



**DEBATES**

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**HANSARD**

16 September 1992

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**MADAM SPEAKER** (Ms McRae) took the chair at 10.30 am and read the prayer.

**CRIMES (OFFENCES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT) (AMENDMENT)  
BILL 1992**

**MR MOORE** (10.31): I present the Crimes (Offences Against the Government) (Amendment) Bill 1992.

Title read by Acting Clerk.

**MR MOORE:** I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Madam Speaker, the important thing in considering this amendment to the Crimes (Offences Against the Government) Act 1989 is first to take in the background and then to look at the concept of open government. The Act I seek to amend, the Crimes (Offences Against the Government) Act 1989, became law on 11 May 1989. In other words, it was part of the package of laws that were put together at the beginning of self-government. As such, it has received less scrutiny than many other Acts that have come before this Assembly. In fact, it is one of those Acts that effectively were put together by bureaucrats with the intention of looking after themselves and their power structures. That may be a good thing at certain times and, should members argue that it is a good thing, I would accept that they had a point.

In striving for open government, we should look very carefully, issue by issue, at the laws we have provided and have around us that are designed to do just the opposite - to close government. One of those laws is section 10 of the Crimes (Offences Against the Government) Act 1989, disclosure of information by officers of the Territory. Subsections (1) and (2) provide that a person who publishes or communicates any document that comes to his knowledge, for which he has a responsibility and which it is his duty not to disclose is guilty of an offence punishable by up to two years' imprisonment. There are no financial penalties; simply two years' imprisonment.

It is important that this issue should come before the Assembly at this time. It is the Liberals in particular who have kept the issue alive, following what they referred to initially as police raids - a term with which I concur. They continued to refer to things such as paranoid witch-hunts, to quote Mr De Domenico in yesterday's question time. Granted, there is some politicking involved in such terms. Nevertheless, the issue raised is very important.

**Mr Lamont:** Just politicking.

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**MR MOORE:** Mr Lamont says that it is just politicking. There is an element of politicking in it, as there is in almost everything we do. Mr Lamont never does any politicking! Nevertheless, there is a very important issue raised by this matter, the issue of open government. This is a perfect opportunity for us to sit back and have a look at what we mean by open government and what we are prepared to do about it.

It is one thing to stand up and make a lot of noises and point your finger at the Government and say, "You have done terrible things. You have called in the police and the police are now following this up". It is quite clear that, once the police have been called in, the legislation is there, there is a serious offence, and the police are doing the job they should do. I think it is appropriate for us to clarify that there should be no criticism of the police on this issue. The police are doing their job according to the legislation. But the legislation is something with which we deal, and therefore it is something on which we can take some action or decide not to take some action. In other words, you will have the opportunity to act according to where your mouth has been.

It seems to me that what has happened with this Act is that there has been very special treatment for governments. Governments have decided to look after themselves in a very special way. Had this legislation applied right across the government and private sectors, I would have been more reluctant to seek to have this section removed. If on removing this section, should that happen, the law is therefore inadequate, then it is also inadequate for the private sector. I cite as an example information that needs protection in banks, in the stock market, or in a business that is involved in the development of high technology or computer software. These are all businesses that feel that they have the right to protection of information. If we have not protected that information well enough, we ought protect it right across the board, not just look after ourselves, not just look after No. 1. If this amendment is supported, we may see a flurry of action to ensure that a similar section is inserted into the Crimes Act. That may or may not be a good thing, but at least it would be a balanced approach.

It is important for us to try to determine just what we mean by open government. I took time out to contact Ted Mack and find out what he did in terms of North Sydney and open government. A number of arguments were put after I announced publicly that I intended to introduce this Bill, and one of the most important and the one that carried most weight with me was the argument about commercial-in-confidence. I had some concern about what happened in North Sydney, a city council with what many people claimed was the most open form of government. It actually paralleled the time when the greatest number of developments anywhere in Australia were occurring in North Sydney. I wanted to know what happened about commercial-in-confidence. They simply did not allow commercial-in-confidence. There was no such thing in the North Sydney Council.

I asked what happened about tendering, because tendering is a good example of when people deserve protection. The protection that was provided was that when tenders were called they were put in a locked box. That box was opened in public, in front of people who wanted to be there. The tenders were then opened

in public and put on a board so that everybody could see what tenders had been made. Nobody had the advantage of knowing what somebody else had tendered previously; they were all opened at exactly the same time. The tender always went to the person with the lowest bid, unless there was a particular reason for doing otherwise. If there was such a reason, that reason was stated publicly and a justification had to be given. That is a very positive form of dealing with tenders.

**Mr Connolly:** But what if someone looked at the tender box beforehand? That would be an offence, would it not?

**MR MOORE:** The point is that when you use an appropriately secure box there ought not be a problem. I think Mr Connolly's interjection really has to do with the kernel of this Bill; that is, if somebody who has the key then uses it, what do we do? Is he taken before the court, with the possibility of a two-year gaol sentence? The point I make in reply to that is that governments are not the only people who provide a tender system, and that penalty and that provision should apply - not so much looking after No. 1 in an Act called the Crimes (Offences Against the Government) Act, but equally to anybody else who is entitled to the same kind of protection.

That is why this Act has some difficulties. In fact, the whole Act, by its very existence, has some problems; but I have chosen for the time being to limit this amending Bill to two sections. Section 12 is consequential upon removing sections 10 and 11. Section 11 deals with stealing property from the Territory. Why should it be any different to steal property from the Territory than, for example, from the Advance Bank or from Mr Humphries? There ought not be a difference. Why should there be a difference between stealing property from the Territory when you are an employee of the Territory and stealing property from Westpac when you are an employee of Westpac?

Why do we have these special clauses? If we need these special clauses for the Territory, we should also recognise that other people need the same sort of protection. The Territory is such a big organisation that what is required is special evidentiary provisions whereby an officer of the Territory can, in effect, represent the Territory, and that is an important issue. But exactly the same issue applies to any other big organisation. Some of the business organisations that are represented in the Territory are bigger than the Territory and have greater assets and a bigger budget than the Territory. I do not think that is an appropriate argument, and it requires very careful consideration. In putting forward this Bill, a series of issues need to be very carefully considered.

Another argument that has been presented to me in opposition to this is that private enterprise has one very big advantage over government; that is, if you find somebody who has been leaking information, you can fire them. I concede that that is a major difference between the Territory and a big organisation. However, we also need to keep in mind that very big organisations do not operate without union involvement, and in the past, where a union felt that somebody had been dismissed inappropriately, they have been prepared to fight the issue tenaciously, and quite rightly so. So, although it can be said that somebody can be fired, it is simply not that easy when you are dealing with an entity whose size is equivalent to that of the Territory.

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It may well be, therefore, that this clause, reworked, could reappear in the Crimes Act in order to protect everybody; but at this point we need to look at it very carefully. Businesses such as Westpac and the Commonwealth Bank - I use banks because I think they are good examples - do not say to people, "We are an open business". That is not what they are there for. They are there for profit. But a government that says, "We are an open government; our processes are open" needs to look very carefully at how they can continue to open up the processes.

**Mr Berry:** Would you mind if we sent somebody down to your office to rifle through your filing cabinet?

**MR MOORE:** Both the Labor Government and the Alliance Government have taken steps to open up government more and more, and that is something we should continue to do. Mr Berry interjected, "Do you mind if we have somebody come through and rifle through your office?". I will say to Mr Berry that, as far as I am aware, in the First Assembly certainly, I was one of the few members who, from the word go, said that they had no interest in a safe.

**Mr Connolly:** Who shredded a document that he was required to table?

**MR MOORE:** I have no interest in a safe. It is much easier for me to operate in a different way. Madam Speaker, it seems to me that we have the opportunity to work in an open system in many ways, and this is a perfect opportunity to do so. What this Bill does, more importantly than anything - - -

**Mr Kaine:** A photocopier on the one hand for leaked documents and a shredder on the other to get rid of the hot ones.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order!

**MR MOORE:** Madam Speaker, the interjections on shredding documents can hardly be left uncommented on. The way the legislation is at the moment, it is important for people who have documents to protect their sources from two years' imprisonment. It may well be that the law sets up this method of thinking, and all of us, me included, are in a position to rethink how we can operate open government further and further. I am not suggesting for one minute that I have all the answers. I am suggesting, and I said it quite clearly before, that there have been moves since the beginning of self-government to open government more and more. What I am saying is that we now have the opportunity to take another step and look at these two sections. I must say that I am much more enthusiastic about removing section 10 than I am about removing section 11; nevertheless it is an important step for us to consider.

By tabling this Bill I am providing an opportunity for us to consider yet another step in opening our government further and further, and I think it is an appropriate step. It is a step which says that we do not just have to pay lip-service to open government; that we can get closer and closer to the reality of open government.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Connolly**) adjourned.

## ADOLESCENT UNIT

**MS SZUTY (10.48):** I move:

That the ACT Government should establish as soon as possible an adolescent unit as part of the hospital redevelopment project.

Madam Speaker, the proposition that the ACT should have its own adolescent unit for the treatment of young people in hospital is not a new one. Since the early 1980s there has been an impetus to make the stay in hospital of young people more productive for their treatment, recovery and acceptance of their illnesses and injuries. In 1980 an Australian College of Paediatrics report, "Health Care for Adolescents in Australia", called for the provision of special facilities for adolescents in hospitals. In 1983 an ACT youth health task group produced a policy paper entitled "Principle on the Provision of Health and Health Care Services to Young People" that recommended the provision of an adolescent ward in the ACT hospital system.

It seems curious to me that, if this concept has been known about for such a long time, there has been no concerted move on the part of the ACT Government to address the issue. I accept that the Federal Government had responsibility for the ACT for some years after the report was delivered. However, we are now in our fourth year of self-government and still we have no adolescent unit. However, we do have an election commitment from the ALP Government to:

... open an adolescent ward at Woden Valley Hospital to cater for the special needs of young people, and to provide them with the support and company of their own age group.

That was articulated in the most recent ACT election campaign.

Madam Speaker, Sydney has had an adolescent medical unit since 1977 - for 15 years now. Since the Children's Hospital in Camperdown took this innovative step, it has expanded the program and now runs an adolescent ward, a medical unit and an outpatients program, known as the Cellblock, which gives support to young people with health problems. I am not talking about just minor illnesses and recovery after accidents. Young people suffer from a great range of health problems, from broken bones and appendicitis to heart problems, cancer and every other illness suffered by others in the community.

Statistics from Royal Canberra Hospital, as it was known, and Woden Valley Hospital for the financial year 1990-1991 show that there were more than 3,000 admissions of young people between the ages of 11 and 19 to Royal Canberra Hospital and Woden Valley Hospital. In the 1991-92 financial year 2,737 young people in this age group were admitted to the two hospitals. Adolescence is defined by the World Health Organisation as the ages between 10 and 19, but the difference between the two groups as defined would be small.

Returning to the Canberra statistics, the reasons for admissions here varied - abdominal pain, chemotherapy, tonsillitis, diabetes, asthma, leukemia, poisoning, renal dialysis, fractures, cerebral palsy and ingrown toenails. This list is not exhaustive. At present these people are treated and hospitalised both with the adult population and with young children. What an adolescent unit could offer these young people is peer group support at a time when they need it most.

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It would offer them the chance to see other people of their own age in similar circumstances. It would allow them the opportunity to form the sorts of bonds that help them accept injuries and illnesses, with their consequential effects on their lives.

The Camperdown adolescent unit staff feel that the unit has been of great benefit to the young people who have been hospitalised there, and that it has increased their success rate for treatment by lifting the spirits of the adolescents it cares for. The staff are confident that the peer group plays a large part in this process, particularly for those young people who have life-long illnesses or disfiguring diseases. There have been other benefits, as the unit has become a referral centre for other hospitals that treat adolescents in normal adult wards. The Camperdown Children's Hospital finds itself being approached to take on young patients because their illnesses are not responding to treatment, while the major cause is suspected to be depression. While not claiming any miracle cures, the staff feel that the peer group atmosphere created in the unit helps overcome many of the problems associated with depression.

The Camperdown unit has served as a model for hospitals internationally, through its association with the United Nations, and could serve as a good model for Canberra. The unit provides educational facilities, in recognition of the fact that when young people get behind in school studies this can cause other consequential problems in their lives. The Cellblock provides outpatient clinics and medical services for those young people who do not need hospitalisation, and includes antenatal and postnatal classes for adolescent mothers. Counselling services are provided for young patients and their families, as well as a creative arts function to give a focus to the group ethos of the unit, health promotion sessions and an outreach service for adolescents with special needs. All these initiatives have been developed in recognition of the needs of young people in the health system.

Before members start considering the cost of establishing an adolescent unit of this scale, it needs to be remembered that these facilities are the result of 15 years of building on the original concept. In the ACT I feel that it is important to take the first step now, and then to let the adolescent ward start its own agenda to develop additional services. If we do not take this first step, and take it soon, we will have lost another window of opportunity - to establish the unit as part of the hospital redevelopment program.

The ACT Council of Social Service, in its submission to the ACT Government on the budget recently, called for an adolescent psychiatric service. It cites the successful recent opening of the adolescent day care centre for young, emotionally distressed children as a step forward, but says that there still exists a need for a coordinated approach by educationalists and psychiatric services to help young people in crisis. While ACTCOSS has stopped short of calling for an adolescent ward, there is a need to recognise that many psychiatric illnesses have their onset in adolescence and that treating this particular group along with older patients is inappropriate.

In the 1980 paper by the Australian College of Paediatrics, which I referred to earlier, there were many reasons put forward in support of adolescent wards. In short, these were: Firstly, adolescents are neither children nor adults, physically, emotionally or socially. Secondly, children's hospitals are not



generally designed to cater specifically for adolescents and may inhibit the need for young people to gain control and independence. Thirdly, adolescents have special physical and emotional needs peculiar to their stage of development, and need physical facilities and professional staff sympathetic to those needs.

Fourthly, as well as treatment for illnesses, adolescents need counselling services which cover lifestyle issues, sexuality, emotional difficulties and, in many cases, examination of the long-term consequences of their illnesses. Fifthly, young people need health care providers who are sympathetic to them and sensitive to their developmental needs and the concerns of their parents. Sixthly, there are benefits to be derived from grouping adolescents together. They support each other, receive more appropriate health and medical care, provide a resource for professional teaching, and may stimulate clinical research.

If the medical profession can identify that there are specific characteristics in relation to this group and that there are benefits to be gained by making them a special part of the health system, it makes sense that they be treated as a peer group, not as isolated cases in a large health system. We do not ask women who have had caesarean section deliveries to share a general surgical ward, in recognition of the fact that their peer group is other women who have had babies in the past few days. They are easier to care for as a group because of their commonality; the fact that they form a peer group. The maternity section is located in an area separate from other wards.

