closures and diversions will need to be in place on Commonwealth Avenue for an extended period of years. This will see more traffic dispersed onto routes like Kings Avenue and Parkes Way. The construction will mainly impact those coming from the south side into the city, but there will be flow-on impacts for the rest of the road traffic network.

I want to assure members in this place and all Canberrans that we are putting in place significant preparation and planning to minimise this disruption. We do not want to see Canberrans stuck in their cars in daily gridlock. That is why we have formed a disruption task force that brings together expertise in road and public transport network planning, behaviour change, communications and community engagement.

Right now the disruption task force is making plans to mitigate the construction impacts, by identifying opportunities to manage network demand, provide alternative transport options and invest in new infrastructure, like road network improvements on other routes.

We will also be communicating early and often with the community and business during the disruption to give Canberrans the information that they need to make choices about how they move around our city and to help keep other people moving as well. We will be supporting Canberrans through this time, because we understand that disruption on this scale is coming and we need a clear and coordinated response led by government.

DR PATERSON: A supplementary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Dr Paterson.

DR PATERSON: Minister, given your warning to the Canberra community about the disruption now, when will construction begin?

MR STEEL: I am really pleased to say that construction on the light rail to Woden is starting this year. The first package of works involves setting up construction site compounds and undertaking utility relocation works. This work must be completed prior to raising London Circuit, to reduce the risk of damage to critical utilities during the project's major construction works. There will be some local traffic impacts associated with these works, but they will be relatively minor. While these early works are underway, we will be preparing the major project documentation to receive approval from the NCA and undertaking procurement for a project delivery partner.

The first major works to raise London Circuit will get underway from around quarter 2 next year. This will require a number of road closures as the current clover leaves in the Commonwealth Avenue overpass over London Circuit are progressively dismantled.

We are encouraging the community to keep up to date with the project by signing up for email alerts via the Light Rail to Woden website at act.gov.au/lightrailtowoden. This website also has lots of maps and information on the specific routes that will be affected by construction. These will be continually updated as construction progresses. The government will be communicating clearly and early and regularly across a range of channels as the construction program gets underway.

I would like to thank the community in advance for their patience and understanding as we deliver this important infrastructure project that will benefit Canberrans for generations to come.

ACT Corrective Services—release process

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. In December 2017 a detainee was mistakenly released from the jail. Mr Rattenbury said at the time that a review of the process would be conducted to ensure that this error did not re-occur. In July 2021, Canberra found out that yet another detainee was mistakenly released from the jail before completing his sentence. The government again said that a review of this incident would be undertaken to ensure that it would not happen again. Minister, what policies and procedures changed following the review in 2017, given that clearly the changes have not been sufficient?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Parton for the question. I refer him, of course, to the previous answer of the question of a similar vein. The two instances were separate and of different circumstances. As I said, we will, of course, have a look at this review and ensure that—

Mrs Jones: A point of order on relevance, the question asked what has changed since last time. The minister has not actually answered that at all. I ask you to bring him to the question, which is: what has changed since that first incident.

MADAM SPEAKER: There is no point of order. You took the point of order 20 seconds in; he still has plenty of time to answer. He has made reference to the review that was in place and there were different circumstances. Minister, you can continue.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Of course, over the years we have had a number of incidents at AMC, and many of the recommendations occurring from those incidents have been about the way we operate with our staff and the opportunity to increase their training across the ACT. I can say since November 2020 significant strides have been made in increasing mandatory training compliance for custodial officers within ACT.

Mrs Jones: Point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, Minister.

Mrs Jones: On relevance, the minister is now going to broad-based training. But we are asking about systemic changes that were made to ensure that a release would not happen again. He has not mentioned that at all yet in his answer.

MADAM SPEAKER: I believe he is on topic, and there is no point of order. Minister, you have 30-odd seconds to continue, if you wish.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not sure about the opposition, but we certainly believe that training is an important part of how custodial officers can operate within the AMC to ensure safety for the future and that these releases do not occur. Since that date, as I mentioned, between January and April 2021, the proportion of staff who are now up to date with mandatory training has improved. Breathing apparatus training compliance has increased from 38 per cent to 47 per cent—

Mrs Jones: Point of order, Madam Speaker, on relevance, what does mandatory breathing apparatus training have to do with releasing detainees and the processes involved?

MADAM SPEAKER: The time has expired, Mrs Jones.

MR PARTON: Minister, why is the database that was being used in 2017 the same database that is being used in July 2021?

MR GENTLEMAN: As we have said, a review of this incident is being undertaken, and any identified deficits within these processes will be rectified at the earliest opportunity. So when we look at the specific issues around databases, there are specific sets of technology that are drawn up, if you like, for correctional services across Australia. This particular one is quite resource-intensive. We are reviewing it. We are looking to ensure that this does not happen again.

MR HANSON: Minister, given the review done in 2017 did not prevent mistaken early release of detainees, what reasons do Canberrans have to believe that a review of the incident in July will actually change anything?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will refer the member to my previous answer in that, of course, when there have been reviews we have instigated changes in performance and

instigated changes in operational arrangements at AMC to ensure that staff are safe into the future and detainees are well remanded.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—incidents

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. On 12 May this year, there was yet another riot and fire at the AMC. The fire resulted in an accommodation unit being taken offline. An officer's station was burned, and detainees had to be relocated. As of 18 June, the accommodation unit was still unable to house detainees. Minister, how much longer will this accommodation unit be unusable?

MR GENTLEMAN: It will be some time. It takes quite a bit of work to engage construction staff. With repairs at the AMC, due to its particular nature, being a secure installation, we want to make sure that the area is safe for those workers and safe for detainees. We do move detainees around the AMC to ensure that repairers can get in and do those operations. I do not have a final time line on that repair.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, what is the estimated cost to Canberra taxpayers of the damage to the accommodation unit?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will take that on notice.

MR CAIN: Minister, what is the total estimated cost of this riot so far for Canberra's taxpayers, including damage assessments, contracted engineers' reports and operational costs?

MR GENTLEMAN: There is quite a bit of detail in that question. I will take it on notice and come back to the chamber.

ACT Corrective Services—staff health and safety

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, following the AMC riot on 10 November 2020, another serious fire was lit on 14 November, causing the loss of 28 beds. All four corrections officers who responded to the fire had out-of-date training. Two had had their fire training cancelled a few months earlier. One officer recalled that the fire was so hot that it was melting their boots. After an incident like this, a formal debrief must occur, but no such debrief happened. These serious WorkSafe failings contributed to the inspector of corrections issuing several recommendations after his review of the incident. Minister, why are you risking the lives of officers by requiring them to fight fires without up-to-date training?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will refer Mrs Kikkert to my previous answer on training, where the opposition said it was not important, but it is, as we have just heard from Mrs Kikkert! I mentioned in my previous answer the detailed levels of operational training that is occurring on aspects of fire, aspects of breathing apparatus and safety training regarding the detainees.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, have you provided AMC staff with protective, heavy duty equipment for protection against heat, fire and chemicals, as per recommendation 1 of the inspector's report?

MR GENTLEMAN: I understand that is still being worked on with AMC staff and the commissioner. I will be able to come back to the chamber with the number of PP equipment circulated so far, in detail.

MR CAIN: Minister, why was there no formal debrief for officers after the incident, given that this is a requirement of the Incident Reporting, Notifications and Debrief Policy 2020 to ensure that lessons are learned from incidents such as these?

MR GENTLEMAN: That is a matter that I will have to take up with AMC. I have not been briefed on whether or not there was a debrief. Of course, if it is a recommendation or a condition of the code of operation at AMC, it certainly should occur. I have had recent conversations with a number of staff at AMC, and with the union and their delegates as well, who would like to see some changes in the way we operate at the AMC. We will certainly take those on board.

Health—COVID-19 vaccination rollout

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, could you please update the Assembly on the ACT's vaccination rollout?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Dr Paterson for the question. I am of course pleased to inform the Assembly that the ACT's COVID-19 vaccination program is continuing to progress both efficiently and safely. Since our program began on 22 February this year, a total of 142,779 vaccine doses have been administered through ACT government clinics and of course that is complemented by the rollout through primary care and the direct rollout in residential aged care as well, which the commonwealth is responsible for. This is an incredible achievement to date and, combined with the commonwealth government's expansion of the role of primary care in administering vaccines, more than half of the ACT's adult population has now received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

On 29 June, the ACT's third COVID-19 vaccination clinic commenced operations at the Canberra airport precinct. Our health services have been administering COVID-19 vaccines seven days a week, and we are increasing our vaccination capacity so that more Canberrans can get vaccinated.

Recently the capacity of ACT vaccination clinics was increased to more than 14,000 Pfizer doses a week. This is more than double our previous capacity. We have reserved 2,000 appointments each week for important, high-risk groups including healthcare, disability and aged care workers. The ACT government recognises that these workers are essential to our community and that it is vital to have the ability to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

We are expecting to receive an increase in supply of COVID-19 vaccines in coming months from the commonwealth. This will support the ACT to open even more appointments and continue to expand eligibility. Getting vaccinated provides protection to recipients of the vaccine and helps reduce the risk of COVID-19 to vulnerable patients and residents of the wider community.

DR PATERSON: Minister, how is the territory increasing the number of people who can access the vaccination?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Dr Paterson for the supplementary. As members may be aware, on Saturday, 17 July the Chief Minister announced that from Wednesday, 21 July, 30- to 39-year-old Canberrans were able to register through the digital health record consumer portal MyDHR, the ACT government's online booking system for COVID-19 vaccinations. More than 20,000 30- to 39-year-olds took up the opportunity to register their interests. This is another excellent indication that Canberrans are ready and willing to get vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones. This call for registration was possible due to the excellent organisation and preparation of our public health officials.

This morning those 20,000 30- to 39-year-olds received a text message to tell them they could now book their COVID-19 vaccination. The opening of eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination appointments to 30- to 39-year-olds is an exciting development for the ACT government's COVID-19 vaccination program.

Of the 70,000 30- to 39-year-olds in the ACT, 16,000 have already received at least their first COVID-19 vaccination dose as part of phases of 1a and 1b. Now we are encouraging the remaining 54,000 30- to 39-year-olds to roll up their sleeve to protect themselves, their families and their community.

Vaccines are the only way out of this pandemic. There is no other viable alternative to protect yourself and people around you from very serious illness as result of COVID-19. I encourage all eligible Canberrans to receive vaccination.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how is the ACT planning for the expected increase in vaccines in the final quarter of the year?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary. The ACT government is continuing to plan for the anticipated increase in supply of COVID-19 vaccines from the commonwealth. This increased supply will place us in a position to increase our vaccination appointments to more eligible Canberrans.

A recent successful change in the patient model of care in ACT government clinics has significantly increased throughput and resulted in more Canberrans having access to a COVID-19 vaccine. In the last fortnight the essential access and sensory clinic has also almost doubled its weekly appointments. This is in response to excellent community uptake and stakeholder feedback.

More planning is underway to review current clinic models and prepare for future expansion of ACT government vaccination clinics. This will enable us to be ready for the expected increase in COVID-19 vaccine supply in coming months.

Further planning and policy efforts are also focused on improving equity and access to COVID-19 vaccination within high-risk groups such as, as I have previously mentioned, aged care and disability residential care workers. Getting vaccinated provides protection to these recipients of the vaccine and also helps reduce the risk to vulnerable people.

The ACT government is also committed to ensuring equity of access to COVID-19 vaccines to those Canberrans who are less likely to engage with health services. This includes homeless and housing-insecure populations; culturally and linguistically diverse communities; people living with drug and alcohol dependencies and mental health challenges; and people in congregate living arrangements including secure facilities, supported accommodation and refuges.

Canberrans can be confident that the ACT government will continue to deliver a safe and effective vaccination rollout in partnership with the commonwealth, primary care and pharmacies. Thank you to all the health professionals who are part of this incredible effort.

Roads—William Hovell Drive

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, I have been speaking to many west Belconnen residents who are concerned about the active travel connections between west Belconnen, the town centre and the rest of the city. I have some concerns about the William Hovell Drive duplication, but I am pleased to see that dedicated bike lanes are included as well as an off-road shared path. But on similar trunk roads we have seen quite high rates of accidents for people riding bikes. Can you please advise what infrastructure will be used to separate bikes from cars in the on-road cycle lanes?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Clay for her question and note her interest in active travel. The ACT government is investing in our road network, including through the duplication of William Hovell Drive, which will be a key road that will service the growing region of Ginninderry but also Molonglo.

As part of that duplication work, the ACT government is taking the opportunity to establish a new off-road shared path connection between west Belconnen, Molonglo and the rest of our shared path network. This seven-kilometre active travel route will run from Drake-Brockman Drive through to Bindubi Street and will actually go beyond the section where the duplication will be occurring, in order to link it through to the rest of our shared path network. It will be an entirely off-road ride from those regions, which will help to improve safety and provide another option for people who are looking to take that route, particularly commuting into the city on a bike. We are hoping that will encourage more people to take it up.

The other central links which have been identified in our transport strategy which go through Belconnen and which are our public transport links are also important, and we are continuing to invest in those as well.

Off-road shared paths are not the only part of this connection. On-road shared paths are a feature of all our road upgrades as well, but we want to provide the opportunity and option for people to go off road where they can.

Under the transport strategy, we have committed to undertake further work, in consultation with the community, on standards for active travel along mid-block sections as well as key intersections. We are looking at how we can improve safety in the design of those features that goes beyond Australian standards.