Adolescents, too, have special needs and their accommodation, even over a few nights, needs to allow for the lifestyle of their cohort. There is a need for music and television that is appropriate to their age grouping. They need space where they can also be quiet. They need to be able to pursue their studies and to mix with other young people in hospital. These are needs that are partly met by the current arrangements within general wards in the ACT hospital system. By separating young people out, they are then able to interact rather than continuing to be separate from the benefits of peer group support.

We know that at Woden Valley Hospital at the moment various departments and units are moving into temporary locations while their permanent locations are being refurbished. There is also the question of accreditation which the hospital is seeking for 1993. I understand that, for the level five accreditation the paediatric services area is seeking, there is a requirement that the hospital have an adolescent ward. Now is the perfect time to identify a space that can be set aside for an adolescent unit.

If the current concerns are over resources, it is time for the Government to step in and organise the project, as it has had to step in and organise other aspects of the redevelopment project, such as the combining of the two maternity sections from the Woden Valley and Royal Canberra hospital campuses. I am sure that there have been more onerous tasks placed before the Government in the name of hospital redevelopment than the establishment of an adolescent ward from within hospital resources.

It is not as though these adolescents will be a new client group. The young people are already in the hospital system and receiving treatment. The creation of an adolescent unit should not create any new demand. There is also no pressing need to meet the example of Camperdown Children's Hospital adolescent unit. There will be time in the longer term to develop an appropriate

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program and ancillary services that will serve the needs of Canberra's adolescents and those from surrounding regions. What is needed now is a commitment in the form of a ward that is styled as an adolescent ward and that has the potential to expand in the future.

There is considerable support in the community for the establishment of an adolescent unit. The Youth Affairs Network of the ACT, the Red Cross Youth Health Project, the ACT Youth Accommodation Group, the Australian Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital and the Chief Minister's own Youth Advisory Council have all recommended that an adolescent ward be established in the ACT. These groups can be called upon by government to help set up the ward, to appraise community support and to establish exactly what is needed and what can be deferred for a short time in setting up this much needed facility.

Already there exists a proposal for a 15-bed ward to be located in Building 3 of Woden Valley Hospital once it has been vacated by its current tenants. The proposal from the adolescent ward working party claims that there would be minimal outlay only for the establishment of this ward, with most of the resources coming from other areas in the hospital. Canberra should have a first-class public hospital system and it deserves an adolescent unit as part of that first-class public hospital system. We need to ensure that the new hospital system is adequate for future uses and for all people.

It is in the interests of the community that our young people receive appropriate care and treatment for their injuries and illnesses. From anecdotal evidence from interstate it appears that better health outcomes for young people are achieved from adolescent units. Adolescence is supposed to be the most healthy stage of our lives. However, there is much evidence to show that young people in our society are at risk. They are disproportionately represented in mortality statistics for motor vehicle accidents, substance abuse, suicide and drug dependence. They experience enormous growth in emotional, physical, mental and social development which can leave them isolated and without support, especially if they are also suffering from illnesses or injuries that set them apart from their peer group. As a community we are addressing other issues in the lives of our young people. Now is the time to act in recognition of the work that has been done over the past 15 years in many forums and to establish an adolescent unit at Woden Valley Hospital.

**MRS CARNELL (11.02):** I wish to strongly support Ms Szuty's motion on the adolescent unit. To begin with, it is worth defining which group of people we are talking about here. As Ms Szuty said, the World Health Organisation has defined adolescents as including young people between the ages of 10 and 19, so we are talking about teenagers in the literal sense of the word. It includes the period from the onset of puberty to the end of secondary school education. It is a period of rapid physical, mental and emotional development for all young people.

There has been a growing realisation in Australia that adolescents have special health care needs and need special steps taken to meet those needs. Paediatric wards are not the best places to treat adolescents, as their interests and requirements are obviously different from those of very young children. Adolescents often respond differently to certain treatments and there is also

a number of conditions that are peculiar to this age group. On the other hand, treating teenagers in normal hospital wards can be very intimidating and can cause adolescents to feel out of place. For instance, I certainly would not want to see young people with minor psychiatric problems, possibly like anorexia or bulimia, placed in Ward 15A, where they may be frightened and severely stressed by extremely ill older patients. They often feel lonely amongst adults and they would enjoy and benefit from the company of their peers.

Some of the problems arising from childhood and adolescence which are very well treated in an adolescent unit, both on an inpatient basis and on an outpatient basis, include developmental concerns such as delayed puberty, menstrual irregularities, scoliosis and even severe acne; also renal and orthopaedic disorders; chronic illnesses such as juvenile onset diabetes and juvenile arthritis; congenital disorders such as cystic fibrosis and spina bifida; teenage pregnancy - that really means the antenatal and postnatal care components - and sexually transmitted diseases; psychological problems such as anorexia, depression and suicidal behaviour; physical and sexual abuse; and areas like the misuse of alcohol and risk taking behaviour. Many of these areas are not ones that are well covered in other parts of the hospital, and certainly not in a way that is appropriate for adolescents. As well, as I have indicated, many of the illnesses and problems common to adults, adolescents and children alike are still appropriately treated in an adolescent unit. Adolescents feel comfortable amongst their peers in supportive environments.

In the past there has been a black hole as far as adolescents are concerned. Their needs have never really been considered to be special or unique, and the arrangements in Canberra hospitals have been no exception to this approach. I suppose that, historically, this may have been because, as Ms Szuty rightly pointed out, teenagers are regarded as being in robust good health, possibly even approaching the obstreperous. Unfortunately, the general picture has disguised many problems, again as Ms Szuty appropriately said. Adolescents are disproportionately represented in mortality statistics. Adolescents also have a number of very specific concerns for their health, and once again I must point out that they are not well looked after in paediatric or adult wards. Adolescents, and adolescent problems, have not attracted the attention they should, and I believe that this must change.

Madam Speaker, I have been accused of just wanting to spend more money. This is simply not true. I am not an advocate of every kind of expenditure on youth or young people. Expenditure must be tied to outcomes. For example, the utilisation of the Civic Youth Centre at times has been disappointing. The building at times has been in bad shape and is strewn with graffiti, Ms Szuty. An adolescent medical unit, however - - -

**Mr Cornwell:** Public art.

**MRS CARNELL:** Yes, public art; I am sorry. The adolescent medical unit, however, is a totally different kettle of fish. Such a unit would cater for the very real problems and would make a very real impact on the health and welfare of our adolescents, and one that is quite demonstrable. The unit should be a priority over some of the other expenditures that the Government seems keen to promote.

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It is also important to recognise that the first area which tends to get cut in any budget cutbacks is public and community health, and we saw some of that yesterday. This is a short-sighted approach because it often leads to increased costs down the line. An adolescent ward is the sort of service which can help save money in the future, and there will certainly be cost savings if the unit is appropriately planned now as an integrated part of the hospital redevelopment program.

Now, Madam Speaker, let us talk about the unit itself. Provision for the unit needs to be made now, while the redevelopment project is going ahead, and not on an ad hoc extension basis later on. Moreover, in contrast with what Mr Berry said on 11 August, it is interesting to note that the adolescent ward working party does, in fact, say that an adolescent ward could be located next to a paediatric ward. I am not sure what Mr Berry was talking about when he suggested to the contrary.

**Mr Cornwell:** Neither was he.

**MRS CARNELL:** No, probably not. The most appropriate place for an adolescent ward is in self-contained accommodation, which may or may not be located near a general paediatric ward. It is also important that planning be undertaken now, so that the unit can be linked into the redevelopment project in an integrated and holistic fashion.

Madam Speaker, submissions on this issue have outlined the design needs which an adolescent unit should fulfil. Privacy, accessibility to visiting parents and friends, the need for space to allow for mobility, and the ability to engage in individual pastimes are all important design criteria. Another important aspect is the need to make sure that education is not interrupted. An adolescent unit would need to have space and equipment so that a teacher would be able to visit the young people. Such space would also serve as a quiet area between lesson times.

On the basis of these sorts of considerations, the adolescent unit working party has recommended a unit of 15 to 16 beds. The latest figure on admissions to ACT public hospitals of young people aged between 11 and 19, for the 12 months from July 1991 to June 1992, as Ms Szuty said, was 2,737. I have to admit that I am a bit concerned as to whether a 15- or 16-bed unit is sufficient to meet the needs of Canberra's young people, particularly with our growing population and knowing that that part of our population will grow in the future. Possibly 20 beds would be appropriate.

The working party recommends a ground floor location with access to appropriate school, recreation, medical and counselling facilities. Of course, we are talking about not just the bricks and mortar of the unit itself but also the types of staff an adolescent unit would require. In particular, there is a need for people with appropriate psychiatric qualifications who can deal with conditions, as I have already said, like anorexia and depression, and developmental concerns felt by teenagers.

There is also extensive support for an adolescent ward. The National Health and Medical Research Council, as Ms Szuty said, recommended in 1980 that there be special facilities made available to cope with the needs of adolescents. The AMA supports the project. The ACT branch of the Australian Association for

Adolescent Health has recognised the need for better facilities in the ACT and, again as Ms Szuty said, Ms Follett's own Youth Advisory Council last year provided advice recommending that an adolescent ward be established. The Social Policy Committee of the last Assembly also recommended the provision of a 20-bed adolescent ward. Other groups which support the unit include the Red Cross Youth Health Project, the Youth Affairs Network, the Australian Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital, the Youth Health Task Force and the ACT Council of Social Service. The list goes on and on.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, adolescents need health care workers trained to relate to their problems. They need not only an environment designed to deal with the primary medical concerns but also a supportive environment designed to cope with their educational problems, their communications problems, the "I have nobody to talk to" syndrome, and their emotional problems - the "Nobody understands me" syndrome.

I think it is appropriate at this stage to suggest that I might have a conflict of interest here. As a teenager I was in hospital for a prolonged time in Brisbane, first of all in a paediatric ward and then in an adult ward, both of which were totally unacceptable and both of which caused more problems than they solved. Finally, it was decided that an adolescent unit was appropriate. An adolescent unit was not available in Brisbane at the time and that meant going to Sydney. Just to show you the depth of feeling of many of the doctors and, for that matter, patients, in the end it was perceived that the extra stress placed upon me by not being near my parents or my friends would be outweighed by the unit. It was, and the whole experience turned out to be a good one rather than, as it seemed at the time, a bad one.

So I must admit that I do have a personal interest in this area. The current facilities are just not adequate. I strongly support this motion that better facilities for adolescents be provided, and be provided now.

**MR BERRY** (Minister for Health, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport) (11.13): The approach of the Liberals never ceases to amaze me. When they were in government there were no plans for an adolescent unit, but there are calls for them when they are in opposition. I suppose that that is what oppositions are for.

The Government is keenly aware of the special needs of all users of the ACT health system and it plans for these needs, especially within the hospital redevelopment process. It is acknowledged by the Government that adolescents have special needs. It is inappropriate, of course, to place most adolescents within paediatric wards with small children, and it is equally inappropriate to place adolescents with the population generally found in medical and surgical wards in hospitals. While the general public, Madam Speaker, views adolescence as probably the healthiest time of an individual's life, adolescents are in fact disproportionately represented in hospital populations, as has been said, because of violence, sporting accidents and motor vehicle accidents and substance abuse, which have been mentioned. There is also another group of adolescents who use our health system and who are not provided for at this stage - those with chronic and terminal illnesses.

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The Youth Affairs Network formed an adolescent ward working party late in 1991, Madam Speaker. I met with members of that working party in February and I recall meeting with members again recently. I discussed with the members of the working party a draft submission they were preparing at the time on the establishment of an adolescent ward at Woden Valley Hospital. That group has put a lot of hard work into it. Their organisational skills are to be commended because they were able to pull together a range of interested people, including experts in adolescent care, to advise them in respect of the future of services which might be provided in the ACT for adolescents.

A range of professionals are interested. I was particularly impressed with the enthusiasm for improved adolescent care by some of the nurses who are involved in that area, particularly the ones who work with youngsters who have longstanding illnesses. Cystic fibrosis is one of those. In fact it is the most prominent one which requires longstanding care from health professionals. They are a very impressive group of young people. It is because of the unfortunate requirement to attend hospital regularly that they become so expert. They are able to advise people on the shortcomings of a system because of their experience in the system. Fortunately, not too many of us develop an expertise through long attendances in hospital, but we can learn from the wisdom which is developed by the attendance of people who are long-suffering and who have to use our hospitals regularly.

**Mr Cornwell:** The consumers.

**MR BERRY:** Indeed. We very often take our advice from the professionals who are there all of the time. We do not often have the advice of the people who use our system a lot and are able to keep us advised. These young people in particular impressed me with their knowledge of what was required for their particular needs. They were able to advise too, more broadly, in relation to what they thought would be appropriate for adolescents with other injuries and illnesses which might cause them to use the hospital system.

Madam Speaker, officers of Woden Valley Hospital are providing that working party with detailed data on the number and type of admissions of adolescents and details of the hospital redevelopment plan. Early in the piece, in February, I told them that we would provide some resources to assist them with the development of their plans, and I am told that a full and final submission is due shortly. That submission will be considered in the context of the hospital redevelopment planning process. I have to say at this point that ward space for such a facility will not be readily available, but if it is decided to proceed with such a facility it could not happen before 1994-95 because of the planning of the hospital redevelopment process and the way the packages of reconstruction are going ahead. The new permanent ward accommodation for paediatrics will be commissioned at the end of 1992. It includes separate en suite facilities suitable for adolescents, as well as recreational facilities, particularly for chronically ill adolescents.

It is also important to note that there is a difference between, I think, an adolescent unit and an adolescent ward. I have circulated an amendment to omit the word "unit" and replace it with "ward". I will explain why that approach has been taken. In an adolescent unit the patients are managed by subspecialists in adolescent medicine, with consultation, where necessary, with subspecialists in other disciplines. On the other hand, patients in an adolescent ward, as opposed

to a unit, are managed by their own specialist but they are co-located with other adolescents in an environment more suited to their needs. At this stage in the hospital redevelopment we are looking at the provision of an adolescent ward further down the track. For this reason, I have circulated the amendment that I referred to a moment ago.

Madam Speaker, I think that this is a positive way to continue the consideration of this important issue and to build on the consultation already under way between my department and the adolescent ward working party. The Government recognises the needs of adolescents and, of course, the provision of better services for adolescents is consistent with our intention to provide access to a broad range of health facilities and services within a strong public hospital system. I can say that we are committed to continuing with that approach across the board.

I am pleased to see that Ms Szuty has taken on this issue. It is a noble issue and it deserves resolution. I was interested in the comparisons which she drew with what is provided in Sydney. We could never expect to provide, in the short term anyway, the sorts of facilities that would be provided in the centre of a large population area like that. But we have recognised the need to do something better for adolescents, and it will be in the planning process of our redevelopment as it goes ahead. Madam Speaker, the Government will be supporting the motion, and we will also be supporting the amendment which I have circulated. I formally move:

Omit "unit", insert "ward".