MS CLAY: Minister, what infrastructure will be included to protect bike riders when they are crossing the roads?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. With the off-road cycle lanes, we will be utilising many of the underpasses that already exist on William Hovell Drive so that people can safely pass from one side of the road to the other in certain sections as well as connecting with the bicentennial trail, the equestrian links, and the rest of the shared path networks. There should be no reason to have to cross the road. Further up the road network, there may be intersections that are established. Those will have safe crossing points for pedestrians.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, when will construction of the duplication of William Hovell Drive happen?

MR STEEL: Following detailed design.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—detainee searches

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Between October 2020 and April 2021, 208 strip searches were carried out on women at the AMC. Almost 60 per cent of them were conducted on Indigenous women. The data released via FOI also revealed that women at the AMC are stripped searched at a rate of roughly 30 a month. The population of women at the AMC is about 20. Julie Tongs and ACTCOSS have both pointed to this data as evidence that a commission of inquiry into systemic racism in the entire ACT justice system is needed. Your government has repeatedly dismissed any such inquiry. Minister, does this data showing disproportionate strip searches of Indigenous women constitute evidence of systemic racism in the ACT justice system?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Castley for the question, and I will say that the government has not rejected that claim. In fact, we are leading a response in the justice sense of the amount of Indigenous over-representation within our whole justice system. The Attorney-General is leading that work. Indeed, as a government we are responding to the inquiry for Ms Tongs and the roundtable recommendations. I am pleased that that work is starting.

I recognise the negative impact that searches can have on detainees, and that this is especially so for women. Women offenders often have higher levels of complex trauma, family and sexual violence, and disadvantaged backgrounds. As a government we are committed to providing appropriate supports to female detainees at the AMC. However, searches need to take place at times to ensure the safety and security of staff and detainees at the prison.

ACT Corrective Services is currently procuring a body scanner which will mean that in future the number of strip searches of detainees will be minimised greatly. This is good news and will be welcomed by detainees and staff alike, as searches can be uncomfortable for all parties involved.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, why is there an unacceptably high level of strip searches that occurred under your watch, and, even worse, the close to 50 a month under Mr Rattenbury?

MR GENTLEMAN: Between October 2019 and 30 June 2021—these are the stats I have—51 per cent of searches on female detainees were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female detainees; 49 per cent of the searches were non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees. These searches resulted in 12 detections of contraband, eight on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and four on non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females. In terms of population on 30 June 2021 there were 21 female detainees at AMC.

Searches are used in correctional facilities right across the world to ensure the safety of staff and detainees. If searches occur at a rate—which is particularly when they are moving. So, for example, if detainees are going to a court appearance, then they will be searched before, and sometimes after the court appearance too, to ensure there are no foreign parts on their body, for the safety of all concerned.

DR PATERSON: Minister, can you further outline how the government is committed to ensuring safe conditions for female detainees?

MR GENTLEMAN : As we heard from the Minister for Women, Ms Berry, this morning, we are working as best we can to support women detainees in the AMC, whether it is their personal situations with searches or whether it is their situation for accommodation within AMC. We have moved women back to the purpose-built facility at AMC. The recent visit I had with Minister Berry gave us some very good feedback from those detainees about the quality of life they are now having at the AMC. There is more work to do, though. We need to provide more opportunities for learning amongst that cohort and more opportunities for privacy as well.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—incarceration rates

MR CAIN: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, in a roundtable with you and other ministers, Aboriginal leaders were asked to determine what form the investigation into Indigenous over-representation in the justice system should take. They unanimously requested a commission of inquiry. In response,

Minister Stephen-Smith and the Attorney-General wrote that a commission would require significant expense and that its recommendations are, “reasonably likely to mirror those of previous inquiries and reviews,” many of which are yet to be implemented by your government.

When asked about overrepresentation, the chair of the AMC oversight committee recently stated that one cause is: “the white community thinking that they know what’s always best ... I hope we can stop thinking that the white community has the answers because we clearly don’t.” In your role as Minister for Corrections, have you advocated for the requested commission of inquiry, and if not, why not?

MR GENTLEMAN: I have worked with my colleagues the Attorney-General, Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith and, of course, Emma, on the response to the roundtable. We are still working through that process. There will be, I think, a number of opportunities for Aboriginal people to take the forum forward in our responses. Of course, they have called for it and the government has responded to say that it should be Aboriginal led.

Mrs Jones: Point of order. The question was whether he has advocated for it or not. That was not answered in his answer.

MADAM SPEAKER: I cannot direct the Minister how he answers the question. He responded to the question appropriately. He did not provide that, but he responded appropriately.

MR CAIN: Minister, if a commission of inquiry is unlikely to reveal anything new, as your government claims, can you explain specifically why the ACT has the highest Indigenous incarceration rate in Australia, and why that rate is growing faster here than in any other jurisdiction.

MR GENTLEMAN: I reject the premise of the question. We have not said that we will not find anything new. Every inquiry finds something new. That is how we learn about the actions we should take and the resources we should put forward into over-representation. I think the work that the Attorney-General Rachel Stephen-Smith and the government is doing in response to this is appropriate. Of course it will have resourcing, as well.

MRS KIKKERT: I have a supplementary question. Minister, what right does your all-white government have to ask Aboriginal leaders to determine the form of the review into over-representation?

Mr Barr: Point of order: that question contains an imputation.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes.

MRS KIKKERT: I was directing from a quote.

MADAM SPEAKER: You did not present it as a quote.

Mr Rattenbury: She paraphrased it into the question, Madam Speaker.

Mrs Kikkert: It was a quote.

Mr Rattenbury: She paraphrased it in.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Rattenbury, do you want to stand and make your comment?

Mr Rattenbury: I think the Chief Minister was taking a point of order first.

Ms Jones: Now you do not want to speak!

Mr Rattenbury: I will speak after the Chief Minister.

Mr Barr: The point of order is that it is very clear in standing orders that questions cannot contain imputations, and that is exactly what that question did.

Mrs Jones: How is ‘all-white’ an imputation?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Rattenbury.

Mr Rattenbury: I take a slightly different approach from the Chief Minister, but I think that starting to refer to groups in the chamber by racial titles is not a slope that we want to slide down. I think it is quite disrespectful and not how we want to talk about people in the ACT in the way that Mrs Kikkert is seeking to represent it. I think it is unhelpful and unedifying.

Mrs Jones: On the point of order: we are constantly being given descriptions of different people in the community by their racial attributes by the government. So if people want to make the point that was made by Christine Nixon in this place and refer to her intelligent assessment of what is going on in this government then I do not understand how there can possibly be a point of order when a piece of fact that she has pointed out, that she has considered, is being stated by the shadow minister.

MADAM SPEAKER: Can you repeat the question. You have stood and you have said that this is a quote, but you have not said, ‘This is a quote.’ You have just labelled ‘white government’ is what I heard, and I would agree that that is absolutely inappropriate.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, by what right—from the oversight committee chair, when she said “the white community thinking that they know what is always best”—had you to ask Aboriginal leaders to determine the form of a review—

MADAM SPEAKER: You have rephrased your question—

MR BARR: You cannot make it up again—

MADAM SPEAKER: No, it is out of order; you have rephrased it.

Multicultural affairs—community language schools

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Minister, the ACT Community Languages Schools Association have written to both of us about the impending loss of access to teaching spaces in my electorate of Yerrabi. I would like to know what the government is doing to support ongoing affordable access by community languages to classes in the ACT.

MS CHEYNE: I thank Mr Braddock for the question. We both acknowledge how valuable language is and the important role that community language schools play in ensuring that multicultural languages are maintained and promoted.

I want to give a broad overview, before I get to the detail of the question, for those who might not be aware: the ACT government investment in community language schools is over \$275,000 annually. CSD works with the association to provide annual funding grants to over 40 schools representing 34 languages and over 2,000 students in the ACT.

To the detail of the question: we have recently undertaken a review into community language schools, part of which is subject to a motion tomorrow. I note that Mr Braddock's motion calls for the review and the response to be tabled at the end of October this year. The government is currently working on a cross-directorate response to the review, because, as Mr Braddock noted, community language schools operate in a range of venues, including in schools. We are aware that there are some concerns about the current use of facilities, including with schools. CSD, in addition to responding to the report, is also working with the ACT Education Directorate on the issues that have been raised with me and with Mr Braddock.

Of course, the ACT government supports the community use of public school facilities, but we need to ensure that there is a real balance there with community use as well as the important school operations, and that public schools are community hubs and their facilities enrich the lives of all local residents, not just those who attend the school.

MR BRADDOCK: Whilst grateful for the support that the ACT government provides to community languages, I would just question how the provision of grants to community languages is returned to the government in the form of hire fees for community-owned spaces. Is that a business model that is going to continue?

MADAM SPEAKER: I remind members that the second supplementary is direct with no preamble. I gave you some grace there, Mr Braddock, but not next time.

MS CHEYNE: This was subject to the review. The tabling of the review and the response to the review will address that.

MR DAVIS: Minister, will the multipurpose community centre that is planned for Gungahlin include spaces for community groups to book for classes?

MS CHEYNE: That is a question for the Chief Minister.

MR BARR: As the project is developed, there will be an opportunity for community engagement in relation to the internal spaces and configuration within the new centre. So it is quite likely that that particular use would be able to be accommodated within the new centre.

Territory rights—voluntary assisted dying

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Human Rights. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the action taken following the motion passed on 31 March in relation to territory rights?

MS CHEYNE: Restoring territory rights is about our democratic rights. It is about giving citizens in the ACT and the Northern Territory the same rights as those who live in the states. Since the ACT Legislative Assembly unanimously passed the motion on 31 March, I continue to press the case—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MS CHEYNE: It is the last question, Madam Speaker. Come on—not to you—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members.

MS CHEYNE: I have continued to press the case and momentum is building. Last month the Northern Territory Attorney-General and I published an opinion piece in the *Canberra Times* calling on the federal government to finally show some leadership on this issue and restore our territory rights. It would be nice if they would respond to our letter as well.

I am pleased to see so many Canberrans supporting territory rights and the *Canberra Times* launching their own “our right to decide” campaign. We have received some valuable support from across the political spectrum over the past little while. Federal minister Simon Birmingham, for example, put his support for territory rights on the record back in 2019. Last week Mr Rattenbury and Mrs Jones were both great panel members at the Politics in the Pub discussing territory rights. The federal Labor representatives for the ACT have all been particularly vocal in support of territory rights. For example, Andrew Leigh recently sponsored a private member’s motion—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, do not distract someone when they are on the floor.

MS CHEYNE: in the House of Representatives calling on the government to repeal the law blocking the territories from legislating on voluntary assisted dying. Senator Gallagher has also been very vocal—

Ms Stephen-Smith: Madam Speaker—

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat. A point of order?

Ms Stephen-Smith: Madam Speaker, I can hardly hear Ms Cheyne, because of the chatter.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, if we are all silent, Ms Cheyne will be heard.

MS CHEYNE: Senator Gallagher has also been very vocal in the media.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, we are getting to the end, I know, but there are more questions to go. Mr Pettersson?

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, have you written to the responsible federal minister about territory rights? If so, what has been the response?

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, could we have one question time when I don't call you to order?

MS CHEYNE: Madam Speaker, I note that, once upon a time, Mr Hanson actually considered this issue important. On 3 March the Northern Territory Attorney-General and I jointly wrote to the three responsible federal ministers, drawing their attention to the human rights implications of the territories not being able to legislate on voluntary assisted dying. We asked the ministers to take action to fix this. We wrote to the then Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories, Nola Marino, and the then Attorney-General, Christian Porter.

We had not received a response when there was a cabinet reshuffle, so on 23 April the Northern Territory Attorney-General and I wrote to the incoming federal Attorney-General to highlight that we had not received a response. We have still not received a response from any minister, and today marks five months. All we have had is a note from the Attorney-General's Department saying they had referred our correspondence to Ms Marino, but we have since heard informally that the Attorney-General has decided that she is the responsible minister after all. It is deeply disappointing that the federal government have been bouncing the issue among ministers when all that they need to do is agree to make a simple legislative change. While they continue to stall, they are preventing the territories from having a meaningful conversation about our end-of-life choices, while the states are able to progress voluntary assisted dying laws for themselves.

MR DAVIS: Minister, what or who are the current greatest threats to securing territory rights?

MS CHEYNE: There is probably a greatest hits list here. What is incredibly frustrating—

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, enough.

MS CHEYNE: Madam Speaker, I think that the greatest threat overall here is the conflation of voluntary assisted dying with our democratic rights and with restoring territory rights.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, that is enough.

MS CHEYNE: Madam Speaker, I implore members of the federal parliament to be aware of this issue and to be aware of how it affects Canberrans, how it affects all of the citizens of the Northern Territory, and how unfair and untenable it is that our rights are different from those enjoyed by those in the states simply because something was inserted into our self-government acts more than 24 years ago. It is frustrating, it is sad, and there are people who are suffering as a result. It is those who cannot distinguish between the two issues and those who are not standing up for us, including the ACT Liberal senator in Zed Seselja, who could be actively campaigning for territory rights, but instead are actively campaigning against Canberrans, and thus abandoning them, that is so incredibly frustrating to many members here.

Mr Barr: Further questions can be placed on the notice paper.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 17(5)—Auditor-General's Report No 7/2021—Procurement exemptions and value for money, dated 28 June 2021.

Bills referred to Committees, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 2 December 2020, as amended 30 March and 22 April 2021—Correspondence—

Bills—Inquiries—

Carers Recognition Bill 2021—Letter to the Speaker from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing, dated 6 July 2021.

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2)—Letter to the Speaker from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services, dated 15 July 2021.