**MR HUMPHRIES (11.22):** Madam Speaker, I was going to use the word "paranoid", but I think it has been overworked in the last few days. Mr Berry likes to come out fighting on every occasion that the Government and the Opposition appear to be saying something different. I think he is overreacting slightly. There is no notion of condemnation of the Government in this motion of Ms Szuty's, and there has been no tone of condemnation on the part of Mrs Carnell, who spoke on this matter on behalf of the Opposition. There is no intention for that to happen. Nobody is saying that the ACT Government has been remiss in not putting in place plans for an adolescent unit or ward to date. What we are saying is that it has become clear, over a period, that there is a case for such a facility, and that, collectively, the ACT should be moving down the path of making plans for that to happen. I can assure the Minister that there will be no press release going out saying, "Government dragging its feet on adolescent unit", or "Government tardy on important health facility". That will not be happening as long as this matter is at least addressed in the next year or two.

Madam Speaker, when I was in government as Minister for Health the argument was put to me that an adolescent unit was required. The argument was an impressive one, and it was given serious consideration. I can say that at the time of the 1991-92 budget, which the Alliance Government was preparing when it lost office, consideration was being given within the Department of Health to the question of adolescent facilities in our ACT public hospitals. That is not to say that it would have happened in the 1991-92 budget had we remained in office. There were many competing demands

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**Mr Kaine:** It would have dropped out like the abortion clinic, probably.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** It probably did, yes. It was a question of seeing what was possible within the constraints of what the ACT had to spend at the time. I am not at all reticent about pointing out the many important things that the Alliance Government did achieve in health while it was in office. The birthing centre, new psychiatric facilities and new obstetric facilities are just three that come to mind off the top of my head. I am proud about those things. But obviously it can always be said that more is possible. I hope, Madam Speaker, that we have initiated today a step towards a realisation that we do need more in this area and - - -

**Mr Kaine:** You mean that greater achievements would have been possible, not more.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Indeed. We all accept that there is a need to look to the question of cost. Nobody wants to build gold plated facilities - everybody knows that we cannot afford them - but, as Mrs Carnell has pointed out, there is the very real question of whether we would not save money by having an adolescent unit or ward in the ACT public hospital system. On that premise, we believe that the Government should be giving consideration to the question of adolescent facilities. I hope that the Government - - -

**Mr Berry:** I said that we are.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** The Minister says, "We are". In that spirit we support the Government's move and look forward to seeing the product of the Government's deliberations in due course. If the Government comes up with something in that area, I can promise you that the Opposition will give it strong and sincere support, not mindless opposition.

**MS SZUTY (11.26):** I would like to thank members for their support of this motion. I would like to draw attention to a few of the comments that I heard during the debate. I think that Mrs Carnell made a very important point regarding the establishment of an adolescent ward in that not only will it improve health outcomes for young people; it will also be cost-effective in the long term. That is a very important point for us to remember. I also noted her reference to the support of the idea of an adolescent ward from the First ACT Legislative Assembly's Social Policy Committee. That is another group that I had not realised had lent its support to the establishment of an adolescent ward. I thank Mrs Carnell, also, for her personal experience when she was an adolescent and spent time in hospital recovering from what I believe was a long-term illness.

I would like to thank the ACT Government for the work that it has done to date in developing plans for the establishment of an adolescent unit. I must admit that I am disappointed with the timeframe that it is looking at at the moment. It will be 1994 or 1995 before the adolescent ward is operating. I did draw attention in my speech to the need for accreditation for the paediatric services section of the hospital, which will come up in 1993. Obviously, we will not have a first-class rating for that section without an adolescent ward. I think that is a disappointment.



The other point that Mr Berry made and that I think I should mention is the importance of consultation with young people in the hospital environment. That is something that he drew attention to. It obviously is most important to discuss the planning and development of an adolescent ward with young people. It is crucial that we learn from their experiences in our public hospital system. I would like to thank members for their support. I indicate that I will be supporting Mr Berry's amendment to my motion.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

### **YORK PARK DEVELOPMENT**

**MS ELLIS** (11.29): I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) condemns Liberal Party members of the Legislative Assembly for their opposition to the development of York Park for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and for their blatant politicisation of this important economic issue for Canberra;
- (2) notes the difficult and unsafe conditions under which officers of Foreign Affairs and Trade are currently working;
- (3) acknowledges the cost effectiveness of the planned development; and
- (4) acknowledges the employment generation of a development of this magnitude.

It is with considerable consternation that I rise to speak on this matter today. I assumed originally that I would be speaking to a motion reflecting this Assembly's unanimous support for the development of York Park for the Foreign Affairs and Trade building. Mr Kaine and his colleagues have been fooled into supporting their Federal leader, Dr Hewson, in opposing this project. In so doing, they have turned their backs on the people of Canberra, the people they purport to represent.

**Mr De Domenico:** Rubbish! Ros must have written this.

**Mr Humphries:** Where is the evidence of that?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! Ms Ellis has the floor.

**MS ELLIS:** Mr Kaine and his colleagues have shown contempt for those unemployed in our community; contempt for the public servants who provide public services, in particular, the officers of Foreign Affairs and Trade; and a complete lack of understanding of the planned costs and facilities of the project. Perhaps members opposite may care to sit back and listen to some of the facts of this project and the benefits of it.

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The condition of the Administrative Building, where the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is situated, has been widely reported in the press. Also, the Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, and the general manager of Australian Estate Management, Richard Williams, have repeatedly given the facts surrounding the decision to build at York Park. Senator Evans said this on ABC radio on Tuesday, 25 August:

The Admin Building is the oldest of the group of Canberra Buildings going back to the 1940s which are coming right to the end of their working life. In occupational health and safety terms the present building is a disaster zone. There was a recent consultant's report, which was decisive in the Government's consideration of this, which said not only was there a number of features of the building creating life-threatening situations at the moment, but that within the next two to three years a number of key systems were facing complete breakdown - including electric wiring, air distribution and conditioning, hydraulics and the sewerage system.

Yet, Madam Speaker, on no occasion have the Federal Opposition, and now our own ACT Liberal Party members, given any thought to the working conditions of the officers of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Dr Hewson and his cronies opposite claim that DFAT does not deserve - - -

**Mr De Domenico:** You do not really believe what you are saying, do you?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr De Domenico, please desist from interjecting.

**MS ELLIS:** Dr Hewson and his cronies opposite claim that DFAT does not deserve the new building. I would like to know what this means. Does not deserve what? Reasonable and safe working conditions? Surely all workers in this country deserve working accommodation of an acceptable occupational health and safety standard.

**Mr De Domenico:** That is what you get from reading somebody else's speech.

**MS ELLIS:** No, I am not, Mr De Domenico. It is my speech and I am very proud of it. I would be very proud if you could listen to it. Unfortunately for the Liberal Party, this includes the workers employed by the Australian Government. In fact, Madam Speaker, I was intrigued by Dr Hewson's use of the word "deserve"; so much so that I sought a true definition from the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. The definition is:

To merit by service, to become entitled to or - - -

**Mr Humphries:** I take a point of order, Madam Speaker. Ms Ellis is referring to Dr Hewson's comments about the York Park development. The motion before the Assembly talks about Liberal Party members of the Legislative Assembly. Dr Hewson does not have a seat in this Assembly. What Dr Hewson has said is completely irrelevant to this motion.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I would think that if you allowed Ms - - -

**Mr Kaine:** It is relevant if somebody is being misrepresented.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Berry:** It is relevant, Mr Kaine says; so it is all right.

**Mr Kaine:** To the extent that he is being misrepresented.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Members, I am about to speak about Mr Humphries's point of order. Thank you, Mr Humphries, for drawing that to my attention. I will listen to Ms Ellis and determine whether it is in order or not. For the time being, we will listen to her speech.

**Mr Kaine:** You will not rule on it. Yes, noted.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Kaine, I will remind you that I am the Speaker and there is a standing order about reflections on the Speaker.

**Mr Kaine:** I wish you would act like it, Madam Speaker, and rule on it.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Kaine, I am standing, and I ask you to withdraw that rudeness, please.

**Mr Kaine:** Madam Speaker, would you like to tell me what it is that you want me to withdraw?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Your comment that was a reflection on my ruling, Mr Kaine.

**Mr Kaine:** I made no comment that was a reflection on you, Madam Speaker - unless you can tell me what it is.

**Mr Connolly:** You did. You said that you wish she would act like a Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** That is what I heard, Mr Kaine.

**Mr Kaine:** Would you like to tell me what it is that you want me to withdraw?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Connolly correctly repeated what you said. You said that you wish that I would act like a Speaker.

**Mr Kaine:** I said that I wish you would make a ruling on the point of order that was taken.

**Mr Connolly:** No; you said that you wish she would act like a Speaker. Withdraw it.

**Mr Kaine:** Is that unreasonable? To ask you to make a ruling?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Kaine, I will ask you to - - -

**Mr Kaine:** Madam Speaker, I am sick and tired of this.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I am standing.

**Mr Kaine:** I will withdraw.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Mr Kaine:** But your performance is there for all to see.

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**MADAM SPEAKER:** I call Ms Ellis.

**MS ELLIS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I understand the Opposition's consternation. What I have done in my speech, if they had been courteous enough to listen, has been to draw a simile between their objections to this project and the mirror of their objections, the Federal Opposition's. I will continue. The definition of the word "deserve" is:

To merit by service, to become entitled to or worthy of. To be entitled to recompense, to merit, be worthy.

It seems that under a coalition government many workers would be faced with the use of this word rather than maintaining their basic rights as employees. This is the Liberal Party's definition of industrial relations. The Liberal Party is willing to go around telling employees that they do not deserve basic occupational health and safety standards. They do not deserve these basic rights because it is expedient to use them as political footballs.

Madam Speaker, allow me to quote from the consultant's report to the Australian Property Group on the current Administrative Building in Parkes. It said:

The findings of the project team show that the building does not comply with the building code of Australia, Australian standards nor the building standards and performance requirements for Commonwealth offices.

The report went on to state that fire escapes were totally unsatisfactory for a large office building. Also, there were unsatisfactory findings in regard to distribution boards being obsolete; inadequate exit signs; circuit-breakers reaching the end of their useful life; thermal detectors needing to be replaced; at least a third of the general cabling was obsolete and had the potential to become a fire hazard - coupled with the totally inadequate fire safety measures, this is of major concern; and the lighting did not comply with Australian standards and had the potential to cause eyestrain. The report went on to say, Madam Speaker, that the air-conditioning system is fundamentally inadequate and obsolete, and that the existing systems cannot be upgraded to comply with current standards.

The conclusion of the consultant's report on these major areas of concern was:

The building is in urgent need of refurbishment and if it remains in its current state of repair, it will deteriorate in a cumulative manner and within a period of two to three years will cease to function properly in relation to the building's basic services. It should also be noted that committing substantial additional funds to repair and maintenance will not overcome this problem, it may slow down such a deterioration by a year or so.

Madam Speaker, Mr Kaine was quoted in the *Canberra Times* on 26 August as saying that he was "not at odds with the general thrust" of Dr Hewson's remarks in opposition to the development of York Park but that the project would be "useful for Canberra". Also, Madam Speaker, Mr Kaine, speaking in this chamber the day after the Federal budget was brought down, was whingeing that Canberra did not get enough money spent on it. I quote from the *Hansard* of 19 August this year:

... when the Commonwealth brings down its budget, as it did last night, and is looking at the allocation of moneys from its budget. Canberra does not get a guernsey.

Just a few days later, however, Mr Kaine and his colleagues in the Assembly were opposing the building, full stop. Did they get a phone call? We could speculate.

**Mr Humphries:** I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Ms Ellis has made a clear misrepresentation of what the Liberal Party has said. We have never opposed in this place the building of the York Park development. I ask Ms Ellis to withdraw that suggestion. Quote the *Hansard* where we said it, otherwise it is not true.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Ms Ellis, were you quoting *Hansard* at that point?

**MS ELLIS:** Yes, I was. I am sorry, Madam Speaker - - -

**Mr Humphries:** What page?

**Mr Kaine:** Can you quote where we opposed it?

**MS ELLIS:** No, I am afraid that I do not have that with me.

**Mr Humphries:** Then withdraw it. Ask her to withdraw that, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Berry:** No, you do not have to withdraw. There is no imputation.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Excuse me! I am about to speak. Let there be order. Ms Ellis, if there is a perception here that you have somehow misrepresented the Liberals, I ask you to withdraw any unintended misrepresentation.

**MS ELLIS:** Certainly, Madam Speaker. I will.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Perhaps when we check the *Hansard* we may come back to that point.

**MS ELLIS:** Certainly, Madam Speaker. I am happy to do that.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms Ellis.

**Mr Kaine:** You are happy to do what?

**MS ELLIS:** As I have just said, Mr Kaine - if you had been listening and not interjecting - to withdraw any imputation that - - -

**Mr Kaine:** Thank you.

**MS ELLIS:** Did the Opposition here get a phone call, Madam Speaker? We could speculate. We could speculate for hours on the real reasons for this new high art form of Canberra bashing. Madam Speaker, how ridiculous it is to expect the people of Canberra not to interpret the Liberals' opposition to this valuable project in any other way than doing the Canberra bash. But I digress. We could speculate, but let us guess. Could it perhaps be because this project is for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade?

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I have already explained the basic occupational health and safety standards that all workers in this country should receive; but, Madam Speaker, I also take this opportunity to dispel any myths that may surround the work of this particular department. The Liberal Party Opposition, both Federal and ACT, have not ignored the appalling working conditions of the Foreign Affairs and Trade officers; they have gone so far as to infer that they deserve to work under these conditions because they are only probably cocktail-sipping, jet-setting diplomats anyway.

When an officer is posted overseas he or she is basically on call 24 hours a day. When Australians travelling overseas experience difficulties of one kind or another, they rightly turn to the Australian overseas mission for assistance. Typical duties can and do include the recovery of bodies of Australian tourists from plane wrecks, bus wrecks and so on; visiting convicted Australians in overseas gaols; assisting tourists when a family member dies; advising families in Australia when a family member fails to send that regular postcard. In some countries they experience conditions of war and survive coup d'etat and civil unrest. They have the delight of air travel with some pretty questionable airlines, and experience extremes of living conditions, from Western countries to the poorest nations in the world. They are working in areas such as Cambodia, working - - -

**Mr Cornwell:** What has this to do with the motion? Nothing.

**MS ELLIS:** It has a lot to do with it, Mr Cornwell. They are working with the Cambodian people to build up their country from nothing. They work in areas such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, South Africa and Eastern Europe. Can you imagine what sort of heart-rending, stressful work the officers in the Australian embassy closest to Somalia are doing right now?

**Mr Cornwell:** I take a point of order, Madam Speaker. I do not believe that Ms Ellis is being relevant to the motion before us. She is at the moment giving us a fairly detailed outline of the services provided by Australian diplomats overseas. I thought we were discussing the development of York Park for the Australian base of the department.