Bills—Not inquired into—

Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2021—Copy of letter to the Speaker from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, dated 30 June 2021.

Domestic Violence Agencies Amendment Bill 2021—Copy of letter to the Speaker from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing, dated 6 July 2021.

Senior Practitioner Amendment Bill 2021—Letter to the Speaker from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion, dated 6 July 2021.

Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2021—Letter to the Speaker from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality, dated 7 July 2021.

Commissioner for Standards, pursuant to Continuing Resolution 5AA of the Assembly of 31 October 2013, as amended 3 August 2017 and 22 August 2019—Annual report 2020/2021, dated 1 July 2021.

Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, pursuant to Continuing Resolution 6A of the Assembly of 10 April 2008, as amended 21 August 2008—Report for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, dated 6 July 2021.

Legislation Act, pursuant to subsection 228(1)—Assembly Committees for Consultation (Appointments to Statutory Provisions) Nomination 2021 (No 2), dated 2 July 2021.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to section 21—Auditor-General's Reports—Government responses—

No 2/2021—Total Facilities Management Contract Implementation.

No 3/2021—Court Transport Unit Vehicle—Romeo 5.

Australian Crime Commission (ACT) Act, pursuant to subsection 51(5)—Board of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission—Chair Annual Report—2019-20, dated 17 March 2021.

Australian Human Rights Commission—Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces—ACT Government response, dated June 2021, together with a statement, dated August 2021.

COVID-19 Emergency Response Act—pursuant to subsection 3(3)—COVID-19 Measures—Report No 11—Reporting period 1 April-30 June 2021, dated July 2021.

Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee—Report 2—*Report on inquiries into Annual and Financial Reports 2019-20 and ACT Budget 2020-21*—Government response.

Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee—Report 1—*Annual and Financial Reports 2019-2020 and Appropriation Bill 2020-2021*—Government response.

Electoral Act, pursuant to subsection 10A(3)—ACT Legislative Assembly Election 2020—Report—Government response.

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee—Report 1—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2019-20 and Estimates 2020-21*—Government response.

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee—Report 1—*Annual and Financial Reports 2019-2020; Appropriation Bill 2020-2021 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2020-2021*—Government response.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 1—*Annual and Financial Reports 2019-2020; Appropriation Bill 2020-2021 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021*—Government response.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 1—*Annual and Financial Reports 2019-2020; Appropriation Bill 2020-2021 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2020-2021*—Government response.

Planning and Development Act—

Pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approval of Variation No 379 to the Territory Plan—Nature Reserve—Kenny Environmental Offsets Site, dated 2 August 2021, including associated documents, together with a statement.

Pursuant to subsection 242(2)—Statement of leases granted for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021, dated August 2021.

Rail Safety National Law—Rail Safety National Law National Regulations (Fees) Variation Regulations 2021 (2021 No 343—South Australia), dated August 2021, together with an explanatory statement.

Rail Safety National Law—Rail Safety National Law National Regulations (Modification of FOI Act) Variation Regulations 2021 (2021 No 235—South Australia), together with an explanatory statement.

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Agents Act—Agents (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-138 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Animal Welfare Act—Animal Welfare (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-94 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Associations Incorporation Act—Associations Incorporation (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-139 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act—Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-112 (LR, 10 June 2021).

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act—Board of Senior Secondary Studies Appointment 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-132 (LR, 18 June 2021).

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy Act and Financial Management Act—

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy (Governing Board) Appointment 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-117 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy (Governing Board) Appointment 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-118 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy (Governing Board) Appointment 2021 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-119 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy (Governing Board) Appointment 2021 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-120 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Canberra Institute of Technology Act and Financial Management Act—

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT Board Member) Appointment 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-121 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT Board Member) Appointment 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-122 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT Board Member) Appointment 2021 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-123 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT Board Member) Appointment 2021 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-124 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Casino Control Act—Casino Control (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-140 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Children and Young People Act—

Children and Young People (Death Review Committee) Appointment 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-93 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Children and Young People (Death Review Committee) Deputy Chair Appointment 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-92 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act—

Civil Law (Wrongs) Australian Institute of Building Surveyors Professional Standards Scheme 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-137 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Professional Standards Council Appointment 2021 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-116 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) (Enforcement) Act—Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) (Enforcement) (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-141 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act—Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Climate Change Council Chair) Appointment 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-152 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Clinical Waste Act—Clinical Waste (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-95 (LR, 7 June 2021).

Community Title Act—Community Title (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-125 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Co-operatives National Law (ACT) Act—Co-operatives National Law (ACT) (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-142 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Court Procedures Act—

Court Procedures (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-154 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Court Procedures Amendment Rules 2021 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2021-15 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Dangerous Goods (Road Transport) Act—Dangerous Goods (Road Transport) Fees and Charges Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-100 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Dangerous Substances Act—Dangerous Substances (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-101 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Domestic Animals Act—

Domestic Animals (Assistance Animal Accreditation) Guidelines 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-106 (LR, 7 June 2021).

Domestic Animals (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-96 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Duties Act—Duties (Pensioner Duty Deferral Scheme) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-175 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Duties Act, Land Rent Act, Land Tax Act and Rates Act—Rates, Land Tax, Land Rent and Duties (Certificate and Statement Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-170 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Emergencies Act—Emergencies (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-113 (LR, 15 June 2021).

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act—

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Energy Savings Contribution) Determination 2021, including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-163 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Energy Savings Target) Determination 2021, including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-162 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Penalties for Noncompliance) Determination 2021, including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-164 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Priority Household Target) Determination 2021, including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-165 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Firearms Act—Firearms (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-114 (LR, 15 June 2021).

Gaming Machine Act—Gaming Machine (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-151 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Guardianship and Management of Property Act—Guardianship and Management of Property (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-155 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Health Act—Health (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-161 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Juries Act—Juries (Payment) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-136 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Land Titles Act—Land Titles (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-143 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act—

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Members' Hiring Arrangements Approval 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-181 (LR, 2 July 2021).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Members' Salary Cap Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-134 (LR, 24 June 2021).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Office-holders' Hiring Arrangements Approval 2021 (No. 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-180 (LR, 2 July 2021).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Speaker's Salary Cap Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-135 (LR, 24 June 2021).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Variable Terms of Employment of Members' Staff Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-185 (LR, 2 July 2021).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Variable Terms of Employment of Office-holders' Staff Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-184 (LR, 2 July 2021).

Liquor Act—Liquor (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-144 (LR, 28 June 2021).

Liquor Regulation—Liquor (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Permit Fee Waiver) Declaration 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-183 (LR, 2 July 2021).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act—

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Community Sector Industry Employer Levy Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-91 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Contract Cleaning Industry Employer Levy Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-90 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Lotteries Act—Lotteries (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-157 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Machinery Act—Machinery (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-102 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Magistrates Court Act—

Magistrates Court (Plastic Reduction Infringement Notices) Regulation 2021—Subordinate Law SL2021-12 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Magistrates Court (Public Health (COVID-19) Infringement Notices) Amendment Regulation 2021 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2021-17 (LR, 5 July 2021).

Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation—Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods (Vaccinations by Pharmacists) Direction 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-111 (LR, 8 June 2021).

Mutual Recognition (Australian Capital Territory) Act—Mutual Recognition (Australian Capital Territory) Regulation 2021—Subordinate Law SL2021-13 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Official Visitor Act—Official Visitor (Mental Health) Appointment 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-103 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Partnership Act—Partnership (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-145 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Pest Plants and Animals Act—Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Animals) Declaration 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-133 (LR, 21 June 2021).

Planning and Development Act—

Planning and Development (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-126 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Planning and Development Amendment Regulation 2021 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2021-16 (LR, 5 July 2021).

Plastic Reduction Act—

Plastic Reduction (Single-use Plastic Cutlery—Special Circumstances) Exemption 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-159 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Plastic Reduction (Single-use Plastic Products) Exemption 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-158 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names (Hume) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-110 (LR, 10 June 2021).

Public Trustee and Guardian Act—Public Trustee and Guardian (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-156 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Public Unleased Land Act—Public Unleased Land (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-97 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Race and Sports Bookmaking Act—Race and Sports Bookmaking (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-179 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Rates Act—Rates (Objections Period) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-178 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Rates Act and Taxation Administration Act—Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Rates) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-167 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Registration of Deeds Act—Registration of Deeds (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-146 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Residential Tenancies Act—Residential Tenancies (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Declaration 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-166 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Retirement Villages Act—Retirement Villages (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-147 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Act and Road Transport (General) Act—Road Transport (Offences) Amendment Regulation 2021 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2021-10 (LR, 21 June 2021).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) (Parking Permit Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-108 (LR, 7 June 2021).

Road Transport (General) (Pay Parking Area Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-109 (LR, 7 June 2021).

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act—Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Maximum Fares for Taxi Services Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-115 (LR, 15 June 2021).

Scaffolding and Lifts Act—Scaffolding and Lifts (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-104 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Security Industry Act—Security Industry (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-149 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Sex Work Act—Sex Work (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-150 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Stock Act—

Stock (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-127 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Stock (Levy) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-128 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Stock (Minimum Stock Levy) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-129 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Surveyors Act—Surveyors (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-130 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Taxation Administration Act—

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Duty) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-171 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Home Buyer Concession Scheme) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-172 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Land Rent) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-168 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Land Tax) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-169 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Pensioner Duty Concession Scheme) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-174 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Safer Families Levy) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-176 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Taxation Administration (Off the Plan Unit Duty Concession Scheme) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-173 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Taxation Administration (Payroll Tax) COVID-19 Exemption Scheme Determination 2021 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-177 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Traders (Licensing) Act—Traders (Licensing) (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-148 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act—Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Plastic Reduction) Regulation 2021—Subordinate Law SL2021-14 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Tree Protection Act—Tree Protection (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-98 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Unit Titles (Management) Act—Unit Titles (Management) Certificate Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-107 (LR, 7 June 2021).

Unit Titles Act—Unit Titles (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-131 (LR, 17 June 2021).

Unlawful Gambling Act—Unlawful Gambling (Charitable Gaming Application Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-153 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Utilities Act—Utilities (ACT Retail Electricity—Transparency and Comparability Code) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-182 (LR, 5 July 2021).

Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Act—Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Amendment Regulation 2021 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2020-11 (LR, 30 June 2021).

Victims of Crime Regulation—Victims of Crime (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-160 (LR, 29 June 2021).

Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act—Waste Management and Resource Recovery (Fees) Determination 2021 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-99 (LR, 3 June 2021).

Work Health and Safety Act—Work Health and Safety (Fees) Determination 2021—Disallowable Instrument DI2021-105 (LR, 3 June 2021).

National inquiry into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces—government response

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) (2.58): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Australian Human Rights Commission—Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces—ACT Government response.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (2.58): Today the ACT government's response to the Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect@Work on the national inquiry into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces has been tabled.

The Respect@Work report provides a clear, evidence-based and survivor-centred approach to responding to workplace sexual harassment. Our response to this report sets out the ACT's long-term commitment to creating a culture of respectful behaviour across all workplaces in the ACT.

In our response we have provided an overarching position to each of the 55 recommendations made in the Respect@Work report. This will guide our future and ongoing work to understand, prevent and respond to sexual harassment at work, based on the principles of respect, equity, diversity and human rights.

All individuals and workers have a fundamental right to feel safe and protected in their workplace, and in the community. This includes safety from psychosocial hazards. Sexual harassment denies victims this right, and often has profound and destructive impacts for all aspects of their lives.

Distressingly, sexual harassment remains pervasive across workplaces and the broader community, regardless of setting, level, industry or location. In 2018 the Australian Human Rights Commission found that over four in five Australian women and over half of Australian men over the age of 15 had been sexually harassed at some point in their lifetimes. This is a confronting and unacceptable reality. The injustice of this is undeniable. We must show that as a government, and as an ACT community more broadly, we reject sexual harassment in any and all circumstances and are committed to continuing work to promote respectful workplaces, free of sexual harassment.

The ACT government has already taken significant steps to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in workplaces and across the community and to promote equality and respect. Fostering gender equity in Canberra workplaces is a key priority under the second action plan of the ACT women's plan 2016-26 which I launched in March 2020.

To achieve this, we are providing enhanced support for women, improving opportunities for women in the traditionally male-dominated building and construction industries and promoting programs to improve gender equality in

workplace leadership and participation. This will make a vital contribution to developing respectful and equal cultures and practices in workplaces across the ACT.

We have also developed respectful relationships across our ACT schools to promote attitudes and behaviours which reject violence and value respect and equality. Addressing the social and cultural drivers of gender-based violence through education is critical to prevent sexual harassment.

Led by the experts in the sector, I have recently established the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program to reinvigorate and redirect our response to sexual assault. The prevention working group and the workplace reference group under this program have already made excellent progress in developing advice to guide our future responses to workplace sexual harassment in the context of preventing harassment and promoting gender equality.

However, the ACT cannot address sexual harassment alone. Sexual harassment is everyone's business and responsibility. We are therefore committed to working with our federal, state and territory partners to develop national solutions to workplace sexual harassment. We have submitted this response to national cabinet, and I look forward to working with all Australian governments and my colleagues in the women's safety task force to develop collaborative and coordinated responses to sexual harassment in the ACT and across Australia.

The ACT is contributing to the development of the next national plan to reduce violence against women and their children to continue the progress made under the current plan to make Australia safer for all.

Sexual harassment is not inevitable. It is preventable. Every Canberran, and every Australian, can contribute to addressing and eliminating it. I am confident that in the ACT we can come together to build a society where all people feel safe and protected. I look forward to working alongside our community to drive meaningful change in workplaces and long-lasting change to cultures of behaviour. This response is an important step along this path. I thank all individuals who have been involved in the consultation, development and drafting of this significant response. I commend the response to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Planning—Kenny environmental offsets site

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) (3.04): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Planning and Development Act—Approval of Variation No 379 to the Territory Plan—Nature Reserve—Kenny Environmental Offsets Site.

This variation implements the outcomes of the Gungahlin strategic assessment 2013 for matters of national environmental significance protected under the commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The land is to be incorporated into the Canberra Nature Park as a nature reserve by the name of Nadjung Mada. It is the 39th reserve in the Canberra Nature Park.

It is always a pleasure and a privilege, as Minister for Planning and Land Management, to be able to continue adding to Canberra Nature Park. To create this new nature reserve, variation 379 rezones Gungahlin rural block 820 and part of the Old Well Station Road track from a range of existing urban zonings under the future urban area overlay to the non-urban NUZ3 hills, ridges and buffers zone. It also replaces the future urban area overlay with a nature reserve public land overlay on the Territory Plan map.

Draft variation 379 was released for public comment between December 2020 and February 2021. It attracted four public submissions. These submissions were generally supportive of the variation and raised matters related to the future access to and management of the Nadjung Mada nature reserve. A report on consultation was prepared by the ACT Planning and Land Authority and responded to the issues raised in the submissions. Given the support for the proposal, no changes were made to the draft variation as a result of the public consultation processes.

Under section 73 of the Planning and Development Act 2007, I referred the draft variation to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services. The standing committee advised me on 15 July 2021 that it had decided not to conduct an inquiry into DV379. I approved variation 379 because it implements the recommendations of the Gungahlin strategic assessment and secures a significant area of land for the Nadjung Mada nature reserve. I have now tabled the approved variation 379 to the Territory Plan.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Youth—vaping products

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.07): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) vaping is the inhaling of a vapor created by an electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) or other vaping device;
- (b) ingredients in e-cigarettes include e-liquids and may or may not include nicotine and other toxic contaminants. The coil of an e-cigarette releases heavy metals which are inhaled;
- (c) e-cigarettes are relatively new products, and the evidence is still evolving around their health impacts, however, studies have shown negative health impacts;

- (d) in line with the nationally agreed principles that underpin the current *Policy and regulatory approach to electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in Australia*, under the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1927* (ACT) it is an offence to:
 - (i) supply vaping products to people aged under 18;
 - (ii) be reckless about whether the person to whom the vaping product is sold is under 18 years old (including failing to check identification);
 - (iii) purchase a vaping product for use by someone aged under 18 years old; and
 - (iv) display advertisement for e-cigarettes and vaping products;
 - (e) under the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008* (ACT) it is an offence to commercially sell or supply liquid nicotine for use in e-cigarettes;
 - (f) the advertising of vaping products, including packaging, is not currently regulated under Commonwealth legislation;
 - (g) young people, under the age of 18, in our community are vaping, which can create pathways to tobacco smoking nicotine addiction;
 - (h) ACT Health is working with the ACT Education Directorate to raise awareness of the impacts of e-cigarettes for children and young people;
 - (i) there is currently insufficient evidence to show whether e-cigarettes are effective in helping people to quit smoking; and
 - (j) in 2020, the ACT Government's submission to the Australian Senate Select Committee on Tobacco Harm Reduction, called for:
 - (i) effective internet safeguards to prevent children purchasing vaping products;
 - (ii) national regulations, or nationally recognised approach to flavoured nicotine vaping products;
 - (iii) regulation of e-cigarette packaging and product names to ensure their use is not marketed to appeal to young people;
 - (iv) display of health warnings or advisories consistent with evidence, as validated by the National Health and Medical Research Council; and
 - (v) requirement for child-proof packaging for nicotine liquid and nicotine salts; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) continue to develop programs that educate and inform Canberrans, particularly younger Canberrans, about the risks of e-cigarettes and prevent their uptake and use;
 - (b) review relevant ACT legislation to ensure current arrangements are contributing to minimising the harm being caused by e-cigarettes and vaping, across our community, and particularly young people;
 - (c) continue to advocate with relevant Commonwealth ministers for amendments to Commonwealth legislation to regulate e-cigarettes by:

- (i) amending the national tobacco control legislation to expand the scope of the plain packaging and advertising legislation to include non-tobacco smoking products;
- (ii) restricting the type of e-liquid flavours and vaping devices permitted to be sold in Australia to those that are less likely to appeal to children and young people; and
- (iii) requiring child-safe packaging;
- (d) seek consideration by the health ministers' meeting on stronger national measures for vaping products including e-cigarettes; and
- (e) report back to the Assembly on progress no later than the first sitting week in December 2022.

This motion addresses the issue of vaping, or e-cigarette use, in our community, in particular by children and young adults. E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that deliver an aerosolized solution with or without nicotine. To date there are over 7,000 e-liquid flavours available worldwide and over 400 different e-cigarette brands. These e-cigarettes heat liquid flavour, or nicotine, to the point where it becomes a vapour that is then inhaled.

E-cigarettes do not contain the typical carcinogens present in tobacco smoke. However, there are unknown long-term health impacts of the solvents, flavours, additives and contaminants that can be found in the vapour that is inhaled through e-cigarettes. At the end of the day, we do not know if vaping causes cancer; we do not know if vaping increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Currently in Australia, people buy liquid nicotine from overseas websites. This industry of devices, liquid nicotine and flavours is largely unregulated globally, with international studies evidencing serious concerns around mislabelling, as well as the targeting and marketing of these products to young people.

There is much debate in the community about the potential e-cigarettes have to reduce tobacco-related harm. One argument suggests that e-cigarettes are less harmful than tobacco cigarettes. Another argument supports the view that e-cigarettes which do not contain nicotine could fulfill the habit and behaviour of smoking, without the harmful effects.

However, there is currently insufficient evidence to demonstrate whether e-cigarettes are effective for the purpose of smoking cessation. A recent study by the ANU Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, published in September last year, notes that the substantial majority of smokers who quit successfully do so unaided, and no e-cigarette products have been approved by the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration as smoking cessation aids.

The report further notes that currently there is insufficient evidence that nicotine-delivering e-cigarettes are a more effective smoking cessation aid than no intervention, non-nicotine e-cigarettes or standard nicotine replacement therapy. Similar conclusions have been reached by recent major national and international reports reviewing this evidence.

Before a product can claim that it can help with quitting smoking or managing nicotine withdrawal symptoms, it must be assessed and approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for safety and efficacy. Currently, no brand of e-cigarette has been approved by the TGA for this purpose. Counter to the position of e-cigarettes helping people to quit smoking, e-cigarettes have the potential for the reverse effect: creating pathways and behaviour which can lead to nicotine addiction, particularly in young people.

The NHMRC states that there is some evidence from longitudinal studies to suggest that e-cigarette use in non-smokers is associated with further uptake of tobacco cigarette smoking. The ANU report I referenced earlier further states that, among people who have never smoked or are current non-smokers, those who use e-cigarettes are, on average, around three times as likely to take up smoking of conventional cigarettes and transition to regular tobacco smoking as those who have not used e-cigarettes.

To this point much of our success in reducing smoking rates across the country has largely been that young people are not taking up cigarette smoking. Our public health and legislative reforms are working. However, e-cigarettes and vaping may work to undermine these efforts, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that young people in our community are vaping. The National Health and Medical Research Council is currently funding Australian research into this matter and, more broadly, into the effects of safety and efficacy of e-cigarettes.

A key report that has just been released by the World Health Organisation, highlighting the dangers of novel nicotine products, notes that nicotine is highly addictive, electronic nicotine delivery systems are harmful and must be better regulated and, where they are not banned, governments should adopt appropriate policies to protect their populations from the harms of electronic nicotine delivery systems and to prevent their uptake by children, adolescents and other vulnerable groups.

Another recent study, this one undertaken by the University of Queensland, has analysed the impacts of the portrayal of vaping on TikTok. TikTok is a platform primarily used by young people, and one middle-aged Liberal member of the Assembly. The UQ study noted that TikTok's community guidelines restrict uploading videos featuring "the depiction, promotion and trade of drugs or other controlled substances". Advertising of tobacco and alcohol products is also prohibited on the platform.

However, the findings of the University of Queensland study suggest that TikTok was not acting to control vaping-promoting video content. We need national regulation and legislation to address situations such as this. The University of Queensland study called for age restrictions to reduce young viewers' exposure to videos intentionally or inadvertently advertising vaping products and behaviour.

Predominant medical associations, including the World Health Organisation, the Australian Medical Association, the Therapeutic Goods Association, the Public

Health Association and the Cancer Council of Australia have all published position papers raising their concern with e-cigarettes and vaping. The World Health Organisation calls for caution surrounding their use, urges governments to apply precautionary principles and notes the need for further studies and research into various aspects and impacts.

The ACT's legislation and regulation around the use of e-cigarettes and vaping are among some of the most progressive in the country, and well ahead of national regulation and legislation. In the ACT, under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1927, it is an offence to supply vaping products to people under the age of 18; it is an offence to be reckless about whether the person to whom the vaping product is sold is under 18, including failing to check for identification; it is an offence to purchase a vaping product for use by someone under 18; and it is an offence to display advertisements for e-cigarettes and vaping products.

Under other ACT legislation, the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008, it is an offence to commercially sell or supply liquid nicotine for use in e-cigarettes. These measures, particularly those around advertising, packaging and marketing of e-cigarettes and vaping products, are intended to prevent non-smokers, including young people and children, from the uptake of smoking. Nationally, the advertising of vaping products, including packaging, is not regulated.

In 2020 the ACT government made a submission to the federal government's Senate Select Committee on Tobacco Harm Reduction, calling for effective internet safeguards to prevent children from purchasing vaping products; national regulations or nationally recognised approaches to flavoured nicotine vaping products; the regulation of e-cigarette packaging and product names to ensure their use is not marketed to appeal to young children; the display of health warnings or advisories consistent with evidence, as validated by the NHMRC; and a requirement for childproof packaging for nicotine liquid and nicotine salts. These reforms have not yet occurred or come into effect.

One aspect of these recommendations is asserting the importance of childproof packaging for nicotine substances. Nicotine is a poison. It is a highly toxic substance. I refer the Assembly to the Victorian coroner's report of July 2019. The report outlines the devastating circumstances of the death of an 18-month-old baby, referred to as Baby J, as a result of the accidental ingestion of liquid nicotine that was being mixed for e-cigarette use. The coroner stressed that not enough had been done to educate the community about the risks associated with e-cigarettes and the toxicity of liquid nicotine.

Despite the ACT legislation effectively making it illegal for people under 18 to vape, this is something that is occurring in our community. I originally received a couple of emails from concerned parents that their children had obtained e-cigarettes at school. I investigated this further by posting widely on Canberra's Facebook noticeboards, encouraging parents to contact me if they felt that this was an issue among teenagers in the ACT. I received many emails from concerned parents, who reported widespread vaping amongst our teenagers, our children, in the ACT.

It is imperative that we act now. Kids will always be kids and want to push boundaries and try new things. We cannot let another generation be sucked down the path of previous generations. Smoking is still the biggest cause of preventable death around the world. It is important to acknowledge the commonwealth moves to further regulate e-cigarettes. From 1 October, you will no longer be able to legally buy these products from overseas websites without talking with a GP and getting a prescription.

I commend everyone who has worked on this issue over the last few years, including my colleagues Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith, as Minister for Health, and Ms Yvette Berry, as minister for education, as well as the staff of the relevant directorates.

I have moved this motion today on behalf of my constituents and the ACT community to protect our children from this potentially harmful product that threatens to normalise smoking behaviour in another generation, undoing all the progress we have achieved. We must support those in our community with nicotine addiction to quit smoking. We already have many effective programs in place, such as the great work undertaken by organisations such as Quitline and the Cancer Council.

While we await the outcomes of NHMRC studies and others, there is more we can do right now, based on what we know about vaping and e-cigarettes. My motion calls on the ACT government to continue to develop programs that educate and inform Canberrans, particularly young Canberrans, about the risks of e-cigarettes to prevent their uptake and use. My motion asks the Assembly to call on the ACT government to review relevant ACT legislation to ensure that current arrangements are contributing to minimise the harm being caused by e-cigarettes and vaping across our community, particularly for young people.

My motion further asks the Assembly to call on the ACT government to advocate again to federal ministers for amendments to commonwealth legislation to regulate e-cigarettes by amending the national tobacco control legislation to expand the scope of plain packaging and advertising legislation to include non-tobacco smoking products; to restrict the type of e-liquid flavours and vaping devices permitted to be sold in Australia to those that are less likely to appeal to children and young people; and to require child-safe packaging.

I also call on the ACT government to seek consideration by the health ministers' meeting on stronger national measures for vaping products. Lastly, I ask that the Assembly call on the ACT government to report back on these issues to the Assembly no later than the first sitting week in December 2022.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (3.20): I rise to speak to Dr Paterson's very important motion and thank her for bringing this matter to the Assembly for debate.

Australia has led the world when it comes to tackling tobacco smoking and the harms it causes. We have taken on big tobacco before, and we have won. Plain packaging for cigarettes, for example, was extremely controversial. I acknowledge the commitment

of the then Labor government to this historic reform, particularly the efforts of Nicola Roxon as the health minister who introduced the legislation and then as Attorney-General as the legal fight escalated internationally.