**MS ELLIS:** I will get to that.

**Mr Cornwell:** I do not mind the Cooks tour, madam; it is just that I do not know that it is relevant to the matter before the house.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Cornwell, following Mr Humphries's advice on the matter, I said that I would listen carefully. I have been listening carefully. Because Ms Ellis is talking about York Park and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and these are people who work there, I do believe that it is relevant, and I would like Ms Ellis to finish her speech.

**MS ELLIS:** Madam Speaker, I was referring to the Australian officers posted overseas nearest to Somalia, or Yugoslavia, or Burma, or many other countries we could name, where conditions are far from ideal. That is the sort of work officers of Foreign Affairs and Trade do. However, there are many officers employed here in Australia at Parkes. In fact, approximately half the officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade currently work in Australia, most of them at the Administrative Building in Parkes. They are your normal, everyday

public servants who travel infrequently and have rare opportunities to attend cocktail parties, which, unfortunately, some members of the community may not perceive. As I have already said, their working conditions are far worse than those we enjoy here in our Assembly offices.

The Federal Government, when considering this matter, had only two options. The first was to construct the new building at York Park at a cost of \$187m. The second option was to refurbish the existing building. This option was rejected on the following grounds: The refurbishment would occur on a staged basis with continued occupancy by the department. This would take seven years and cost \$140m. It would also mean continual uprooting of the officers of DFAT to relocate during this seven-year period and would mean that for seven years the department would be scattered throughout Canberra in different areas at different times. At the end of this seven-year process the Administrative Building would have room for 250 fewer officers and the department would be spread through five separate locations.

For a cost comparable to total refurbishment, a new building would provide space for the entire department, excluding AIDAB. This building would be provided in three years - less than half the time it would take to refurbish the Administrative Building. This difference in timescale is significant, not only in cost and efficiency, but also in the relief of the current occupational health and safety problems. (*Extension of time granted*) I will be very brief, depending on the interjections. The new building will provide about 46,300 square metres of office space. It will be good quality office space, but I stress that it will have none of the prestigious extras that Federal and local - - -

**Mr De Domenico:** Very good quality.

**Mr Humphries:** Yes, very good.

**MS ELLIS:** There you go. It will have none of the prestigious extras that Federal and local oppositions have so wrongly suggested. It has also been put about by the Opposition that York Park will be the largest office building in the ACT excluding Parliament House. In the *Financial Review* on 25 August Dr Hewson was quoted as saying:

At more than 46,000 square metres, it would - - -

**Mr Humphries:** I take a point of order, Madam Speaker. Ms Ellis is again quoting Dr Hewson. Dr Hewson is not mentioned - - -

**Mr Kaine:** No, she is quoting the *Bulletin*.

**Mr Humphries:** The *Bulletin* is quoting Dr Hewson, which is - - -

**Mr Connolly:** You do not want to hear about him?

**Mr Humphries:** I am happy to talk about Dr Hewson in a motion that refers to Dr Hewson, but the motion does not do that. It talks about - - -

**Mr Berry:** These are frivolous points of order.

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**Mr Humphries:** They are not frivolous. Madam Speaker, the motion talks about the ACT Legislative Assembly members of the Liberal Party, not about the Federal parliamentary members of the Liberal Party. Therefore, any reference to Dr Hewson is irrelevant.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Humphries, I do believe that what Dr Hewson has to say is relevant to this debate and I will let Ms Ellis continue.

**MS ELLIS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I quote:

At more than 46,000 square metres, it would be Canberra's second largest building after Parliament House ...

This is wrong. It will be approximately the same size as the Edmund Barton Building. It will be much smaller than Russell Offices, and smaller also than Cameron and Benjamin Offices in Belconnen. What they may have been attempting to refer to is the size of this building in terms of the scope of the development. This project is the single largest building development in Canberra since the construction of the new Parliament House.

Madam Speaker, this is where the Opposition's lame objections cause more affront than anywhere else. The Opposition has been claiming recently that it is concerned for the unemployed of Canberra. Actually, Madam Speaker, I can again quote from the *Hansard* a comment made by Mr Kaine the day after the Federal budget was brought down in relation to jobs for Canberra. I quote:

There is this great claim about 2,000 jobs. When? This year? Next year? The year after, when it comes off the drawing board? Are you, the Government, going to give a guarantee that the 2,000 jobs, if there are 2,000 jobs, are to be filled from the unemployed ranks in the ACT?

Those were strong words from Mr Kaine the day after the Federal budget was brought down. Anyone reading that *Hansard* would say that Mr Kaine is concerned about jobs for Canberra. Anyone reading that *Hansard* would not believe that Mr Kaine has rejected the York Park project. If Mr Kaine and his colleagues are so concerned about unemployment, why have they rejected a project that, during its life, will provide up to 1,500 jobs for Canberrans? The answer, Madam Speaker, is political expediency, and once again giving in to the pressure of their Federal colleagues and collaborating in a bid to gain cheap political points around Australia through Canberra bashing.

This building will serve the purpose of providing realistic office space for DFAT. It will solve the current occupational health and safety problems, as well as fire hazards and continual breakdowns. Surely every public servant has the right to such accommodation. Madam Speaker, this Opposition holds the people of Canberra in contempt. The York Park project will provide reasonable and safe working conditions for the officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The York Park project will provide jobs for Canberrans. The York Park project represents a sensible and practical decision by the Federal Government which will benefit Canberra and Canberrans. The Opposition needs to be condemned for their contempt of Canberra, for their contempt of the valuable work of public servants, and for their blatant lack of understanding of the issues surrounding safe conditions for all Australian workers.



**MR KAINE** (Leader of the Opposition) (11.48): Madam Speaker, the basic problem with this motion is that it is based on either a misunderstanding of the Liberal situation or a gross distortion of it. I could say that it is based on a lie, but you would rule me out of order. I will not say that, although I noticed that Mr Keating got away with the use of that word in the Parliament over the road the other night and nobody objected to that. It is only in this place that members of the Government are so sensitive and so touchy about it. Madam Speaker, I will do Ms Ellis the courtesy of suggesting that she has misunderstood. She has misunderstood the Liberal Party's position on this issue.

**Mr Lamont:** No, she has you on the run.

**Mr De Domenico:** It is like being hit over the head with a warm lettuce leaf.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! Mr Kaine has the floor. Mr De Domenico, I am ruling in Mr Kaine's favour in this instance. He has the floor. I would like silence.

**MR KAINE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I could go further back; but I begin by referring to report No. 4 of the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure, dated August 1992, which concerns matters discussed by the committee during the months of May, June and July. The second recommendation, at paragraph 3.7 of the report, states:

... that the ACT Government bring all possible pressure to bear on the Commonwealth with a view to decisions being made about projects such as the refurbishment of the old Parliament House, the Museum of Australia and York Park.

The members of the committee know that that is in there because I asked for it to be put there. That is why it is in there. It reflected my view then and it reflects my view now. Which of the Labor members of the committee asked that that be put in there? Did Mr Lamont? Did Ms Ellis? Of course not. It was Trevor Kaine, the Leader of the Opposition; the person that Ms Ellis is now criticising and whose position on this issue she is misrepresenting, as I say, because she probably misunderstands my position.

I put that in there because I meant it; and it is not the first time that I have said it, either. The record will show that I have been talking about getting the Commonwealth to back up its support for Canberra in practical ways like this for a long time, and the York Park development is one of the things that I have constantly referred to. If this Government is so concerned about the Commonwealth backing up its support for Canberra, why have they not been pushing for the Museum of Australia? Why have they not been pushing for the refurbishment of the old Parliament House? No, it is only the DFAT building, because Ros Kelly jumped into the ring; so we have to get behind Ros Kelly, whether or not her position is inconsistent.

**Mr De Domenico:** She probably had her mouthpiece over there set this up.

**Ms Ellis:** I take a point of order, Madam Speaker. I do not appreciate Mr De Domenico suggesting that I am representing someone else in this house. I take personal affront at his intimation.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms Ellis.

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**MR KAINE:** I do not know who Ms Ellis represents, but presumably Ros Kelly is one of her constituents. She claims to represent her. Anyway, Ms Ellis really revealed her vitriol right from the beginning when she said that we were fooled into supporting John Hewson. John Hewson did not even make a comment on this until August. My position was well and truly on the record, in a committee report, three months before. We were not fooled into supporting John Hewson. In fact, Ms Ellis misrepresents John Hewson's position as well. Madam Speaker, I will read from John Hewson's press report on the matter, which, of course, Ms Ellis would not want to know about. I quote John Hewson's media release of 24 August 1992:

We do not doubt that the current building in which the department is housed has health and occupational safety problems. These need to be remedied as soon as possible.

I will read on:

But what we do question is the way in which the Government proposes to fix the problem.

John Hewson is not even objecting to a building for DFAT. He is suggesting that what is being proposed is questionable in today's economic climate. So do not misrepresent John Hewson and do not misrepresent me.

To be more specific, Madam Speaker, not only did I put that recommendation in the Planning Committee's report. On 26 August this issue started to get some publicity. The members of the Government decided that it ought to be an issue and they ought to be kicking John Hewson to death. His media release is dated 24 August. Look what happened afterwards. Ros Kelly came out. I was asked by the media on a number of occasions, on 26 August, to make a comment. I quote from a transcript of interview with WIN Television, at 9.45 on 26 August. I was asked:

Mr Kaine, where do the ACT Liberals stand on a new DFAT building in York Park?

My answer was:

We stand firmly where we've always stood. We believe that the Commonwealth should be beginning projects of that kind - the development of York Park, the restoration and refurbishment of the old Parliament House, the construction of a Museum of Australia. They're projects that Australia needs and that the ACT needs.

Where is the opposition to this project inherent in that? I see that Ms Ellis has left. She does not want to hear this. A question further down was this:

... do you deny that Canberra doesn't need it?

My answer was:

Oh no, I think Canberra needs it. I think the public servants are entitled to reasonable accommodation. There is no doubt that the building that they're in needs refurbishment, but there is a question of standards.

Where in that statement did I oppose this building? I did not. So Ms Ellis is misrepresenting me, I submit, in putting that position. In a second interview, later the same morning, I was asked:

... do you support the construction of this new building?

Diana Watts of Capital Television asked me that question. My answer was:

Yes, I do. I've been saying for some time that the Commonwealth, in today's economy, should have been getting on with some of these construction projects.

Where did I oppose the building? Ms Ellis cannot prove that I did, because the fact is that I did not. I have supported this building. Later in the morning again, Claudia Oakley, of ABC radio, asked me a question and I said:

I've said over recent months that I've thought the Commonwealth should embark on some capital projects including the York Park development ...

Again I ask Ms Ellis: Where did I oppose this building? She obviously misunderstands my position. She obviously does not understand when I speak. I do not oppose this building. I have never opposed it and I am being misrepresented.

Ms Follett jumped into the picture then. She is going to do everything to get this building up before the end of the year, she says, because we need it. But where did she spring to the support of the ACT and say, "We also want the refurbishment of the old Parliament House and we want the Museum of Australia"? She did not say that. It was very easy to say this because it is totally out of her hands; she has nothing to do with it. Yet she says that she has ordered her bureaucrats. To do what? It is a Commonwealth program on Commonwealth land and funded by the Commonwealth. Of course, Mrs Kelly gets into the act too. Mrs Kelly demands that Trevor Kaine distance himself from John Hewson. Why would I? I have read John Hewson's comment; I agree with him entirely. The building is needed. The officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade are entitled to reasonable accommodation. The building that they are in is unsatisfactory. That is what I said. That is what John Hewson said. But, of course, you will misrepresent. Either you do not listen and you do not hear, or you deliberately misrepresent; I do not know which.

While we are on the question of misrepresenting John Hewson and misrepresenting the members of the Liberal Party in this Assembly, we also have some contempt for the unemployed, says Ms Ellis. I would like to know what this Government has done for the unemployed in the last 24 hours. They even misrepresent their capital works program; they pretend to put it about that it is going to create 3,500 jobs. It is not going to create 3,500 jobs. It is merely going to support the existing work force, although there might be, maybe, 500 new jobs - that is if the private sector can drag itself off its knees and employ more people. They are doing what the Follett Government is trying to do. They are trying to do their job with fewer people because they cannot afford to employ more people. There is no guarantee whatsoever that the contractors who take on that work will hire more people. They will try to do it with the people they have and maintain their businesses at the current level.

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Let us look at this allegation that we have contempt for the unemployed. Mr Berry has made much over recent months of trying to explain the Fightback program. Let us look at the Fightback program. What does it attempt to do? The Fightback program attempts to do what the Labor Government has screwed up for the last 10 years.

**Mr Connolly:** There is a good article about Fightback in this week's *Bulletin*.

**MR KAINE:** There is a good article I have here, too, and it is a good explanation of it. What does the Fightback program aim to do? It aims to deal with the state of the economy that the Labor Government has created over the last 10 years. Living standards have been seriously eroded. Can anybody deny that? Nearly one million Australians are unemployed. Can anybody deny that? Stand up and say that that is not true. Thirty per cent of young Australians are unemployed. Can you deny that? We have a massive foreign debt. Can you deny that? Incentive has been stifled by a heavy tax burden on individuals and business. Can you deny that? That applies even in the ACT. Have a look at yesterday's budget. There are falling education standards and quality of training. Labor obviously believe that, because whenever you talk about unemployment they say, "More training. More positions in TAFE and schools is the solution to unemployment". There is an inefficient national infrastructure.

That is the result of 10 years of Labor government. The Fightback program attempts to attack that. Mr Berry gets up and he talks about the 15 per cent GST. The coalition's Fightback program has 20 major points to it.

**Mr Berry:** We are distancing ourselves from the GST now?

**MR KAINE:** I will get to that in a minute. There is a total program covering 20 different points. I will not run through them all, because some of these people over here would not understand the words in most of them; but there is a commitment to labour market reform to achieve more productive and rewarding workplaces.

**Mr Connolly:** Yes, bashing unions.

**MR KAINE:** Boy, they are paranoid, this lot. You talk about labour market reform and they say that it is union bashing. Another element of the 20-point plan is lower, fairer taxes across the board, including a 30 per cent reduction in personal income tax; abolition of wholesale sales taxes; reductions in capital gains tax; abolition of superannuation lump sum taxes; abolition of payroll tax; abolition of petroleum product excises; and a reduction in taxes on business, including import competing business, and on exports.

**Mr Berry:** Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order. If it were related to the York Park matter, this would be entirely relevant. Reading out the propaganda that has been printed by the Liberal Party is probably testing the relevance rule.

**Ms Follett:** Straying from relevance.

**Mr Berry:** It strays from the relevance rule. If you want to talk about Fightback, we are happy to do it.

**MR KAINE:** I can understand that they are a bit sensitive about this. I think I have said enough.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I was waiting with interest to see the relevance, and I will continue to wait with interest.

**MR KAINE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is just as relevant as the lecture we had on DFAT. I would point out to Ms Ellis that I happen to have a daughter and a son-in-law in the foreign service. They have served in places like Kenya, Somalia and others. I know very well the conditions under which they work. I did not need the history lesson and the lecture from Ms Ellis as to the conditions under which they work. That was totally irrelevant. The building over here has nothing to do with when they were in Somalia or Washington; it has to do with when they are in Canberra, when they are not entitled to any better accommodation than any other public servant. That little lecture was totally irrelevant and we should address the issue.

Madam Speaker, before I sit down, I would like to move an amendment to the motion, and that is:

Omit paragraph (1), substitute the following paragraph:

"(1) supports the development of York Park for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;"

Omit paragraph (3).

Ms Ellis in no way demonstrated the cost-effectiveness of any planned development. We do not even know what the plan is yet. How she can say that it is cost-effective, I cannot imagine. To pass that part of the motion would prove us to be shallow and to have no possible conception of what the end product is going to be. I submit that members of the Assembly ought not support paragraph (3).

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Kaine, because this is, in fact, two amendments, would you seek leave to move the two amendments together, please?

**MR KAINE:** I seek leave, Madam Speaker.

Leave granted.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr Kaine. Everything else is in order.

**Mr Berry:** We would like to talk about them separately.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You can talk about them separately now that leave has been given.

**MR LAMONT (12.04):** It is indeed a propitious time for us to be discussing this matter of private members business. I think that Mr Kaine and the Liberals, if they support the comments that he has made, should be congratulated. They should be congratulated, for this indeed is the greatest turnaround in anybody's political position that we have had the misfortune to see. It is nothing but a turnaround. There is a substantial difference between the position and the policies offered by the Hewson-Kaine Liberal team in Canberra and the Follett

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Labor Government, as announced in this budget last evening. A great difficulty has been thrust upon the local Liberals. I do not believe that Mr Kaine has attempted deliberately to misrepresent the position of the Liberals and their support or non-support.

**Mr Kaine:** I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I do not believe that I set out deliberately to misrepresent anything. In fact, I tried to present my case fairly and honestly, and I would like that to be withdrawn.

**MR LAMONT:** I thought that was what I said. I do not believe that you deliberately set out to mislead.

**Mr Kaine:** In that case, I accept it.

**MR LAMONT:** Thank you, Mr Kaine.

**Mr Connolly:** If you want him to withdraw it and say that you did, that is all right.

**MR LAMONT:** I will repeat it, and I am also prepared to withdraw it. Mr Kaine, I do not believe that you did, in fact, deliberately set out to mislead; but that, in effect, is what has happened. On the one hand, I and many other Canberrans heard your comments in relation to the refurbishment of the old Parliament House and a number of other projects in the capital works inquiry. A whole range of things that you have supported, we have supported. We have all supported them. It is somewhat contrary to the comments that you made, I would submit, for quite obvious political reasons, in support of those projects, to support on the other hand Fightback, because Fightback - the "frightpack", or one of the other names it will be given between now and the next election - quite deliberately sets out to decimate the ACT. It quite deliberately sets out to decimate the economic and employment base in the ACT.

I need but remind you, Mr Kaine, of the *Canberra Times* article by Ross Peake and Jodie Brough of 25 August. It stated:

Dr Hewson told *The Canberra Times* he was prepared to risk the wrath of Canberra people with his strong opposition to the building.

He said flatly, "We are going to do everything we can to make sure it doesn't go ahead. We will campaign on it and I think it's indicative of how out of touch they are".

Mr Kaine, on 26 August - - -

**Mr De Domenico:** In the form proposed, he said.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr De Domenico - - -

**Mr De Domenico:** Tell him to tell the whole truth, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Berry:** I raise a point of order. There is an imputation there. I think Mr De Domenico ought to withdraw that. He is disorderly as well. A little bit of silence would help the speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr De Domenico, I have repeatedly warned you to stop interjecting. I would ask you to desist, please.

**Mr Berry:** Madam Speaker, he did impute that Mr Lamont was not telling the truth.

**Mr De Domenico:** I did no such thing.

**Mr Berry:** You said, "Tell the whole truth".

**Mr De Domenico:** That is right. That is what I said - "Tell the whole truth". I did not impute anything.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I am sorry, Mr Berry; I did not hear that interjection. Mr De Domenico, I will ask you to desist from interjecting, particularly from making interjections of that nature. Mr Lamont, would you continue, please.

**MR LAMONT:** I will conclude on this point in my remaining five minutes. On 26 August, the next day, Dr Hewson appeared to strengthen his stand.

**Mr Humphries:** I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I again appeal to you on the question of the relevance of the references to Dr Hewson. The motion before the Assembly deals only with the ACT Liberals, not with Dr Hewson. There is no way that reference to Dr Hewson's views on York Park can be of any - - -

**Mr Connolly:** You just quoted him for 10 minutes.

**Mr Humphries:** Because you quoted him at us. There is no way that it can be considered relevant to a debate about the ACT Liberal Party's position on York Park.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Humphries, I did allow Mr Kaine to continue to talk about Dr Hewson, and I believe that I should allow Mr Lamont to continue to talk about Dr Hewson. Your point is understood, Mr Humphries. We are indeed talking about the ACT and I will listen further and wait for the relevance of those comments to the ACT.

**MR LAMONT:** Madam Speaker, the precise relevance will become apparent very quickly and it will embarrass the people on the other side. I can understand why they do not wish us to continue. I quote the *Canberra Times* again:

Yesterday, Dr Hewson appeared to strengthen his stand, saying it would be fought on all fronts and that his opposition should not be read as anti-Canberra.

"I don't think you should see a building like that in relation to the circumstances in Canberra," he said. "Canberra hasn't been hit as hard as the rest of Australia, that is true, but you've got to assess a building like that on its merits and DFAT does not deserve that building."

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The article goes on to show where the relevance is, Madam Speaker. I quote:

Mr Kaine said he was "not at odds with the general thrust" of Dr Hewson's remarks.

What I think should come out of this debate is not the rhetoric, which it quite obviously is, that the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues have been going on with in relation to this project; they should stand up and wear the ignominy of having to change their position. They are now going to have to come out, Madam Speaker, and say quite clearly that what they said in the reports that we have referred to was wrong; that they do, in fact, support the total construction of York Park in terms of the DFAT building; that it is appropriate that the DFAT building go ahead, as evidenced, Madam Speaker, by their amendment.

It is quite clear that Mr Kaine and the Liberals are diametrically opposed to the position adopted by John Hewson. In fact, Madam Speaker, in view of these quotes attributable to Mr Kaine, Mr Kaine should have the temerity to go on the public record of the *Canberra Times* and have them withdraw them. What he said then is incorrect, or what he said now is incorrect - one of the two. Either he was incorrect then or he is incorrect now. He cannot have it both ways. Or, once again, as I said at the outset, it is the greatest turnaround that we have seen because they are trying to get out from under.

These people opposite took great pleasure in supporting John Hewson. Mr Kaine said, "Here is the bible. Here is the word according to Kaine. This is my vision for Canberra". It was the Fightback. It was the Fightback leaflet put out by his leader. That document talks about the decimation of the ACT economy. Not only does it talk about the relocation of government employees out of the ACT, not only does it talk about thousands of jobs being taken out of the ACT; it also talks about a complete undermining of areas such as the real estate industry. That is the natural conclusion that you must draw from what the Liberals have said.

Here, Madam Speaker, is the inconsistency. On the one hand we have statements made in the media, trying to convince the people of Canberra that they have nothing to worry about because, really, this package is going to be good for Canberra. They say, "We have a few little scruples that we think might interfere with the development at York Park. It should go ahead, we think. But we really support Dr Hewson and we are not too sure what we are going to do. We will have a committee meeting about it and we will change our mind". That has been the line that we have heard.

It is indicative at least of the flexibility of the Opposition that they had the audacity, if nothing else, to put forward an amendment that we will support. I think that it is an amendment that needs to be supported.

**Mr Humphries:** Bowing to the wind, eh?

**MR LAMONT:** Probably not the deletion of paragraph (3), but the manager of government business will handle that. It is very good, if nothing else, to see once again the flexibility of the Liberals. I am not quite sure that the people of Canberra will accept that. They certainly did not accept it six months ago, and they will not be accepting it in three years' time.



**MR DE DOMENICO** (12.14): Madam Speaker, we have just heard one of the most irrelevant pieces of diatribe. It is quite obvious, Madam Speaker. Let me quote fully, unlike members on the opposite side of the chamber. We believe in telling it as it is, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Let us see what Dr Hewson did actually say. I will quote, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Connolly:** Relevance, Mr Humphries?

**MR DE DOMENICO:** This is very relevant, Mr Connolly. If you sit down and listen you might learn something. I quote what Dr Hewson did say:

We will do all we can to ensure that this construction proposal is not railroaded through the Parliament's proper approval processes and that contracts are not signed before the next election. We will ensure over the coming months that all aspects of the Government's proposed building - including the tendering process and other alternatives to address the current accommodation problem - are fully and properly scrutinised.

That is very credible, Madam Speaker, and it is very right.

**Mr Kaine:** It is the same process that the Government here used in connection with the South Building.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** That is right. I also repeat for the record something else that Dr Hewson said, Madam Speaker. I quote:

We do not doubt that the current building in which the Department is housed has health and occupational safety problems. These need to be remedied as soon as possible.

So much for the humbug and the distortions said by people on the other side of the house. What we are seeing here this morning, Madam Speaker, is an attempt by the mouthpieces of other Federal members to stand up here and play politics. If they want to play politics, we will play politics too.

**Mr Humphries:** They accused us of the same thing.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** We are accused of doing the same thing. When we realise who the mouthpieces are speaking on behalf of, Madam Speaker, we all know why this is going on.

**Mr Connolly:** I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I think it is quite inconsistent with parliamentary practice to accuse any member of being a mouthpiece speaking on behalf of an outside - - -

**Mr Humphries:** On the point of order, Madam Speaker - - -

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Excuse me, Mr Humphries; I was just about to speak. I will take that on notice, Mr Connolly, and rule later.

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**MR DE DOMENICO:** As I said before I was rudely interrupted, Madam Speaker, all this is being attempted by the members on the other side, the other mouthpieces on the other side of the chamber. And who are they talking on behalf of? Australia's rowing coach, Mrs Kelly, the person who ran alongside, issuing instructions in Barcelona, or so she told us on ABC radio when we listened to it that Saturday morning. That is what this is all about.

The Liberal Party, as Mr Kaine quite correctly said, at no time have said that we are against the development of York Park. It is a wonder that Ms Ellis did not say what I said on ABC radio. I once again agreed with my leader, Mr Kaine. Being a member of the committee that Ms Ellis is on, by the way, she should have been aware, because I am sure that she was at the meeting, that both Mr Kaine and I supported the development of York Park, two or three months in advance of what Dr Hewson, Mrs Kelly or anybody else might have said. Ms Ellis, had she done the research properly, would know that what she said here this morning was a very liberal bending of the truth.

What this motion is all about once again, Madam Speaker, is the Government's attempt to disassociate themselves from the massacre that this country has gone through with the grim reaper Keating in charge and to put it back onto us. It will not work, Ms Ellis, because your research is flawed, as your arguments are flawed. We know exactly who you represent here from time to time, because we know where you learnt your politics - from Australia's rowing coach.

**Mr Connolly:** She did all right. I seem to recall that she got a couple of gold medals out of that.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** She gave them to herself.

**MS ELLIS (12.18):** I have to confess to a certain amount of nonplussment following Mr De Domenico's statements. I would like to make a very strong point here, despite the interjections that I am bound to get from my Tuggeranong colleague over there - although one would never know that he is from Tuggeranong, considering the amount of time he spends down there.

I am speaking today on behalf of the public servants who work for DFAT and the population of Canberra about the great import of this project for this community. That is who I am speaking on behalf of. In relation to the amendment, I agree with paragraph (1). In fact I applaud it and welcome it. I will quote it everywhere I go. I am afraid that I do not agree with the second paragraph. It is very relevant to the motion that I have put before the house today to acknowledge the cost-effectiveness of this planned development when you talk about the options that the - - -

**Mr Kaine:** How do you know that it is cost-effective?

**MS ELLIS:** If you had listened earlier you would know the options the Federal Government had to face in deciding how to treat the problems at the DFAT building. Cost-effectiveness is very relevant here. The options were to - - -

**Mr Kaine:** But has it been demonstrated?

**MS ELLIS:** Yes, it has, Mr Kaine.

**Mr Kaine:** It has not been demonstrated to me.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order!

**MS ELLIS:** I demonstrated in my speech earlier this morning that the comparative costs between refurbishment and building undeniably point to the cost-effectiveness of building the new project. For that reason, Madam Speaker, I am afraid that I do not agree to the second paragraph of the amendment; but I do agree to the first.

Ordered that the question be divided.

Amendment to paragraph (1) agreed to.

Question put:

That the amendment (**Mr Kaine's**) to omit paragraph (3) be agreed to.

The Assembly voted -

*AYES, 8*

*NOES, 9*

Mrs Carnell  
Mr Cornwell  
Mr De Domenico  
Mr Humphries  
Mr Kaine  
Mr Moore  
Mr Stevenson  
Ms Szuty

Mr Berry  
Mr Connolly  
Ms Ellis  
Ms Follett  
Mrs Grassby  
Mr Lamont  
Ms McRae  
Mr Westende  
Mr Wood

Question so resolved in the negative.

**Mr Moore:** That is not right.

**Mr Wood:** That is right, because Mr Westende said no.

**Mr Westende:** Madam Speaker - - -

**MADAM SPEAKER:** If there is confusion over the vote, we can vote again.

**Mr Westende:** Thank you very much.

**Mr Wood:** That is the way it was. It was clear. It was not retracted.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** He has disputed it. We have done this before. Mr Wood, we have allowed this before. I have ruled on this.

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Question put:

That the amendment (**Mr Kaine's**) to omit paragraph (3) be agreed to.

The Assembly voted -

*AYES, 9*

Mrs Carnell  
Mr Cornwell  
Mr De Domenico  
Mr Humphries  
Mr Kaine  
Mr Moore  
Mr Stevenson  
Ms Szuty  
Mr Westende

*NOES, 8*

Mr Berry  
Mr Connolly  
Ms Ellis  
Ms Follett  
Mrs Grassby  
Mr Lamont  
Ms McRae  
Mr Wood

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

**Sitting suspended from 12.35 to 2.30 pm**

## **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

### **Department of Education and Training - Secretary**

**MR KAINE:** I address a question to the Chief Minister in her capacity as Minister responsible for the public service. Will the Chief Minister explain to the Assembly the process that was used for the selection and appointment of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training?

**MS FOLLETT:** I am pleased to explain the process to members. It was a merit selection process. The position was advertised fairly widely. An independent selection panel was formed and candidates were interviewed. From that process, recommendations were made to the Government, and the Government subsequently made a decision to appoint Ms Cheryl Vardon from South Australia to the position.