Within Australia, the ACT is a leader in tackling tobacco smoking and reducing the impact that it has on the health and wellbeing of our community. We have taken big strides, at both a national and territory level, to reduce the rate of people smoking in the community and the number of people who take up smoking in the first place.

Currently, around 8.2 per cent of adults living in the ACT are daily smokers and 0.6 per cent of secondary school students. To put this into context, in 1998, 22.5 per cent of Canberrans over the age of 14 were daily smokers. In a little more than 20 years, the ACT has seen a reduction from more than one in five adults smoking to fewer than one in 10.

However, our efforts to reduce the terrible lifelong health burden caused by tobacco are being threatened by e-cigarettes and vaping. Unfortunately, young people are attracted to these products. Make no mistake, Mr Assistant Speaker, this is by design. E-cigarette sellers have recycled the tactics that were used to market tobacco to children in the 1950s, including celebrity endorsements, attractive promoters, sweet flavours and cartoons. For adults, there is encouragement to switch rather than quit.

Vaping devices are designed to look cool and attractive, incorporating edgy artwork. Vape liquid labels often include cartoons, bright colours and child-oriented confectionary names like gummy bears, sour worms and jelly beans. Sellers describe their products using words that are strongly linked to food and pleasure such as juicy, sweet, fizzy, tangy, frosty, yummy, luscious and treats.

Concerningly, it appears to be working, with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reporting that in 2019 one in five Australian non-smokers aged 18 to 24 had tried e-cigarettes, mostly out of curiosity. In addition we know that in the United States almost 20 per cent of high school students and nearly five per cent of middle school students are using e-cigarettes. This rate of use is occurring in a relatively unregulated environment and we do not want to see those figures here.

We are increasingly hearing reports, as Dr Paterson has talked about, of increasing adolescent use of e-cigarettes in the ACT, and this is indeed hugely concerning. We do not know how many ACT adolescents are vaping because the last data was collected in 2017 and the Australian secondary school student alcohol and drug survey has had to postpone its next data collection to 2022 due to COVID-19. But this has not stopped our work to reduce daily smoking rates and the number of people who start smoking.

A key priority in our plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the ACT community, the healthy Canberra plan, is to reduce the damage from tobacco. To achieve this, the plan identified a key aim: having fewer children and young people using smoking products, including e-cigarettes. There is strong and consistent evidence that non-smokers who use e-cigarettes are more likely to go on to smoke combustible tobacco than non-smokers who do not use e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes are a gateway to smoking.

In addition it is already clear that vaping irritates the respiratory tract, is likely to have long-term systemic effects on the cardiovascular system and may lead to cancers of the respiratory tract. It will be many years before we truly know the full health effects of e-cigarettes.

What are e-cigarettes? The commonwealth Department of Health describes them this way:

E-cigarettes are devices that deliver an aerosol by heating a solution that users breath in. The aerosol is commonly referred to as 'vapour'. Using an e-cigarette is commonly referred to as 'vaping'.

E-cigarettes are battery operated and may look like cigarettes, cigars, pipes, pens or memory sticks.

The liquids used in e-cigarettes:

- may contain a range of toxic chemicals including those that add flavour
- sometimes contain nicotine even if they are labelled as being 'nicotine free'.

We know that nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the developing brain, impact learning, memory and attention, and increase the risk for future addiction to other drugs. Vaping can also potentially expose both the vaper and bystanders to other harmful substances. These include heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deeply into the lungs.

ACT Health has developed a fact sheet on the health impacts of e-cigarettes for children, young people and adults. Information like this is a critical part of making sure Canberrans know the risks. However, in the face of the industry's underhanded tactics, we know that without effective controls on advertising and marketing, health messaging can only achieve so much. To help achieve our goals, we continue to invest in grants and programs to address nicotine and smoking-related harms through our health promotion grants and partnerships with community organisations.

The ACT government recognises that the regulation of e-cigarettes is complex. Responsibility is spread across ACT tobacco legislation and medicines and poisons legislation, as well as commonwealth legislation. In 2016 my predecessor, Meegan Fitzharris MLA, introduced the Smoke-Free Legislation Amendment Act 2016 to this Assembly to protect the health of the public from the potential harms associated with personal vaporisers. This act made the ACT the first jurisdiction to regulate e-cigarettes.

As a result, under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1927, the ACT treats e-cigarettes in the same way as tobacco products and applies the same offences for non-compliance. Regulatory measures also apply to all e-cigarettes, regardless of whether they contain nicotine. But this does not stretch to commonwealth legislation. For example, online marketing approaches used by e-cigarette companies would be prohibited under the commonwealth's Tobacco Advertising Prohibition Act 1992 or the Tobacco Plain Packaging Act if these were considered tobacco products.

Another example, although one that is soon to be rectified, is that liquid nicotine is classed as a schedule 7 poison and is regulated under the ACT's Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008, which makes it illegal to supply nicotine e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine without a prescription from an Australian medical practitioner, but currently commonwealth law is less strict.

From 1 October this year, however, changes to the commonwealth poisons standard will take effect, aligning the commonwealth instrument with our law. This means Australians will no longer be able to buy or import nicotine e-cigarettes or nicotine vaping products from overseas websites without a valid doctor's prescription, reinforcing the need to have a doctor's prescription before purchasing nicotine e-cigarettes from any source.

From 1 October 2021, child resistant closures for nicotine vaping products will also become mandatory to reduce the risk to children of accidental ingestion. Dr Paterson has spoken about how terrible the outcomes of that can be. These changes are welcome and will provide some additional protections to young people by reducing their access to nicotine e-cigarettes. However, we know that there are currently significant imports of these products occurring and it is unclear how effectively border measures will control the illegal supply of these products into Australia.

I consider that it is critical to protect Australia's tobacco control achievements as well as to protect children and young people from initiation to tobacco and e-cigarettes. As Dr Paterson notes, in November 2020 the ACT government made a submission to the Select Committee on Tobacco Harm Reduction, calling on the commonwealth to introduce improved protections for children, including effective internet safeguards, a national regulatory approach to flavoured nicotine vaping products, e-cigarette packaging, health warnings and childproof packaging for nicotine liquid and nicotine salts. We advocated for the commonwealth to regulate non-nicotine e-cigarettes to further protect children and young people.

The commonwealth changes that come into effect on 1 October will go part-way to addressing our request for health warnings and childproof packaging for nicotine liquid and nicotine salts. However, these requirements will only apply to products supplied in Australia and not to e-cigarettes imported from overseas suppliers using the personal importation scheme. This means that ACT children may still be at risk of poisoning from products legally imported under this scheme. The changes will also not place any controls on e-cigarette products that do not contain nicotine, even though purchasers of non-nicotine products may add nicotine to them.

It is likely to be several years before we know whether commonwealth amendments to tobacco advertising and packaging legislation will address the current issues with internet supplies, flavours, packaging and non-nicotine e-cigarettes. That is why this motion and the ACT government's work, in partnership with the commonwealth and other jurisdictions, is so important. It is also why I recently wrote to the commonwealth minister for health, seeking that health ministers get a report back on the analysis of the harms of e-cigarettes that we requested in 2019. That work has been disrupted by COVID, but it is absolutely critical that it continue apace.

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (3.30): I thank Dr Paterson for this debate today. It goes very much to the heart of something that maybe my generation and older do not understand if we are not smokers, because we have not necessarily had a lot of access to these devices. We have certainly seen them used in the community, but that does not necessarily mean that we are okay with all the details of what the companies that are pushing these things are trying to achieve.

Going back to the prevalence of smoking in Australia, especially amongst young people, we know it has, thankfully, declined in recent decades. Between 1991 and 2019, the percentage of people in Australia that were daily smokers declined from 24 per cent to 11 per cent. The reduction of smoking by young people has also fallen significantly. In 2001, 15.4 per cent of 14- to 17-year-olds in Australia smoked; in 2019, that number had fallen to 3.2 per cent, a reduction of almost 80 per cent.

In the ACT, efforts to counter the uptake of tobacco smoking amongst young people have been successful. Between 2007 and 2019, the percentage of people in the ACT aged 18 to 24 who smoked declined from 21.1 per cent to 9.9 per cent.

Despite these successes, there is a real risk that uptake of vaping, particularly amongst young people who have never smoked, could lead to a generation of people who face currently unknown specific health consequences of extended vaping. Concerningly, there is a trend towards young people taking up vaping—even those who have never smoked, as I mentioned.

In the *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019* report, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare said:

Young adults were most likely to be attracted to these products—nearly two-thirds of current smokers and 1 in 5 non-smokers aged 18–24 reported having tried e-cigarettes ... Frequency of use also rose among smokers between 2016 and 2019—daily use rose from 1.5% to 3.2%, and at least monthly use increased from 3.4% to 7.8% ...

That report warned that between 2016 and 2019, the percentage of the Australian population that had never smoked but had nonetheless tried vaping rose from 4.6 to 6.9 per cent of the Australian population.

While vaping is often represented as an alternative to smoking that can assist smokers to quit, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare also warned:

Although more than two-thirds (69%) of electronic cigarette users were smokers when they first tried an e-cigarette, nearly 1 in 4 considered themselves to be a ‘never smoker’ at the time ... Younger users were far more likely to report being a never smoker than older users—39% of 18–24 year olds compared with less than 10% of people aged 40 and over ...

Let me emphasise that: one in four people aged between 18 and 24 who vaped regularly were never cigarette smokers.

Concerningly, the health risks of vaping are presently unknown. A 2020 study by Curtin University and the Telethon Kids Institute, commissioned by the Australian Lung Foundation, tested 52 vaping liquids sold over the counter in Australia. That study found that 100 per cent of e-liquids had between one and 18 chemicals which have unknown effects on respiratory health; none of the brands had a complete, accurate ingredient list, which would be noncompliant with European Union labelling regulations; 21 per cent of e-liquids contained nicotine or nicotyrine, despite it being illegal to sell e-liquids containing nicotine in all Australian states and territories; and 62 per cent of new e-liquids and 65 per cent of vaped e-liquids contained chemicals likely to be toxic if vaped repeatedly.

The Morrison government, via the Therapeutic Goods Administration, has taken substantial steps to restrict access to vaping fluids that contain nicotine by closing gaps in the current regulatory regime in Australia. Currently, while the sale of vaping fluid that contains nicotine is illegal in all states and territories, the importation of vaping fluid containing nicotine is not prohibited. From 1 October 2021, the importation of nicotine e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine for vaping will require a valid prescription. It is important to note that this change will not prevent access to vaping fluid to persons who have a prescription from their doctor.

The Canberra Liberals do not oppose the motion, but note the efforts that are already underway to reduce the risks from vaping. Many of those efforts are squarely the responsibility of the commonwealth and are currently being progressed via the Therapeutic Goods Administration and other agencies, such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, in relation to the marketing and safety of e-cigarettes.

We will support the motion and we look forward to the reporting back to the Assembly of the findings of the investigations.

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (3.35): The ACT Greens will be supporting Dr Paterson's motion calling on the ACT government to educate and advocate for the prevention of the use of e-cigarettes or vapes. In recent weeks, there has been increased and important attention to the uptake of vaping by people who otherwise would not be likely to start smoking, including younger people. I appreciate Dr Paterson bringing that important conversation to the Assembly in this well-considered motion.

Australia has a strong track record in leading the way on legislative and taxation reform that has driven down the rate of smoking. This approach has included our ban on the importation of liquid nicotine. As the motion rightly points out, it should be extended to include plain packaging for vaping paraphernalia, banning advertisements for said products, and requiring child-safe packing.

Vaping is considered by some, including some experts, to be a potential method of harm reduction when used as a smoking cessation or replacement product. Indeed, the invention of e-cigarettes in the early 2000s was motivated by an interest in providing a safer alternative to smoking. For those who are already smokers, that may indeed be the case, and seeking opportunities to move smokers off extremely harmful tobacco

should be encouraged. However, the reality is that e-cigarettes are far more problematic for our health than the issues they allegedly seek to solve.

As an appealing tasting and smelling product that does not have the same stigmas and social taboos as smoking, vaping is used as a tool by tobacco companies to encourage and initiate nicotine addiction, which will most likely lead to smoking and therefore a long-term reliance on their products.

Statistics collected by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare evidenced the growing trend of vape uptake amongst people over 18, with a doubling of usage between 2016 and 2019. With a smoking rate so low, and a policy landscape that has already been so successful in reducing smoking rates, we have everything to lose in allowing vaping to be a pathway to the initiation of smoking.

The focus of this public debate, reflected in Dr Paterson's motion, is the fear that young people are particularly at risk due to both peer pressures and the savvy social media presence of companies such as Juul, who have been criticised and litigated in the United States for their role in promoting nicotine addiction in younger people.

In this debate, we should be careful not to directly equate younger people with poor decision-making merely due to peer pressure, nor assume that young people are at fault for the sophisticated marketing that they have been subjected to. Indeed, millennials and gen Z people have been driving down the trend of underage drinking and drug use for which previous generations have been notorious. This proves that young people respond well to targeted and appropriate public health messaging and are leaders of important social and cultural change.

Today's young people are also much less likely than previous generations to take up smoking. This is precisely why tobacco companies consider them to be a new marketing opportunity and challenge. The fact that young people have been able to be targeted by nicotine companies evidences a gap in the policy and legislative regime that is our responsibility to fix. That is why the ACT Greens are pleased to support Dr Paterson's motion.

Before I end, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a largely unspoken issue. The ACT has one of the lowest smoking rates in the country, with our daily smoker rates stubbornly sitting at about eight per cent. This claim to the lowest rate in the country is largely due to the socioeconomic status of our population. We know that, unfortunately, smoking correlates with other measurements of marginalisation, such as poverty, sexuality, drug use and intergenerational trauma. We know that people who enter the criminal justice system are more likely to be smokers and that those who do not smoke are more likely to pick up smoking within prison.

This is an intergenerational issue too, with people whose parents smoked while they were growing up much more likely to smoke as well.

Alongside doing great work to prevent the uptake of smoking through this motion, I would like to take the opportunity to encourage the ACT government to commit to implementing an effective smoking cessation strategy that targets marginalised groups.

In ATODA's budget submission, they rightly pointed out that while the government has committed to further developing approaches to reducing smoking rates among high-risk population groups, it remains unclear how they will go about implementing this commitment.

While I am aware that smoking cessation work is partly done through the healthy Canberra grants program, to be successful in supporting these smokers we need an overarching and strategic approach to cessation among the stubborn eight per cent, especially given the particular and nuanced needs within these communities.

I look forward to continuing to participate in this discussion as the ACT Greens spokesperson for health, young people and drug harm reduction. I once again thank Dr Paterson for her motion, which the ACT Greens proudly support.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.40), in reply: I thank Minister Stephen-Smith, Mrs Jones and Mr Davis for their input into the debate. I am very glad that this motion has received tripartisan support. It is testament to the fact that this is a really important issue and we do not want to be going backwards on it.

I agree with the point made by Mrs Jones and Mr Davis that unless you are vaping as an adult, the ins and outs of these devices can be quite foreign to you. However, that is exactly what this industry targets at children, in advertising on social media platforms that is particularly pitched to children and has a lot of content from overseas.

Thank you very much for supporting this motion today.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Government—e-invoicing

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (3.42): I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes the potential economic benefits of the use of e-invoicing by the ACT government for the ACT's economy, including the:
 - (a) reduction in processing costs for businesses and not-for-profit organisations that provide goods and services to the ACT government;
 - (b) reduction in payment times, which will speed up cash flow;
 - (c) reliability and security of the system, reducing fraud and errors; and
 - (d) automation of record keeping and information management, enabling organisations to more easily meet their regulatory obligations; and
- (2) calls on the ACT government to implement e-invoicing in all ACT government directorates and agencies by 1 July 2022, in line with the Australian government's policy.

Today I am calling on the Labor-Greens government to implement e-invoicing across the ACT public service by 1 July 2022. E-invoicing is the digital exchange of invoices

between a buyer's and supplier's accounting systems. It enables shortened payment and processing times, fewer manual errors and it is more secure than a paper-based system.

E-invoicing is an innovative game changer that could reduce the cost of doing business by up to \$20 per invoice, according to Deloitte Access Economics. In Australia, with an estimated 1.2 billion invoices exchanged annually and almost 90 per cent of small and medium businesses still processing paper or PDF invoices, there are big productivity gains to be made. Yet, when asked about when the ACT government would implement e-invoicing, the answer from the minister was that he is not sure. That is not good enough. The Labor-Greens government should provide certainty on this and commit to a 1 July 2022 implementation.

Another compelling reason for this is that e-invoicing should form part of Canberra's COVID-19 economic recovery. At a time when small businesses are struggling and government has an opportunity to put in place the digital infrastructure that could help drive our recovery, their response was to run the abortive, failed ChooseCBR scheme. Imagine how that \$2 million could have assisted with the preparation and scoping work needed to get e-invoicing up and running as soon as possible—something that would have supported many more businesses in Canberra than just a handful.

Another key reason to target 1 July 2022 as an implementation date is that the commonwealth government has mandated this date for all of its departments. No doubt there are many businesses and organisations in the not-for-profit sector in Canberra that provide goods and services to both the commonwealth government and the ACT government. It would be very efficient for them to be able to use a single digital productivity enhancing system for invoicing.

Why aren't we taking advantage of our location and leveraging the benefits being introduced by the commonwealth government? We have all of the know-how and resources at our fingertips to make this a reality.

Another really important reason to get this done is that the implementation of a system like e-invoicing is simply good governance. All suppliers to government should be paid on time, and it is a fact that not all of them are, going back several years. Mr Deputy Speaker, I will say that again: this Labor-Greens government, which claims to prioritise fair working conditions, is not paying all of its suppliers on time. That is a statement made in an answer to a question on notice that I have received.

Businesses rely on cash flow, so the knock-on effect of this for business owners and staff is real. Implementing e-invoicing as soon as possible would be an important step forward, ensuring all suppliers to the ACT government are paid on time. This is something small business advocates have been saying is needed for a long time now. Indeed, the Council of Small Business Associations Australia has been advocating for the adoption of e-invoicing for many years and has played an integral role in the commonwealth government's work in this area.

Of course, this Labor-Greens government has a track record of complacency and incompetence when it comes to creating a business-friendly environment in our city.

Instead of taking sensible action to provide benefits for all businesses, they prefer failed schemes like ChooseCBR. In April, they rejected my colleague Ms Castley's motion calling for a ministerial advisory council for small business. That voice to government would no doubt be calling for common-sense measures like e-invoicing—again, a missed opportunity by this government.

Canberra businesses are facing a skills shortage, but young people moving to Canberra to work cannot afford to rent or buy a house here. The Labor-Greens government locked small business out of its energy abatement schemes, adds red tape through union-backed systems like the Secure Local Jobs Code, and could not or would not tell me how often they extend their panels rather than allow new applicants to tender.

Time and again I hear from businesses, organisations and constituents that this government has opportunities to deliver cutting-edge digital systems, and it just sits on its hands—a sign of indolence and complacency.

E-invoicing is just one part of the bigger picture of measures that should be put in place for our business community, as well as for the not-for-profit sector and the Canberra economy at large. We should be using this digital innovation as one of our COVID recovery measures and we must absolutely ensure that suppliers for the ACT government are paid on time.

In closing, I implore this Labor-Greens government to provide certainty right now by aligning its time frame for the implementation of e-invoicing with the commonwealth government's 1 July 2022 target.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (3.48): I welcome the opportunity to discuss how our government is continuing to support small businesses and local jobs in Canberra. Mr Cain's motion makes reference to the importance of assistance to business, and we absolutely agree, which is why our government has a range of programs and initiatives in place to support local businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises.

As we know, it has been a difficult year for business in Canberra and across the country. To this end, our government has stepped up with a range of assistance measures. We have applied rates relief for commercial properties, we have made rent reduction support available for tenants of commercial properties directly impacted by COVID-19, we have provided payroll tax waivers and exemptions for businesses that have been unable to trade due to health restrictions, and we have waived food business registration, outdoor dining and liquor licensing fees, and we will continue to waive these until 31 March 2022.

Access Canberra's business liaison line has played a critical role in providing timely advice and guidance to businesses about the current public health directions in place. The service works closely with the Chief Health Officer to provide updates on travel requirements, COVID testing and the rollout of vaccines.

To ensure all of this assistance is as accessible as possible, the ACT government has proactively reached out to business and, as of 15 July, Access Canberra had undertaken 8,700 site visits and sent over 200,000 direct emails to businesses to assist them in complying with public health directions. Our government is and has been standing beside Canberra businesses and supporting them through this very challenging period during the pandemic.

As part of the ACT government's support for businesses during COVID-19, we also announced that the standard payment time frame for suppliers to government would be reduced from 28 days to 14 days. Of course, where a supplier reaches an agreement that payments be made more frequently, payments are made in accordance with that agreement.

In addition to halving the processing times for a significant number of businesses, we have also seen steady progress on the percentage of invoices paid within standard time frames. Of course, the vast majority of the ACT's invoice payment process is already automated. Not only are businesses getting paid faster, but an even larger number of businesses are receiving those payments within the government's improved time frames. To be precise, 94 per cent of ACT government invoices are currently paid within 14 days.

It is also important to point out a number of key pieces of information which are not reflected in Mr Cain's original motion. When it comes to the development of e-invoicing, we should acknowledge that a significant body of work has been undertaken at the commonwealth level by the Australian Taxation Office. The ATO has been consulting with state, territory and federal government departments to develop a statement of requirements for e-invoicing implementation. This is a process that the ACT government has actively engaged in. As the commonwealth begins to implement an e-invoicing process across their agencies, there will no doubt be lessons to be learned through that process which will be applicable and beneficial to the ACT when we come to look at e-invoicing. With this in mind, I will be moving an amendment to Mr Cain's motion to reflect this commonwealth-led piece of work on e-invoicing.

While the ACT supports this e-invoicing initiative and continues to work with the commonwealth on it, it is prudent for us to monitor the implementation at the commonwealth level, which is yet to be finalised. There may be risks within that implementation; there are with any major IT implementation process. Apart from providing the certainty that Mr Cain is after, we are keen to reduce the risk as much as possible by seeing how it is implemented at the commonwealth level before we undertake it here in the ACT.

The ACT government is very supportive of reducing the processing costs and payment times for businesses, which is why we have already halved the standard payment times for invoices. We also support a reliable and automated system, which is already in place for much of the processing chain for invoices. There may be more work to do here, but we recognise the importance of working together with the commonwealth and the ATO to get this right. I move the following amendment:

Omit paragraph (2), substitute:

“(2) further notes that:

- (a) the vast majority of the ACT’s invoice payment process is currently automated;
 - (b) the Australian Tax Office (ATO) is leading a significant body of work to develop, consult, and finalise an e-invoicing framework in consultation with State, Territory, and Federal government departments;
 - (c) the ACT supports this e-invoicing initiative and is working with the Commonwealth Government to ensure national consistency for the planning and implementation of e-invoicing;
 - (d) the ACT will continue to monitor the implementation of e-invoicing at the Commonwealth level, which has yet to be finalised;
 - (e) the ACT Government reduced the standard payment terms from 28 days to 14 days for suppliers in 2020; and (f) 94 per cent of invoices are paid within 14 days; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to continue engaging with the Commonwealth Government as they implement e-invoicing across their agencies and consider any lessons learned through the implementation process ahead of introducing e-invoicing in the ACT.”.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (3.52): I rise on behalf of the Greens to make some comments and respond to Mr Cain’s motion today concerning the economic benefits of e-invoicing by the ACT government. We will be supporting the amendment moved by Minister Steel this afternoon, as I think it both reflects the intent of Mr Cain’s motion and adds some additional information. It also reflects the work that is being undertaken regarding the rollout of e-invoicing in line with the national approach to this issue. We welcome the opportunity to talk about this and thank Mr Cain for bringing forward the motion.

As the amendment makes clear, the government has made some very useful progress in automating its invoicing and it has made some real inroads in reducing payment times. I was particularly pleased to see in Minister Steel’s amendment that he notes that the vast majority of the ACT’s invoice payment process is currently automated, that the ACT government reduced the standard payment times from 28 days to 14 days for suppliers in 2020, and that 94 per cent of invoices are paid within 14 days.

These are really important measures for small business. Cash flow is important, and not having to spend time chasing up people who have not paid their accounts makes a material difference. These are positive steps that have already been taken, but, as Mr Steel noted in his remarks, the government is now working, as part of the commonwealth process, to move to a more comprehensive e-invoicing system.

With my portfolio responsibility as Minister for Consumer Affairs, I am certainly conscious that simpler, faster and more transparent systems are beneficial for both consumers and suppliers. I certainly think that these are important initiatives and ones that are worth pursuing.

Certainly, the Greens are very happy to see the end of paper invoices as much as possible. It cuts waste. It not only makes life simpler and easier for people, but also, if we can cut out a bit of excessive sending around of documents and the like, this can only be a positive.

Certainly, e-invoicing reduces compliance and administration costs, particularly for small businesses, and I think that is a benefit for the whole community. I note and welcome the fact that Mr Cain referred in his motion to not-for-profit organisations or community organisations. They either have a lot of volunteer involvement or they want to spend their resources on the important community services that they are providing. Again, any improvement in efficiency and reduction in administration costs is very positive for those organisations.

I acknowledge the work that has already been undertaken by the ACT government to have more rapid payment administration systems and the work that is highlighted in Minister Steel's amendment about the ACT government's involvement in the ongoing commonwealth processes. I conclude by saying that we will be supporting the amendment moved by Minister Steel.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (3.56): In closing, I will speak against the amendment and in support of my motion. I appreciate that we seem to be on the same page here, as to the merits of e-invoicing. As members would be aware, most software packages actually support e-invoicing, and are waiting for suppliers and buyers to tick some boxes and make some commitments.

I am disappointed. I disagree that there is support for the intent of this motion, because the whole purpose of the motion is to ask the government to make a commitment to a time frame. That is not an unusual thing to request of a government that is reviewing any process and finding that there is value in change. But it is not saying when it will happen. This is really disappointing. The business community in the ACT, particularly the small and not-for-profit section, need a little bit more encouragement from the government that there will be something happening by a certain time.

I speak in support of my motion that the government should commit to a time to implement e-invoicing—something which it seems we are all agreed is a highly valuable change to make. Apparently, it is not important enough to commit to a time frame.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 7

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.58): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 7, dated 27 July 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 7 contains the committee’s comments on six bills, five pieces of subordinate legislation and two government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting.

I do not normally do this with scrutiny reports, but I would like to thank the other members of the committee, Dr Paterson and Ms Clay. I also thank the committee staff, Julia Agostino, who is the secretary; Daniel Stewart, who is our legal adviser on bills; and Stephen Argument, who is the legal adviser on subordinate legislation. I certainly thank them for their insights and their enthusiasm. It is nice to welcome back Anne Shannon as the assistant secretary, and I take this opportunity to thank Sophie Milne, who has been standing in whilst Anne has been away.