**MR KAINE:** I ask a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Can the Chief Minister assure us that the person appointed was the person recommended by the interview board?

**MS FOLLETT:** I do not wish to breach the confidentiality of people's applications for positions, but I can certainly confirm that Ms Vardon was recommended for the position.

## **Budget - Employment and Training**

**MS ELLIS:** My question is directed to the Chief Minister. How many new jobs and work experience and training positions are created by the budget?

**MS FOLLETT:** It will be clear to all members that the Government's budget had as its priority job generation and training, and I think that is an appropriate priority, particularly in these times. You can clearly identify 1,200 new jobs and training opportunities generated by the budget. They are additional places over and above the normal run of positions created by the Government's activities.

I will go through some of those opportunities, for the information of members. There are 220 new places in government work experience and training, and there is, furthermore, an increase in capital works expenditure of a total of \$32.8m, which will support an additional 300 jobs. That is 300 over what the normal capital works budget would have supported. Those are jobs in the building and construction industry. There will be a flow-on of an additional 220 jobs in other industries such as retail and finance, property and business services, and so on.

Particularly on the training side, there are 500 additional places provided for in TAFE as a result of significant Commonwealth funding under the Australian National Training Authority agreement and our own and the Commonwealth's training initiatives. In addition, there is funding in the budget for 100 places in the ACT's own Jobskills program. That provides paid work experience and training opportunities for people over 21 and, largely, people who have been unemployed in the longer term.

There is provision for additional employment and development opportunities for youth in the 15 to 19 years age group through a work force development scheme that will provide employment for 30 young people, 10 of whom would be part time; for 10 additional places under the Australian traineeship scheme; and for nine additional apprenticeships. We will be establishing the ACT's youth conservation corps, which will provide 40 places in the current year and 80 places in subsequent years, for young unemployed people to gain workplace training and experience. We have established, as well, the mature age women's traineeship scheme to provide women over the age of 30 years who have been out of the work force for some time with appropriate work experience and training to assist them in gaining further employment. There will be 20 of those places offered this year.

We have added to the funding for the new enterprise incentive scheme, which will enable the establishment of a further 12 self-employment ventures by people who are unemployed. We have increased the funding under the employment and training grants program to provide additional support to community organisations, which in turn provide employment and training opportunities for people who have been disadvantaged in the labour market. I believe that that latter program is particularly effective in providing training opportunities, but it is difficult to quantify the number of people who will go through those community programs.

In addition to those readily quantifiable places, the Government has taken a range of economic development initiatives designed to stimulate employment growth, in particular in the private sector, and to take advantage of opportunities as they emerge. They include the provision of funding for the Tourism Development

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Unit within the Tourism Commission, to attract and develop new events for the ACT, to identify gaps in existing tourism infrastructure, and to build the numbers of visitors to the ACT, which will in turn significantly increase employment prospects in the tourism industry, particularly for young people.

We have also put funds towards the further development of Canberra as a centre for regional and national freight distribution and warehousing. We have put funds into investigating the establishment of an ACT centre for training in waste management and into support for the development of an international hotel management school, with the aim of establishing such a school in the ACT to train hotel managers to the highest possible international standards. Furthermore, we will be coordinating and marketing the ACT's training through the cooperation of the public sector and the private sector, in conjunction with the local business community.

I believe that those employment creation opportunities in the budget are worthwhile and are worth noting. I am pleased that Ms Ellis asked that question. I just add that, in keeping with our commitment to social justice, we have also provided growth funds to community organisations in recognition of the additional demands that are being placed on them at the moment, in particular the superannuation levy. These community organisations are labour intensive organisations, so that could be included as an employment initiative.

Those initiatives I have outlined build on the whole range of existing government programs such as those relating, for instance, to Jobline; the venture and development assistance program; the women's employment strategy and the tradeswomen on the move program; and our own revised service recruitment practices. They are all aimed at enabling people to compete more effectively and, particularly within our own service, for young people to compete more effectively for the ASO 1 and 2 positions - the base level positions. Our budget is clearly focused on real jobs and real training. It is a comprehensive and carefully targeted strategy. It comprises both direct funding of job creation and capital works and support for the private sector to promote the growth of local industry.

### **Police Budget**

**MR HUMPHRIES:** My question is to the Minister responsible for police. I refer him to Budget Paper No. 2, which states that savings of \$1m will be achieved in the costs of ACT community policing. I also refer to Budget Paper No. 3, which states that the major means of making these savings will be through streamlining procedures for the appearance of accused persons in court and technological developments in the provision of breath-testing services. There will be savings of \$1m out of those two arrangements. Given the fact that the new court procedures are still, on the Minister's own announcement a couple of months ago, being trialled, given the fact that almost a quarter of the financial year is already gone, and given the fact that the Government failed to make its savings target last year and blew the budget by \$270,000, will the Minister concede that the \$1m target in this area may not be achieved in this financial year?

**MR CONNOLLY:** I am pleased that the Opposition is at last asking a question about the budget. Mr Humphries accused me of blowing out the budget by some \$240,000 last year. As that is from a man who blew out the health budget by \$17m, I think it was, I reckon \$240,000 is pretty good.

**Mr Berry:** With \$6m unapproved.

**MR CONNOLLY:** Yes, \$6m unapproved. As is clear in the budget papers, and it is explained in a footnote, if Mr Humphries's researchers had bothered to read the footnote, the reason for that overexpenditure in policing was the Aidex demonstrations last year, which were far and away more violent than any intelligence or assessment had led us to believe.

**Mr Humphries:** You should not have encouraged them, then, should you?

**MR CONNOLLY:** That is an outrageous statement and a stupid statement for you to make, Mr Humphries. That is a stupid statement for you to make, because you know that as soon as there was violence we strongly condemned it. You know that we condemn violence, and for you to make those cheap and grubby little interjections ill becomes you.

**Mr Wood:** And they wanted Aidex.

**MR CONNOLLY:** Yes, you are the people who are in favour of arms sales. You are the people who think it is a good thing to be selling weapons.

**Mr Kaine:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order: I think the Minister is getting quite violent now. Can you quieten him down a bit?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you for your advice, Mr Kaine.

**MR CONNOLLY:** Madam Speaker, absent that interjection, which was beneath Mr Humphries, it was clear that we achieved the savings last year on the community policing budget. We overspent because of extraordinary measures that were necessary as a result of Aidex. This year I am totally confident that we will achieve those savings. We have been working on achieving those savings for many months. We have been out implementing those savings.

The voluntary attendance at court scheme will mean that, instead of spending money on police officers running about the town serving summonses, people will agree to turn up at court for minor criminal offences. So far there have been 129 of those in the trial period, which have resulted in 127 attendances at court and two failures to attend that resulted in summonses. So there has been an overwhelming success rate, which is delivering real savings, meaning that we can direct police resources to community policing and beat policing rather than running around serving summonses.

In relation to the breathalyser technology, we are confident that that will deliver real savings. We will no longer need to have an expensive and extensive police centralised bureaucratic network to operate the breath analysis machines. Individual patrol officers will be able to do that. That will deliver significant savings. Savings will also be achieved on this year's budget as a result of the full year effect of last year's roster changes. It will not be necessary to make any further changes to working conditions or rosters. The full year effect of that will deliver those savings.

I note that earlier this year Mr Humphries called on us to trim the police budget. On 8 July, in the *Canberra Times* Mr Humphries made it clear that there was no question but that there should be cuts to the police budget. He suggested that we should call in a consultant to ensure that we could achieve those cuts without affecting services. The do-nothing Alliance Government seemed to need consultants to do anything. Mr Kaine gave a speech at the Canberra University a week or so ago lamenting the fact that nothing happens in the development of public policy. That is not the case under Labor; we get on and achieve savings. We did not need to get consultants in. We have been working on these savings measures for many months, and I am confident that they will deliver the savings, that police will operate well within the budget, and that the standard of service they deliver to this community will continue to be excellent and will be more focused on community policing.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I ask a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Can the Minister tell us how much will be saved from the arrangements for accused persons appearing in court and how much will be saved from the technological developments in the provision of breath testing? And will the Minister put down his pen before he answers the question?

**MR CONNOLLY:** I got carried away by that grubby interjection. The savings will total \$955,000; and we will deliver them. Unlike you failed lot in government, we did not blow our budget out. Two Labor governments delivered and brought in a budget with a surplus or on balance. The one Alliance budget blew it out. We will achieve that \$955,000 saving.

#### **Fyshwick Lease - Compensation**

**MR MOORE:** My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning. I gave him a little notice of this question. Considering that in your own education budget you have had to accept cuts in real terms, could you explain the expenditure of \$700,000, being a settlement for block 3, section 28, Fyshwick, as recorded at page 1158, *Gazette* No. 31, dated 5 August 1992?

**MR WOOD:** This is a matter that is within my frame of knowledge because there are some significant elements attached to it. In fact, it is not \$700,000, although that is what is in the *Gazette*; it is \$1m all-up. It probably needs a little history. The administration declined to renew a lease for the Aarondale boarding kennels at Fyshwick. It had always been the expectation that on the expiry of that lease it would not be renewed, so that the lease could be offered for a more appropriate purpose in Fyshwick.

In the normal course of events, the Australian Valuation Office's valuation was sought to determine what compensation was properly payable to the lessee. Under CALA, that has always been the market value of the improvements on that property. The AVO told us that \$350,000 was their worth. The lessee complained; he did not like that at all, and he appealed to the AAT, who heard it. Ahead of that, the Government paid \$300,000, because we were not disputing that amount of it.



Subsequently, the AAT gave a ruling that the compensation should be \$1m, based on the claim of the lessee that it was not just the improvements for which compensation should be paid but goodwill also. I am sure that members will be aware of the implications of that. So \$700,000 was the balance of that \$1m. The Government has appealed to the Supreme Court on that matter; so I can make no other comment, you will appreciate. The appeal was heard some time in mid to late July. No judgment has yet been handed down, and we await with great interest what that judgment has to say.

**MR MOORE:** I ask a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. If there is a chance that valuations will take into account goodwill, which would be a considerable cost to the Territory, are you in the process of preparing amendments to legislation to ensure that that does not happen in the future?

**MR WOOD:** It is a matter that you can be well aware is much in our minds, Mr Moore. It may be early days. Let us wait and see what the judgment has to say. We will be quite activated if that decision is upheld.

**Mr Kaine:** And aggravated.

**MR WOOD:** I must not comment, Mr Kaine.

### **Certificates of Occupancy**

**MR WESTENDE:** My question is directed to the Minister for Urban Services and relates to the issuing of certificates of occupancy by the building branch, especially in relation to the plumbing and electrical approvals from ACTEW. Is the Minister aware that a certificate is issued by the plumbing branch of ACTEW, but that normally no certificate is issued after the electrical inspection but a straightforward connection is made? Is the Minister also aware that the building branch is currently refusing to issue certificates of occupancy because of their insistence that they require both a plumbing certificate and an electrical certificate? As this problem between ACTEW and the building section is delaying the occupancy of some projects, will the Minister indicate what action will be taken to solve this problem, and when?

**MR CONNOLLY:** Mr Westende draws attention to a quite serious matter. Members would be aware that some months ago a report came to light which indicated that there were some problems with compliance in the home building industry. The Government moved very swiftly after that report came to light because, clearly, the home building industry is a vital sector of the Canberra economy. It is one of the most vibrant areas of the private sector in this town, and we were absolutely concerned to ensure that public confidence in the building industry was maintained. There are too many jobs at stake to allow confidence in the building sector to be undermined. As a result, I gave very clear instructions that Building Control were to be vigilant and ensure that all standards and regulations were enforced.

It would appear that there are some problems in relation to electrical inspection certificates, which for quite some time, it would appear, have not been enforced and have not been required. It is a requirement of the Act and regulations that there be that final electrical inspection. For some time that may not have been required de facto, although it was in the law. I have Building Control and ACTEW working on this. It may be, if we are convinced that it is safe to do so,

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that we will need to amend regulations to dispense with this requirement. Given that there was public concern raised as to whether Building Control was being vigilant, I have directed that all laws and regulations that should be enforced be enforced. If some of those regulations are contradictory or overly regulatory or overly bureaucratic, we will look at them, as we have done in relation to minor building works, where we have cleared red tape out of a whole range of building works.

At the moment, as Mr Westende indicates, it is a problem. There are some delays. I have senior officials of both Building Control and ACTEW looking at the matter. If it is a matter where we need to change regulations we will have to do that, but we are not prepared to say that blind eyes can be turned to any existing regulation or statutory requirement. It is important to preserve public confidence in building integrity.

**MR WESTENDE:** I ask a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. If I give the Minister an instance of where a commercial building has been held up now for over a week, will the Minister look into it and see that the matter is resolved amicably?

**MR CONNOLLY:** I certainly would, in relation to individual matters; but I can assure Mr Westende that we are looking at the whole issue. We are aware of the problem, but it goes to the question of whether that regulation is necessary or unnecessary. It may well be that we end up changing some regulations.

### **Cardio-thoracic Unit**

**MR LAMONT:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Yesterday the Minister announced funding for the planning of a cardio-thoracic unit. What does this mean for the people of the ACT?

**Mrs Carnell:** Not much in the near future; but a good idea, a wonderful idea, totally positive, one of the good things.

**MR BERRY:** You just cannot get it right for the Liberals, can you? Slow, slow, quick, quick, slow, or whatever. "You are not taxing enough; you are taxing too much; you are not spending enough".

This budget makes provision for \$250,000 for the purpose of planning for the establishment of such a unit. The purpose of the unit will be to remove the need for a significant number of people in Canberra to travel interstate for cardio-thoracic surgery. There has been some argument about the numbers in the past. Around election time the figures grow; the real figures could be argued to be significantly lower.

The Government needs to make sure that the unit, when established, is targeted at a range of services which it can provide at the highest level possible. It is pointless to establish a unit if the number of a particular category of patients is not up to the level required to maintain the most efficient level of service in that unit. So the planning is a crucial stage of the development of cardio-thoracic surgery in the ACT. It will require the appointment of a cardio-thoracic surgeon, who will plan and direct the project. Cardiac surgery skills are necessary for this to happen, since further special tailored programs need to be implemented for nursing and other specialist staff.

There is a lot of local support for this proposal from many sectors. When somebody has a relative who has gone to other places for, say, open-heart surgery, which might involve bypass surgery and those sorts of things, it is inconvenient for many people. At the same time, none amongst those people would wish their loved ones to receive a service that could in any way be described as of a lesser standard than is provided, say, in Sydney. It is a major job for a government to set up one of these units and for it to compare well with the sorts of units that are in place and operating at a high level interstate. It is a difficult job.

The Government promised in the election campaign that it would continue with the planning for the unit. It is contingent on the completion of some of the construction work at the Woden Valley site, the diagnostic and treatment block in particular. It is most important that this planning stage is carried through fairly carefully. We aim to satisfy our election promises. This is an important one, and we have made this judgment on the basis of very careful consideration of the issue because large expenses are involved when we get to the point of providing the service in the ACT.

Our position in relation to the provision of this sort of service in the ACT has been quite different from that of our Liberal opponents. When in government, the Liberals fancied the idea of a private sector hospital providing these services and the Government leasing or - - -

**Mrs Carnell:** No, we do not. We said that that was a possibility.

**MR BERRY:** You favoured the idea. You sang its praises and said, "That private hospital might provide cardio-thoracic surgery". Its praises were sung by Mr Humphries, and Mrs Carnell is well known for her support for privatisation.

But our position is quite different. We are about providing access to affordable services in a strong public hospital system for all the people. We are not going to say that the ones that can afford it will go over there and the ones that cannot afford it will go to this substandard hospital over here. We will provide an adequate level of service for all of the people. It will be affordable and it will be accessible. There is none of this ideological claptrap about privatisation. This is about the provision of first-class services for the people of the ACT, and that is why the Government has taken this initial step in a very careful and considered way, to ensure that the services that eventually flow to the community are to a standard that is equal to that anywhere in Australia. I think we owe the people of the ACT nothing less.

### **Health Budget**

**MRS CARNELL:** My question is to the Minister for Health.

**Mr De Domenico:** This is without notice, though, isn't it?

**MRS CARNELL:** Without notice, yes. The budget paper projects a decrease in the proportion of private patients using the public hospital system from 35.5 per cent in 1990-91 to just 30 per cent in the coming year; yet in the health budget an increase in in-patient fee revenue has been projected. Even after taking

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into account one-off payments, et cetera, there is still no budgeted decrease in revenue to allow for the decrease in private patient numbers. Is this another example of Mr Berry hiding behind the business rules in an attempt to make his health budget look credible?

**MR BERRY:** This is just another cheap shot. The Liberals, and some commentators around the town - the ones that are across the issues have been more forthright on the issue - have refused to recognise the importance of business rules and the fact that supplementation occurs in budgets across the public sector. The Liberals were responsible for what will go down as an infamous period in health because of mismanagement. What we had with the Liberals was a period when there was - - -

**Mr Humphries:** Can you answer the question or can't you?

**MR BERRY:** You ought to fidget. There was \$6m of unapproved expenditure, which was, in essence, an illegal expenditure of public money. So there was a period of illegal payment. In relation to the health budget in the ACT, there will be business rules and the business rules will take account of costs that increase beyond the control of Health. That is a quite reasonable approach, and the business rules will take account of that.

We are not about guessing what is going to happen in the future in the way we budget. The business rules will take into account those increases in costs to Health or decreases in revenue that arise because of circumstances such as changes in the public-private patient mix. That will be assessed from time to time. As needs arise, requests for supplementation or otherwise will be made in the normal way. There is nothing new in that. We can predict, for example, that there might be wage increases of a certain order between here and the end of the next financial year. But in this case you do not build them into the budget; you deal with it by way of the business rules.

**Mr Humphries:** That is a blow-out, according to you.

**MR BERRY:** No, a blow-out is when you spend illegally money that you have obtained, and that is what you did - \$6m. I will not do that. I will make sure that we have a structure in place that recognises the already well recognised provision for supplementation in budget processes. Mr Kaine would know well about the need for supplementation when things are out of control, as they were in the case of his colleague - for example, \$6m of unapproved expenditure. And you still gave it to him. The business rules will be in place, and the issue of supplementation for the change in the public and private mix will be assessed from time to time throughout the year.

**MRS CARNELL:** I have a supplementary question. I will not ask the same question; I will ask it in a slightly different way. Why is a prediction made in one part of the budget papers - in fact, only two pages earlier - that there will be a downturn in revenue, and a predictable downturn in revenue, according to the budget papers, not reflected in the budget? Certainly, I accept your point that things are out of the control of the Government. In this particular case, in your budget paper you have said that the downturn to 30 per cent is predictable and is what is happening in the rest of Australia. It is not reflected in the budget. Why?

**MR BERRY:** Because we are not fools, and that is the big difference between us and some other people who comment on health budgets. If you are half a per cent out on that sort of prediction, that is \$1m. For budgeting purposes, it will be assessed from time to time, and applications for supplementation will be made in the normal way.

### **Healthy Cities Program**

**MS SZUTY:** My question is also directed to the Minister for Health. On 13 August the Minister informed the Assembly, in response to a question without notice from me, that funding for the healthy cities program was being considered. Although it would be unlikely that the Health Promotion Fund would be funding the program, the Minister felt that the program could approach other areas of government for funding. Can the Minister inform the Assembly whether a decision on the future funding of the healthy cities program has been made and whether any area of government has indicated a willingness to provide continuing recurrent funding?

**MR BERRY:** I can say that the healthy cities program has not been funded from the Health Promotion Fund. I can also say that I have asked my officers to talk to other agencies with a view to establishing an appropriate source of funding for the healthy cities program. I am not able to give an up-to-date progress report, but I can say that we have taken those steps and that we are examining other areas for funding which may be available to the healthy cities program. I have to say that the healthy cities people were, on my recollection of it, aware that their funding would run out this year in terms of the Health Promotion Fund. It was not something that would have come as a surprise to them. We are pursuing other avenues. I cannot say that we will fund them from other areas. All I can say is that we will pursue every avenue possible to - - -

**Mr Kaine:** And overturn every stone.

**MR BERRY:** We will kick over every stone, too, Trevor, with a view to a positive response.

### **ACT Racing Club**

**MR DE DOMENICO:** My question is to the Deputy Chief Minister in his capacity as Sport Minister. I refer to his press release of yesterday wherein he advised us of certain allocations from the Racecourse Development Fund to the ACT Racing Club. I ask: How much money is the ACT Racing Club borrowing in addition to the Racecourse Development Fund allocation, and where are the interest payments coming from?

**MR BERRY:** We have offered to assist the Racing Club with support for the interest payments, and the obligation for interest payments would come from whatever lending institution the Racing Club chose to borrow the money from.

**Mr De Domenico:** You are paying the interest. Where are you getting the money?

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**MR BERRY:** The Racecourse Development Fund would be providing the backing for that sort of approach. I presume that the - - -

**Mr De Domenico:** You are the Minister.

**MR BERRY:** We have indicated to the Racing Club that we will provide support for that interest. One option that was considered in the past was the SLISS program, but I do not think all options are closed at this point. It is clear that the Racing Club will have to borrow some money to complete the project.

**Mr De Domenico:** How much?

**MR BERRY:** I think the overall project is a little over \$2m. I do not have the exact figures in front of me right now. There will be an interest obligation, and we have said that we will give support to the Racing Club. On issues of principle, I think that is the way to deal with it. The Racecourse Development Fund did not have the money to fund the whole project and they wanted to get on with it. The interest that is paid by the club will be supported.

#### **Commissioner for the Environment**

**MRS GRASSBY:** My question is to the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning. In yesterday's budget the Government announced that a new position of Commissioner for the Environment would be established. How will the Canberra community benefit from this initiative, and when will the commissioner's position be filled?

**Mr Kaine:** "And can I have the job?"

**MR WOOD:** To answer the second part of the question first, we will provide a good officer to do that job, so I think we have just ruled Mr Kaine out. We are not satisfied with his environmental credentials; and, secondly, we do not want to get rid of him. We are very happy with you, Mr Kaine.

**Mr Kaine:** I know. It is because I am full of charm and personality. That is why you like to have me here.

**MR WOOD:** That is debatable, Mr Kaine. Initially, the position will probably be filled in an administrative way with a permanent officer, before we get legislation up, so that we can act quickly on this and have it all in place. Canberra is very proud and careful of its environment. I believe that our environment is good. We have to do more than simply maintain it; I believe that we have to improve that environment.

The commissioner will, very broadly - I will not get into all the detail - hear complaints about the environment, where people have concerns about what is happening. He or she will deliver an annual report on the state of the environment and will further issue reports on specific and important matters as he or she considers appropriate or as directed by the Government. I table a document concerning the Commissioner for the Environment so that members may see it and comment. I am making this document widely available in the community as we draw up the legislation.

**Ms Follett:** Madam Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the notice paper.

### **Police Budget**

**MR CONNOLLY:** Madam Speaker, during question time Mr Humphries asked for a breakdown on the police savings. Have you got a pencil there, Gary? The \$950,000 is broken down to \$522,000 for the disbandment of the central breathalyser unit; \$87,000 this financial year for voluntary attendance at court, or VATAC, which will expand in a full year; \$100,000, being the full year effect of the roster review that was effected last year; and some \$243,000 by way of reduction of corporate overheads being negotiated with the Commonwealth parent body.

### **Needle Exchange Program**

**MR BERRY:** Yesterday Mrs Carnell asked a question about needle exchange. It was leading up to 3 o'clock, when the Chief Minister was about to talk about our budget. I have a long answer here. Essentially, it needs to be said that the Government has always supported the needle exchange program. When it was introduced in the ACT it was innovative and it has proved to be a good program; there is no question about that. Mrs Carnell raised issues about sharing of needles and reusing of needles, and asked whether that was a health risk. I accept that people who share needles do risk spreading the virus. At the same time, we have to recognise that people reuse needles but - -

**Mrs Carnell:** Not if they can get them.

**MR BERRY:** Even if they can get them, people do reuse. We have to talk about the ability to clean the things with sodium hyperchloride and water and those sorts of things if they are going to reuse. The education programs go on, as I am sure everybody will appreciate. Rather than go on with the detail, I seek leave to incorporate the answer in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*Document incorporated at Appendix 1.*

### **LAND (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT LEASES Papers**

**MR WOOD** (Minister for Education and Training, Minister for the Arts and Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning): Madam Speaker, for the information of members, I present 16 leases granted pursuant to the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, in accordance with the circulated list.

*The list read as follows:*

Land (Planning and Environment) Act - Leases, together with executive statements -

Belconnen, section 76, blocks 6 and 7.

Duffy, section 37, block 13.

Evatt, section 25, block 12.

Florey, section 50, block 4.

Fyshwick, section 28, block 1.

Hall, section 3, block 13.

Higgins, section 36, block 13.

Hughes, section 41, block 5.

Kambah, section 228, block 1; section 461, block 33; section 494, block 4; section 518, block 5.

O'Connor, section 55, block 8.

Spence, section 33, block 3.

Watson, section 58, block 7.

### **INDEPENDENT HEALTH COMPLAINTS UNIT Ministerial Statement and Paper**

**MR BERRY** (Minister for Health, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport), by leave: Today I wish to release a discussion paper on the establishment of an independent health complaints unit in the Australian Capital Territory and, in doing so, I would like to make a few points. Firstly, Labor is committed to the best health care system possible; but the best means more than just best staff and equipment, though that is also our goal. The best includes the most responsive and the most accessible, the most flexible and the most open health system. Proper, fast and effective handling of complaints, I am sure members will appreciate, is a crucial part of such a system.

Secondly, establishing such a unit is in no way a reflection upon the superb health staff and institutions we have in the ACT, public and private. We can be proud of what we have, whilst being determined to make it better. Not even the best systems, I am sure members will agree, are perfect. As health systems get bigger, more complicated and more diverse, mistakes will happen. We need to be able to rectify those mistakes, not assume that they are the price to be paid for a modern health system. That price, in what is often avoidable pain and misery, is too high to be allowed to continue.

This proposal has been a long time coming. In 1990, during debate on the Health Services Bill, the Australian Labor Party sought to retain proposals for improved quality assurance. These were rejected by the Kaine Government in one of its many, what I have described as, anti-community decisions. We knew that a complaints unit was needed, however, and put it in our election commitments for 1992. In the last couple of days two very important election commitments made by the Australian Labor Party have surfaced.

Such a unit is needed for many reasons. In spite of the conservative ideology many commentators follow, problems with health care are not confined to the public sector. Canberra health consumers continually complain to me about the quality of care from the private sector, but up until now there was nowhere for aggrieved consumers to go. Registration boards are limited to dealing with cases of individual misconduct, and such episodes are the small minority of complaints. Nevertheless, I look forward to the cooperation of the registration boards, whose members give their time free out of a commitment to the health care of Canberra, to be a key part of the complaints handling system.



In an age of increasingly corporate health care, this is not enough. Our proposal is for a separate unit with its own legislation and staffing to take complaints about any health care service or provider; to provide a safe, confidential process of conciliating those complaints; to be able to investigate quickly the more serious complaints or complaints that cannot be conciliated; to refer complaints to relevant bodies such as registration boards; to make reports to me, the Assembly, registration boards and other bodies; to investigate wider problems in the health system, such as access to services, trends in complaints, and so on; and to educate consumers and providers to promote and respect their health rights and responsibilities.

In the longer term, the range of complaints handled by the ACT independent health complaints unit will be reviewed periodically. Initially, it is proposed that priority should be given to handling complaints against institutional or corporate health care providers such as hospitals or nursing homes; complaints against registered health practitioners and professionals, irrespective of whether they are employed in the public or private sector; complaints against members of non-registered professions such as homoeopaths or acupuncturists; and complaints against those providing or purporting to provide health services, such as alternative providers, including natural therapists and acupuncturists.

Complaints can be about treatment - inadequate or wrong diagnosis or treatment; communication - failure to consult, poor attitude or discourtesy, which are shopfront issues; costs - level, disclosure or appropriateness of charges; access - things such as delay in treatment, discharge or transfer or being refused admission; rights - access to records, insufficient consent, privacy and discrimination; and administration, which might involve public health standards, administration and quackery in relation to unregistered people and illegality.

A complaint against a perceived refusal to treat, for example, would first be referred by the complaints unit back to the provider for their comments. The relevant registration board might also be notified. If it was felt that the complaint was best handled by a board, the complaints unit would hand over the complaint and await a report from the board. Alternatively, the complaints unit could continue to handle the complaint. Depending on the provider's response, the unit might then simply pass on the response to the consumer. Since many complainants only want further explanation, such a response is often enough to resolve a complaint. If the consumer is not satisfied, the unit could seek to informally resolve the complaint or proceed to full conciliation. In conciliation, protected by privilege, the consumer and the provider could come to an agreement about the complaint. That may involve money or an apology. If conciliation failed or, more likely, if the complaint were deemed unsuitable for conciliation, the unit would be able to use its investigation powers to review all aspects of the complaint and make a report to any appropriate authority.

The unit will not be charging around attacking doctors. It is not intended to be an adversarial body. The consultation process might be, but the Government would resist that. In my view, it has a role to educate many of us who assume that medicine can cure all instantly and that, if it does not, it is someone's fault. As I have said before, mistakes do happen, and we need to realise that. But some mistakes happen for particular reasons, and the unit can identify these reasons. This unit is long overdue. Most other States have or will establish similar units, and we need to do so as well - not simply to copy them, but because we all face similar problems.