I also take this opportunity—unusually, probably—to thank the government. I think that, by and large, the engagement from ministers, their staff and staff across directorates is very cooperative and collegiate. They respond to scrutiny’s requests for further information. It is a matter sometimes of a quick turnaround. By and large, I would like to acknowledge that they do make those efforts and respond fulsomely to the scrutiny committee’s reports and requests for further information. I thank them, and I commend the report to the Assembly.

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee Report 2

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (4.00): I present the following report:

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee—Report 2—Draft Reserve Management Plan: Canberra Nature Park, dated 20 July 2021, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

I rise today to table the report of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services on the draft reserve management plan for Canberra Nature Park. As the report notes, Canberra Nature Park is made up of 39 nature reserves, totalling approximately 11,400 hectares in and around urban Canberra. The committee took the view that this was really important—that the Canberra Nature Park is absolutely integral to the ecological sustainability, the character and the amenity of Canberra as a whole. In fact there are very few parts of Canberra that are not within striking distance of the Canberra Nature Park, and all of Canberra is improved in that way.

When the National Capital Plan talks about Canberra’s landscape setting and layout within the territory, and having given it a garden city image of national and international significance, it is impossible to envisage this without taking the Canberra Nature Park into account.

In the process of inquiring into the draft plan, we learned a number of important things. We discovered there are increasing risks to the ecological integrity of the Canberra Nature Park from high levels of use, expanding residential development and climate change. There appears to be a shortfall in resourcing for the Canberra Nature Park, and that constrains compliance, education and conservation activity by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, who hold responsibility for managing the Canberra Nature Park. There is a need for more holistic management of the Canberra Nature Park, including a greater focus on connectivity between the reserves in order to achieve the best possible conservation outcomes for flora and fauna.

We also learned that in schedule 3, “Management objectives for public land”, the Planning and Development Act provides that objectives for our nature reserves are to conserve the natural environment and to provide for public use of the area for recreation, education and research. Where there is an inconsistency between those, the objective of conserving the natural environment should take precedence. This means that conserving the natural environment is, without question, the overriding objective for managing the Canberra Nature Park.

Many submitters noted in this iteration of the plan that the superior status of the natural environment appears to have given way to other things—recreational use in particular—in ways that were not contemplated by the act. We need to keep in mind that that is a really dangerous thing for future generations, for wildlife and for our nature. For this reason, we recommend that the plan be amended to set out clear, concise and measurable propositions throughout; that it provide clear articulations across its goals and actions; and that it include reserve plans comprising measurable actions and goals in the body of the plan.

Taking into account the size and importance of the Canberra Nature Park and the number of goals and actions set out in the draft, we recommend that staffing and other resource requirements be included in the plan and in budget papers. We do not want to see high aspirations undermined by a lack of resources.

In conducting this inquiry, we found that comments made in the consultation process had not always been reflected accurately and sufficiently in the draft plan. We recommend that future management plans accurately reflect the matters brought forward in consultation.

We were also concerned about the pressure on the Canberra Nature Park brought about by high use, residential development and, in particular, by climate change. Taking this into account, we recommend that the ACT Parks and Conservation Service continually monitor the Canberra Nature Park reserve management plan and ensure that it is responsive to the fire and pandemic events which have recently had such a significant effect.

The Canberra Nature Park is an incredibly important and unique asset which should not in any way be taken for granted. We as a committee consider that the draft plan we considered could be improved upon as a guide for and a test of the management of the Canberra Nature Park. We look forward to the minister's response to the recommendations we have made in this report.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MS BURCH (Brindabella) (4.05): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure.

On Wednesday, 2 June this year, the Assembly considered a motion relating to a matter that was also the subject of an inquiry before an Assembly committee. The Assembly referred the conventions and practices around the interaction between the Assembly and the operations of Assembly committees to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure to consider whether standing orders needed to be amended.

At its meetings on 21 June and 15 July this year, the committee considered the issues surrounding the discussion of matters in the Assembly that were being considered by committees. There was some concern that the prohibition on discussing "committee matters" in the Assembly could constrain debate and, conversely, Assembly debate could impact the work of a committee.

Members will recall that in the Ninth Assembly this issue was canvassed in report 13 of this committee in July 2019. That report concluded:

... there is nothing to prevent Members from discussing matters that are the subject of a committee inquiry in the Assembly. The Assembly is free to discuss any matter it chooses (subject to the standing orders and continuing resolutions ...

If a member wishes to lodge a notice of motion or a bill that closely relates to a subject matter that is currently under inquiry by an Assembly committee, the Assembly is free to debate the matter if it so chooses. However, if the Assembly does debate such a matter, such debate should not pre-empt the findings or possible recommendations of a committee nor reveal private deliberations of the committee or evidence given in-camera.

Ultimately it will be the Assembly that determines whether it is the Assembly or an Assembly committee where a matter should be progressed.

The committee in this Assembly remains of the same view. I hope that provides guidance for us for the rest of this term.

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

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (4.07): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services.

I rise today to advise the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services is currently seeking further information on notice that will, if received, allow it to complete its inquiry into Giralang shops.

Senior Practitioner Amendment Bill 2021

Debate resumed from 24 June 2021, on motion by **Ms Davidson**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (4.08): I note the shortness of this bill and advise that the Canberra Liberals support the amendments it makes. However, I note that the implications of COVID-19 may have had some impacts, including a reduced ability to monitor and document issues by both the Senior Practitioner and service providers, a possible increase in restrictive practices due to administrative and staffing pressures, and a reduced likelihood of new or unidentified restrictive practices being reported.

The government promised to provide to the Assembly before the end of February 2022 a summary interim report covering the work undertaken so far. Regardless of the ambiguity over timing in this statement, it is unfortunate that reporting on statistics of events during an extensive COVID-affected period will not be made available for another eight months. The lack of comprehensive reports may mean vital remedial action is not taken in a timely manner or that critical funding is deferred.

Consultations with the consumer advisory sector in the ACT reveal a high level of concern about the aim to defer reporting, as several recent major inquiries have revealed significant shortcomings in relation to services provided to residents of care and aged persons facilities. We need to know whether care standards have slipped. There is a need to ensure continued fairness for those with disability.

The likely passage of the Carers Recognition Bill will enhance interest by carers in their rights. Recognition is needed to address under-resourcing. It is also important that stronger consideration be given to the right to protection and safety for both the person with the disability and others involved with care and further services. Delays in identifying systemic issues should not be overlooked. The responsibility for reporting falls mainly on public servants and institutions. All continue to operate during the ongoing COVID situation in the ACT.

I am fearful that the extra time to be provided for reporting will give the government more opportunities to broaden the scope and definition of restrictive practices on vulnerable people, at the expense of failing to remedy existing poor practices. Nonetheless, I confirm that the Canberra Liberals will support this bill.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (4.11): I thank everybody who has contributed to the debate on the Senior Practitioner Amendment Bill. The Senior Practitioner Act 2018 focuses on the protection of human rights through the regulatory oversight of the use of restrictive practices. The act is in its infancy, and it has required practices to be embedded and reporting infrastructure built around it to ensure proper implementation and data collection.

In my portfolios, I have seen the commitment of public schools to reducing and eliminating restrictive practices in the ACT. The Education Directorate continues to work alongside the Office of the Senior Practitioner on the application of the Senior Practitioner Act in educational settings.

This amendment extends the time frame for the review of the Senior Practitioner Act. This extension will allow for more data to be collected and enable the further time required to allow practice changes to be embedded. This amendment will also allow government to continue to consult with workers across all settings where the act applies, including unions like the CPSU, the UWU and the AEU. These workers are experts in what they do, and it is important that the government understands their perspectives on the implementation of the act and any potential changes.

Knowing more about how the act is working will lead to better policy development and a stronger approach to reducing and eliminating restrictive practices in the ACT. I thank Minister Davidson for her continued commitment to ensuring that the rights of people who are subject to restrictive practices are protected, and I look forward to the review of the act in 2023. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (4.13): In 2018, following extensive consultation, and with overwhelming support from community members, I introduced the Senior Practitioner Act with the paramount purpose of protecting people's human rights. A restrictive practice is defined by the act as a practice that is used to restrict the rights or freedom of movement of a person for the primary purpose of protecting that person or others from harm.

As we know, restrictive practices are most likely to be used on the most vulnerable members of our community—children and young people, people with disability and older people. The reduction and elimination of restrictive practices is incredibly important, and the Senior Practitioner has played, and will continue to play, a significant role in regulatory oversight.

This amendment is minor but important. Extending the time frame to review the operation of the act will allow for a quality and thorough review to take place within the intent. Since the act's introduction in 2018, we have seen a direct impact in the ACT community through better education and awareness of restrictive practices. ACT

government agencies and community services providers have gained insight into the use of restrictive practices, and that insight will be essential throughout the review process as the Office of the Senior Practitioner continues to mature.

I was keen to speak today particularly to acknowledge the contribution of the inaugural Senior Practitioner, Mandy Donley. Mandy recently returned to Victoria but has left an indelible mark on the ACT. Mandy's practical approach has supported all sectors covered by the act—the most comprehensive restrictive practices oversight regime in the country—to understand their legal obligations and, more importantly, how they can better support the people they work with.

The impact of COVID-19 has been profound and evident across the ACT community. We have heard this from the community services sector with implications for service delivery, increased demand and resourcing. By extending the time frame for the review, a comprehensive process can take place in line with the intent of the act across all sectors covered.

I thank Minister Davidson and the officials who have worked on this bill for their commitment to the human rights of people who are subject to restrictive practices. I assure Mr Milligan that there is no ill-intent here and that he need not worry about the ACT government's commitment to the rights of the most vulnerable people in our community. I am pleased to support this bill today and look forward to the review in 2023.

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health) (4.15), in reply: Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the debate on the Senior Practitioner Amendment Bill 2021. This bill confirms the ACT government's strong commitment to promoting human rights and regulating, reducing and eliminating restrictive practices by ensuring that the Senior Practitioner Act is reviewed in an effective and robust manner.

The Senior Practitioner Act 2018 commenced on 1 September 2018. The act created the new role of Senior Practitioner, as well as providing a formal framework for the reduction and elimination of restrictive practices. The current act requires that a review of its operation be carried out and a report provided to the Assembly as near to 1 September 2021 as practicable. This has not been possible due to a number of factors. The bushfires in 2020 and the COVID-19 public health emergency impacted the availability of resources—financial and personnel—to undertake the review within the intent of the act.

Compounding this, while the act has been in place since September 2018, it is really in its infancy as it has required practices to be embedded and reporting infrastructure built around it to ensure proper implementation and data collection. There has been a significant level of change since the establishment of the act, including the commencement of the criminal offences provisions on 1 July 2020 and the impact of thin market pressures.

The changes also include the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission transitioning the ACT to their regulatory framework for NDIS participants on 1 July 2019, as well as the inclusion of aged-care providers in the register of the NDIS commission from 1 December 2020, bringing those based in the ACT under the ACT Senior Practitioner.

The ACT is the only jurisdiction in Australia to have regulatory oversight of child protection services, disability, education and care under the same legislation. Many of the providers operating within the sectors covered by the act are new to a regulatory approach to the authorisation, reduction and elimination of the use of restrictive practices.

Additionally, the Office of the Senior Practitioner has been utilising manual data collection methods which are time-consuming in both reporting and interpretation of the data. The Senior Practitioner has worked tirelessly over the last 12 months to deliver a data system to digitise data collection. In June 2021 the new restrictive intervention data system platform had a soft launch, meaning providers as prescribed by the act will now move to an online and electronic database to create positive behaviour support plans and report against restrictive practices, whether these be routine or emergency uses.

These factors have resulted in a lack of trend data and a complex context in which to gauge the effectiveness of the act's implementation and the efficacy of the provisions in reducing and eliminating restrictive practices. It is expected, as providers further embed practices within their organisations, to see an increase or a levelling out of the number of plans which include a restrictive practice and the individual instances of use of a restrictive practice before we will see a reduction in their use.

This bill seeks an amendment to section 54 to provide further time to allow the changes to have stabilised and for RIDS to be embedded into practice. I am confident that this amendment will mean a more robust review of the operation of the act will be undertaken, including consideration of the professional expertise required to undertake such a review and, importantly, how the experiences and voices of people subject to restrictive practices will be documented, explored and analysed to tell us about the effectiveness of the act and identify any areas for improvement. This will ultimately provide a more holistic picture of the restrictive practice landscape in the ACT.

As previously committed, I will provide an interim update to the Assembly on the implementation of the act, and I have asked the Community Services Directorate to provide me with an interim update by December 2021.

I again thank the individuals and organisations who were involved in the consultation, development and review of this bill. I also thank the officials who have worked on this bill and the scrutiny of bills committee for its consideration. 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.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Olympic Games 2021—Australian equestrian team

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (4.20): I rise with great joy this afternoon to celebrate the performance of Australia's equestrian eventing team at the Tokyo Olympics. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible performance of the team, bringing themselves up from sixth place after the dressage in the teams event to the silver medal position, and Andrew Hoy, of course—an absolute legend of the sport—winning the individual bronze.

I want to start by acknowledging Stuart Tinney, who was the reserve rider and was out of the team at the very last minute. Stuart, of course, will be known to people as one of the 2000 Olympics gold medallists. If the rules had been the same as they have been in previous Olympics, he would have been the individual medallist as well.

Stuart Tinney is an absolute backbone of the sport here in Australia. He is a real professional. He and his family work incredibly hard to support the sport here. It was sad for him that he missed out on a spot to actually ride, but I have no doubt that he was standing behind the others giving all the advice and support that he could as they rode through to their medal-winning performance.

Kevin McNab, the least well-known of the three riders who did compete, is a Queenslander. His name is Kevin; he is here to help! And help he did with the equestrian team. His horse, Don Quidam, had an outstanding performance, both cross-country and in the show jumping.

Shane Rose, the next rider, rode a horse called Virgil, well-known for overjumping everything. He gave us a couple of heart-stopping moments on the cross-country, but he brought it home clear within the time and then had one rail down in the show jumping. Shane is also one of the absolute backbones of the sport in New South Wales. He is a driving force for Eventing New South Wales and can often be found both organising events and riding five horses in the one day, if not more, if you will let him. He is an incredible force to be reckoned with, Shane Rose. He has had multiple injuries, yet he keeps coming back to compete with different horses at the top level of the sport.

Andrew Hoy, what can you say? Riding Vassily de Lassos, they were the only combination out of more than 60 to finish the whole event on their dressage score, and it is more than a normal event. It is not just dressage, cross-country and show jumping; it is dressage, cross-country, show jumping and show jumping again—and two clear rounds in the show jumping, clear without time penalties cross-country, climbing from seventh at the start of the show jumping day into that bronze medal position, and at 62 years of age, having started his international competition career in 1978!

Andrew is the consummate professional in our sport. I am so fortunate to have been taught by Andrew when he was visiting Australia a couple of years ago. One of the things about this sport is that people work really hard. Equestrian sports are really expensive, but all of these people work their absolute butts off. They ride horses that belong to other people and they make ends meet by teaching and training. They all work incredibly hard.

I acknowledge that this was the first time in Olympics history that the individual gold medal had been won by a female rider. So congratulations to Julia Krajewski, the German rider, riding a relatively unknown horse. One of the great beauties of our sport is that men and women compete on an equal playing field. Obviously, from young to old, people are all competing against each other, and we have seen that on the dais at the Olympic Games. I congratulate Julia for being the first female Olympic individual gold medal winner. It is amazing that it has taken this long, but it is fantastic that it has. Congratulations to our Aussie team and huge congratulations to Andrew Hoy. I would not be surprised if we saw him back again in another four years.

Roads—speed cameras

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.24): I would like to bring to the attention of this place the plight of thousands of motorists who have been served speeding fines emanating from the new cameras in the newly minted 40-kilometre zones around Northbourne Avenue and surrounds close to the CBD.

I think it goes without saying that all three parties in this Assembly are on the same page when it comes to road safety, but very clearly this has been an extremely perverse outcome. Thousands of individuals have been penalised. I think it is pretty clear that for the vast majority of those, there was certainly no intent to break the law. So irrespective of the signage and irrespective of any information campaign, it is clear that that campaign did not work.

“Steve” has written to me this week. That is not his real name. Steve’s work involves driving a lot. He copped a number of fines in the new speed zones but, as is often the case, they took a little while to find him. So recently Steve was informed that he had exceeded the speed limit on 6 July, 8 July, 12 July, 13 July, 14 July, 14 July again and 16 July. So Steve has been fined seven times.

When he wrote to me he said, “Obviously I was unaware of the change to the speed zone. With seven fines, I will likely lose my licence and lose my job. Life has been a

struggle through the COVID year and now this. I do not want to be unemployed, but how will I be able to get a job without a licence?"

My office will be writing to the relevant minister about Steve's specific case. Narelle got just the one fine, but she also wrote to us in despair. Narelle is on a disability support pension. She said, "There's no way that I can find an extra \$300 out of thin air. I currently have \$1.29 to my name and, to make it worse, I'm always an overly cautious, over-the-top safe driver."

We echo the concerns that have been expressed by the NRMA regarding the lack of warning to motorists about these changes. The NRMA position was that there is little point in having a grace period if indeed you do not send written warnings to those who fall foul during that period.

To put this into perspective, Madam Speaker, up until the opening of these cameras in the CBC, the most lucrative camera was northbound on the Monaro Highway at Hume. My understanding is that it raised \$1.2 million in the eight months to May. The new CBD cameras—and granted there are three of them—by all reports, are doing \$1.6 million per week. So the new speed zone cameras are making 44 times as much money per week as the previous heist! That seems to me to be a perverse outcome.

Clubs—Majura Football Club

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong) (4.28): I rise today to acknowledge one of the local community institutions in my local region, the Majura Football Club, and highlight some of the fantastic work they are doing to promote grassroots sports and build a strong community. While many of us have got swept up in the excitement of the Olympics and might be a little tired after staying up late to watch the Matildas, it is important to remember that these elite athletes emerge from our community sports.

The world game, football, or what we used to call soccer, is one of the largest participation sports in Australia, with 1.8 million players in 2019. It is a sport that is growing in reputation, particularly in relation to women's participation, thanks to role models like Sam Kerr, Ellie Carpenter and Michelle Heyman.

Here in the ACT we have a thriving professional and community competition. In 2020 the total participation in football in the ACT was 33,604, despite COVID-19 causing major disruption to the competition during last season.

I acknowledge the work of a previous member of this house, the late Steve Doszpot MLA, who was one of the founding members of ACT football, and the dedicated team at Capital Football who continue to grow the game across the region.

We know that footballers are passionate and loyal, and I particularly share some of the achievements of my local football club, Majura FC. This is a true community club, where the sidelines are full of community catch-up, the parent coaches are passionate—if not still on a learning curve—and the canteen is legendary—the only local football club to boast a variety of vegetarian fare. This is a club that knows its demographic.

Like many football clubs, it has a strong history and legacy. While incorporated as an association in 1981, its roots were founded in two of the earliest junior football clubs in Canberra; the North Canberra Soccer Club and the Downer United Soccer Club. Today this club boasts around 1,300 players across a wide range of ages, from the five-year-olds who play in the MiniRoos and the junior leagues, to adults who are trying the sport for the time at the age of 45 in the senior competitions, and each week you will see the club's white and royal blue strip competing on football fields throughout the territory.

Like most grassroots football clubs, Majura FC is volunteer led. Every week parents and friends of the club contribute in myriad ways, from coaching and managing teams, to setting up fields, to washing uniforms, to running Majura's famous canteen, to operating the barbeque, not to mention managing the day-to-day affairs of a busy community club

I was very touched and excited to be invited to be one of the co-patrons this year. While my co-patron, Grace Mahar of Canberra United, is a legitimate football superstar, I think that I qualify as the other face of football, the soccer mum.

One of the most exciting things that is happening in local soccer, including at Majura FC, is the growth of women's football. Club stalwart, Rhonda Parkin, is one of the leaders that kicked off women's football in the region, and her work was acknowledged in 2018 when she was inducted into the ACT Women's Honour Role. In recent years, a Majura FC Skills Academy for players for the under-10s to under-12s category has commenced and, consistent with its ongoing focus on developing female footballers, almost 80 per cent of the players registered for the Skills Academy in the under-12 category are female.

Over the last weekend I joined co-patron, Grace Mahar, and referee, Delfina Dimoski, to promote a new campaign to stop abuse of referees in the game. Reduce Abuse is a Capital Football campaign aimed at uniting the game and everyone that is involved in it. In the past five years there have been a number of campaigns and initiatives aimed at stamping out disrespectful behaviour to and abuse of referees. This has seen some improvement but, sadly, abuse is still occurring.

This is an important campaign that will ensure that football continues to grow as a positive force and is fun for all players, volunteers, spectators and referees. Football does have the power to unite us, regardless of backgrounds and beliefs. *(Time expired.)*

Woden—indoor sports facilities

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee) (4.33): I rise today to talk about a subject that regulars at Woden Community Council meetings will have heard me speak about frequently over the past decade: the need for multi-use indoor sports courts in the Woden town centre that are accessible and affordable for informal, volunteer-run community sports groups.

Over recent years the options for indoor sports in the Woden Valley have progressively disappeared. Woden's basketball stadium was demolished, Woden CIT closed and school sports halls are not enough to meet the growing demand for indoor courts for hire. Many clubs have had to leave Woden to find a venue, and some have closed when they were unable to find space to play.

A September 2019 report from the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment highlighted the need for suitable indoor facilities increasing in the future as a result of climate change. We certainly saw this in the summer of 2019-2020 when some summer sports clubs looked for indoor spaces to maintain their training and fitness while unable to play outdoors due to the bushfire smoke.

Basketball, netball, futsal, gymnastics, badminton, roller derby, fencing, dance, yoga and many other sports and activities all use similar indoor spaces. As a roller derby skater trying to maintain a happy relationship with a badminton player, two sports in strong competition for the same spaces, I can assure you that the increasing pressure on venues for hire is not conducive to harmonious communities.

What the Woden Community Council want, and what I have advocated for publicly since at least 2014, according to the *Canberra Times*, are indoor sports courts in the Woden town centre that are accessible by public transport, affordable for volunteer-run community sports groups and flexible for use for a diverse range of sports. I look forward to one day seeing a return to a multi-court space shared by basketball, roller derby, fencing and badminton players all at the same time. Having a bit more space to play means that we can focus on competing within our own sports instead of with each other.

I encourage anyone interested in seeing this idea progress further to take a look at the e-petition currently on the Legislative Assembly website and share it with your friends and local sporting groups.

Environment—Bluetts Block

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (4.35): I recently had the pleasure of visiting Bluetts Block in Stromlo. I was delighted to visit with the Canberra Ornithologists Group and Friends of Bluetts Block. They showed me around, they pointed out all of the birds I would have missed, and they were even kind enough to lend me some binoculars. We saw lots of other locals enjoying the area on bushwalks and it certainly seems like a well-loved place. We saw more birds than we expected on a cold morning. Almost at once, we were greeted by a scarlet robin, and then a feeding flock of brown, yellow-rumped and buff-rumped thornbills; a grey shrike-thrush; spotted pardalotes; and weebills. Later on, and further up the hill, we saw white-throated treecreepers, two brown falcons and a grey currawong.

Bluetts Block has high conservation values, and it supports high-quality Commonwealth and ACT critically endangered yellow box–Blakely's red gum woodland. Canberra Nature Map notes many rare and uncommon plant species that grow there, including late mauve doubletail, rufous midge orchid, montane leafy greenhood, pink caps, milk maids, medusa bog sedge and many more.

Bluetts Block has many resident birds. It is also sometimes visited by other threatened woodland birds like the vulnerable painted honeyeater and the little eagle, and it is a seasonal home to the scarlet robin. It is a core breeding area for our vulnerable superb parrots, and it features old-growth trees with hollows, which are so important for hollow-nesting species. We lost so many of those during our black summer; we really need to take care of the ones we have left. Bluetts Block is also home—it is, in fact, a national hotspot—for the nationally vulnerable pink-tailed worm lizard.

I would love to see Bluetts Block become a bird hotspot in the Molonglo River Nature Reserve and to see it protected from urban development. As we develop Molonglo, we need to make sure that we are protecting our wildlife corridors and make sure that we are setting up sufficient fire buffers and ecological buffers. Anyone who has not visited Bluetts Block yet should get out there and take a look at this beautiful nature area.

Health—Brumby Fitness

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (4.37): For many Canberrans, the best place to be at 4 am on a cold winter's morning in Canberra is snuggled up deep under the doona. But Brumby Fitness Kalapu Kau Vaivai are doing their best to change that. I wish to thank this community group for all that they are doing to help improve the physical and mental wellbeing of their members. Brumby Fitness's Tongan name means "club of the weak or elderly". The group started earlier this year with just five men, one of whom, Toni Tu'ulakitau, was recovering from surgery following serious health issues. Determined not only to recover but to get stronger, Toni started training at the gym every morning with four mates.

As they saw improvement in their own lives, these five original members—all of them Australians of Tongan heritage—started thinking about their own families and their community. As interest spread, Toni Tu'ulakitau and his mates welcomed all comers. They currently have over 50 active members. Over the past several weeks, it has been my privilege to join in, as well. What a great experience for everyone involved, especially at 4 am! Gym sessions run six days per week, still starting at 4 am on weekdays and 4 am on Saturdays. On Mondays, the focus is on weight training and PT. Tuesdays are formal weights and box fit. Cardio Zumba sessions are held on Wednesdays, followed by weight training and yoga on Thursdays. Participants can enjoy more weight training plus one of my favourite classes, step, on Fridays. Saturdays are considered fun exercise days.

Richard Taumoepeau, a third-year medical student, helps members track their progress by weighing and measuring them each week. He also provides basic health and nutrition advice. Brumby Fitness, however, does not just focus on physical health. It shares a strong desire to improve mental health as well. They do this, in part, simply by building a strong community and giving people opportunities for social engagement. The pandemic has certainly highlighted, for nearly all of us, the central importance of belonging to a supportive community and, true to their Tongan name, Brumby Fitness welcomes everyone, no matter the current fitness level. Parents have started bringing their children. Special attention is given to make the experience safe and inviting for women and seniors as well.

In the process, what started off as five mates keen to improve their health has grown into something that looks and feels more like a family. Everyone is welcome. Everyone is supported and everyone ends up walking out into the cold Canberra morning feeling better physically and mentally and feeling more prepared for whatever the day holds. I express my gratitude to the leadership of Brumby Fitness, Fihī, Mote, Uele and Sale, for seeing beyond themselves and their own needs to the needs of the broader community; their enthusiasm is infectious. I wish them the very best as they continue to build a strong organisation that brings people together in such a positive way. I would also like to thank Diane, the manager of Club Lime at Phillip, for all that she has done to make sure that this community meets together on a daily basis at 4 am. Thank you.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.42 pm.