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The paper I am tabling today is a discussion paper on which we want community views. The Government is committed to giving all sectors of Canberra's community the opportunity to have their say. The next two months will be given over to consulting with consumers, doctors, professional associations and anyone else who has a view. The Government wants a complaints unit everybody accepts and will work with. Members will note that there will be an advisory council on the unit, and I look forward to having some of our most skilled and experienced community and professional representatives on that council to advise me on how the unit is operating and to act as a link between the unit and key stakeholders. The ACT has generally managed to avoid the large-scale disasters that have occurred in New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland. This is not to minimise the tragedies some individuals have suffered; but, as the number of health facilities increases, so does the risk of such events. This unit will not guarantee perfection, but I submit that it will help.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, it is important to emphasise that, as I have mentioned earlier, we want to rule out the adversarial nature that some might perceive these sorts of bodies as promoting. It is about conciliation more than anything. It is about ensuring that we have an understanding of the community's attitude to the provision of health services right across the board amongst the providers. It is also most important that an education process is in place to ensure that the community is aware of the difficulties among health providers but at the same time is extremely confident that the body to which they might complain is independent enough to progress an investigation that will bring down a result that is fair - not just to the patient or the consumer, but to all concerned. Ultimately, it is my aim to promote this approach amongst the profession as something that will be advantageous to the provision of health services as a whole. I present the following papers:

Independent Health Complaints Unit -

Discussion paper, dated September 1992.

Ministerial statement, 16 September 1992.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the papers.

Debate (on motion by **Mrs Carnell**) adjourned.

### UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Members will recall that on Thursday, 10 September 1992, I undertook to review the *Hansard* concerning statements made by Mr Berry on Wednesday and statements made by Mr Humphries on Thursday. On Wednesday, during the debate on the Drugs of Dependence (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) 1992, Mr Berry stated that "statements like 'free up access to drugs' are clearly lies". A point of order was taken, stating that Mr Berry had accused opposition members of lying. I subsequently ruled that Mr Berry had not said that anyone from the Opposition had lied, and therefore I did not require a withdrawal.

On Thursday, while Mr Humphries was making a statement by leave concerning an earlier statement by Ms Follett, Mr Humphries said:

Madam Speaker, the statement that there is no directive is clearly a lie.

I subsequently asked Mr Humphries to withdraw, as I considered that Mr Humphries's remarks infringed standing order 55 in that he directly related Ms Follett to the telling of a lie. Mr Berry's remark, however, did not infringe standing order 55, as it was a general comment not directed or attributed to any member. As Mr Humphries has withdrawn the remark, I intend to take no further action.

## **CRIME**

### **Discussion of Matter of Public Importance**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I have received letters from Mrs Carnell, Mr Cornwell, Mr De Domenico, Mr Humphries, Mr Kaine, Mr Lamont, Mr Stevenson and Mr Westende proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly for discussion. In accordance with standing order 79, I have determined that the matter proposed by Mr Humphries be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The serious problem of rising crime in the ACT.

**MR HUMPHRIES (3.27):** I want to say at the outset that the ACT does have a comparatively low crime rate compared with other States. That is a matter which the Government continually reminds us of, and I think we ought to establish at the outset that that is agreed between both sides of this house. Our dispute with the Labor Government concerns the rate at which crime levels are increasing in this Territory. There is clear evidence, I submit, that crime rates are increasing much faster than our population growth rate. People in the ACT, I contend, do not accept the proposition that, as Canberra moves towards big city status, inevitably we must have big city levels of crime. The people of Canberra reject that contention. The Liberal Party in this Assembly rejects that contention.

Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for our opponents opposite. They continually play down the level of crime in the ACT. They explain large increases in the level of crime in this Territory as a manifestation of our trend towards that big city status. They, in other words, are prepared to excuse large increases in crime as something which is inevitable and unavoidable. We do not. We are often attacked for being prepared to beat up crime statistics and policing issues in this Territory, the suggestion being that we are distorting the figures or running a falsehood with the way in which those figures actually come out.

Let us have a look at what the facts are. Mr Connolly holds up a pamphlet about crime in this community. I aim to prove today in this debate that everything said in that pamphlet can be borne out by the facts, and nowhere more clearly than in the ACT. If anyone had doubts about increasing crime rates and the problems that they entail in this community, they would only have to read the most recent annual report of the Director of Public Prosecutions tabled a few weeks ago in

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this Assembly by the Attorney-General himself. The report is, frankly, a slap in the face for Labor's "don't worry, be happy" attitude towards crime in this community. The Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Crispin, says in his 1991-92 annual report:

Historically, the ACT has enjoyed a low crime rate compared to other Australian jurisdictions and, even now, can be regarded as a fortunate community in many respects. However, recent trends offer obvious cause for concern and there is no reason to imagine that they will not be sustained at least for some time.

Mr Crispin, who has been cited with authority and approval in other respects in this place from time to time, goes on to talk about the level of crime and the problem with increasing crime rates. He says on page 4 of his report - quite up-front, quite early in the report:

The most disturbing aspect of the year was the continued escalation in the crime rate.

Notice the words there - "the continued escalation in the crime rate". He is not fudging this. He is not talking about an increase in the rate of prosecutions; he is not talking about an increase in the trend in particular areas. He is talking about the continued escalation in the crime rate - not ambiguous, no pulled punches, not anything that the Government can take comfort from. He goes on to say:

The number of charges laid under the Crimes Act ... increased by a further 36% to 5,523. The figure for 1988/89 was 2,854. Consequently this year's figure represents an increase of 93.5% in just three years.

That figure is shameful; it is utterly shameful. How any government could fail to come back into this Assembly and announce that it was going to take drastic measures to deal with this serious problem is beyond me. Mr Crispin goes on to say:

The increase in drug charges has been even more dramatic. During the same period the figures have risen from 246 -

that is 1988-89 we are talking about there -

to 546, an increase of 122%. Between 1988 and 1991 the ACT population increased by only 6.5% and it is obvious that such huge increases in the number of prosecutions cannot be explained by normal demographic changes.

The Minister has been quick to scramble for excuses on this matter. His excuse has been, "The figures that the DPP is talking about here are not increases in crime rates; they are increases in prosecution rates. What could be the case is that our ACT police are getting wonderfully more efficient and are able to sustain greatly improved levels of prosecution and apprehension, and that results in this great upsurge in figures by the DPP in his report". The fact of life is that you cannot gloss over those figures in that fashion. You simply cannot explain them in that way. Indeed, the DPP himself goes on to discount that possibility. He says:

Whilst there may have been many causes the emotional impact of the recession, particularly amongst the young unemployed, cannot be discounted as a probable factor.

He also, I understand, ridiculed the suggestion that police efficiency accounts for increases of 122 per cent in just three years in prosecutions for drug offences. We know that that is just rubbish. We know that that is just an excuse grasped for by the Government. We should be looking at solutions to these problems, not scrambling for excuses.

Report after report produced in and for this Territory has pointed to increasing crime rates in Canberra well in excess of our population growth rate. The most recent AFP annual report is another source of alarm on this question. Between 1986-87 and 1990-91, reported offences increased as follows: Robbery, up 88 per cent; burglary of shops, up 75 per cent; burglary of homes, up 16 per cent; property damage, up 82 per cent; arson, up 285 per cent. We can make lots of excuses. None of these figures by itself proves a thing - I concede that. There is a very small number of cases of arson in the ACT each year. A small spate of cases gives a huge increase in the figures. By itself, none of these figures proves a thing; but collectively they spell big trouble, and the Government has to take the first step and acknowledge that big trouble.

Another source of concern is an NRMA report based on insurance claims resulting from burglary. That report indicated that burglary in the Territory had doubled since 1983. The figure was up 17 per cent alone in the 1990-91 financial year over the previous year. The NRMA report said that the highest risk postcode in the ACT equates with burglary rates in the twelfth highest risk suburb in Sydney. We might not be at Sydney or Melbourne standards, but we are catching up extremely quickly. The increase in burglary rates has occurred at a time when rates in Sydney and Newcastle, in fact, have declined. That has been a sustained decrease there. Police earlier this year reported that there were 1,200 burglaries in the first 12 weeks of the year in the ACT. That is about 100 a week. This compares with about 85 a week in 1990-91. It is an alarming trend, by any standard. There is no question that the ACT is experiencing increases in many crime rates well beyond our population growth rate.

We can argue about these statistics forever, but I want to relate a couple of matters which I have come across while talking about and looking at crime in our community. I toured the Lyneham shops some time ago at the request of one of the shopkeepers there, and I spoke to most of the shopkeepers in that area. Every single last one of them had experienced some problem with crime. Nearly all said to me that they wanted to see more police on the beat in that particular shopping centre. They all said that they had not seen police in their shopping centre recently and felt that the presence, the profile, of police there was too low. Nearly all had distressing stories about theft, vandalism, armed robbery or property damage.

One shopowner, a woman, had been confronted by a youth with a knife in broad daylight. She had been robbed, and the experience had left her so shaken that it took her a very long time before she could venture back into her own shop. Another constituent, this time a shopowner in Garema Place, reported that despite the presence of the police shopfront only a few metres from his own premises he has been continually troubled by criminal behaviour late at night.

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On one occasion he found vomit smeared all over his shopfront as a result of a confrontation earlier in the evening with a group of youths. The next morning the shopowner was forced to clean the vomit off his shopfront. I do not think those things are anything to be complacent about. They demand action. They demand swift and decisive action on the part of the ACT Government.

The question is: What are we to do about this? The first problem is identifying that you have a problem. The second is: What do you do about it? The Liberals have long had a two-pronged approach to crime. The first arm concerns simply dealing with the symptoms. It means dealing with crime at its place of commission. It means unashamedly getting tough with criminals. Our record stands. We have introduced move-on powers - a policy supported by the member for Canberra, Ros Kelly. We have introduced dry-area laws. We have attempted to toughen the Bail Act. We have done a number of other things in this place which I think indicate that we believe that there must be a much stronger effort in combating crime as it manifests itself in this community.

The second arm of our attack is, in fact, to deal with the underlying causes of crime. That means creating and producing real and lasting jobs through lifting the tax burden on business and allowing business to expand and grow and remove the great pool of unemployed who unfortunately have been the chief victims of circumstances that obviously, as the DPP suggests, have some connection with the problem of increasing crime.

Labor's recession has almost certainly helped to contribute to higher crime rates. I do not exonerate the Federal Government by any means; but the local Labor Party has contributed by omission, if nothing else, to these serious statistics. They have opposed move-on powers. They have opposed dry-area legislation. They have done nothing about the fight against armed robbery. They have failed to open the psychiatric wing at the Belconnen Remand Centre. They became involved in an unnecessary and protracted industrial dispute with police last year. They stripped \$1.2m from the police budget last year, and we are told that they can take more from the police budget this year without affecting the quality of crime prevention and strategies pursued by the police. I remain to be convinced.

In the last election, the Chief Minister promised not just to sustain police numbers in the ACT but to actually put more police on the beat on our streets. We support this move - and we supported it then - and we have been calling for a proactive approach to policing for a long time. But this budget, as far as I am able to see, has not produced that increase in police numbers. I understand that the \$1m that we have spoken about already is to go towards making the police budget's contribution to the general savings across the board in the ACT. The Minister might correct me if I am wrong. The \$1m savings that we are generating here will not go into extra policing. They will go into simply meeting a reduction in the amount given from Consolidated Revenue for police operations in this financial year. The question remains: Where are extra police coming from and when are they going to arrive? Other questions need to be asked. What has happened to pub card? When are we going to get our safety house scheme promised by Labor in the last election? When is that psychiatric wing at the Remand Centre going to open? What about the crime prevention councils that the Government promised at the most recent election?

The approach pursued by people such as Alcoholics Anonymous is that the first thing you have to do is admit that you have a problem with drink and then you can deal with it. My comment to the Labor Government today is: "Let us admit that we have a big problem in this Territory with crime". We must admit that and stop playing down this problem all the time by saying, "Oh, it is just a beat-up; it is not really a big problem. Don't worry. It will all be right at the end of the day". Once we get over that mentality, then we can get onto the business of actually dealing with the symptoms of the problem. We cannot accept excuses. We need to acknowledge that we have a serious problem. We need to tackle escalating crime rates, and we must focus on this issue. If this Government does not get off its butt and do something about it, crime rates will continue to escalate and the people of the ACT will continue to experience the brunt of that increasing crime, and violent crime in particular.

**MR CONNOLLY** (Attorney-General, Minister for Housing and Community Services and Minister for Urban Services) (3.42): Whenever the Tories are in trouble and have nothing to say, they beat the crime can. We saw that in the United States when George Bush thumped the old Willy Horton ads. We are seeing it in Queensland, where the local Liberal Party has absolutely nothing to offer. All it can come up with is a very distasteful series of television ads which purport to blame the Labor Government for a particular unpleasant murder. Of course, we see it with the Federal Liberals and the old "We are all afraid to go into the streets at night" pamphlet which was circulated around Australia featuring a woman who lives in Hughes - one of the safer suburbs in Canberra, which is one of the safest cities in Australia.

It is not surprising that the Liberals are running this MPI the day after the budget. Clearly, they have nothing to say about the real issues facing Canberra, so they try to thump the crime can.

**Mr De Domenico:** Read the *Canberra Times*.

**MR CONNOLLY:** I would be surprised if the *Canberra Times* were interested in this issue, because there was nobody from the *Canberra Times* here to listen to Mr Humphries's speech. As they did not feel that it was worth listening to Mr Humphries's speech, they are not coming down to listen to my speech. I hardly think you have hit the big issues. I should say, though, at the outset, that Mr Humphries did make an important sensible statement - that Canberra continues to have crime rates which are well below the Australian averages. The question of what the crime rate is is not easy to answer. We have statistics and counter-statistics. Mr Humphries mentioned at one point in his speech that almost any set of statistics can be suspect. The figures that I have always worked from are figures which come from the Australian Institute of Criminology. The institute puts out a publication about every year on the size of the crime problem in Australia. That was updated a couple of months ago to the financial year 1990-91. It does not have the 1991-92 financial year figures, which we ourselves do not yet have from the AFP. They will be going into the AFP annual report.

I table a series of statistical charts which we have had done on a colour printer. They show the rates for a range of offences across Australia. Our opinions can differ about this; but the sensible rate to look at to show you what the problems are is the rate of crime per 100,000 of population, so that you can sensibly compare a crime rate in Canberra with a crime rate in Sydney. Such figures show

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a persistent pattern across robbery, serious assault, violent offences, and break, enter and steal - dwellings. The *Canberra Times* have come back to listen to what I have to say, although they were not interested in what you had to say, Mr Humphries. I do not know whether we can draw anything from that.

These figures, which I table, demonstrate consistently across all areas that the ACT is either the safest or the second safest community in which to live. In some areas, Tasmania would appear to be a safer community than the ACT. For all sets of figures, the Northern Territory is well and truly out of kilter. It has massive rates well above the other States', explainable by its particular social problems. But in all cases we are well and truly below the other State capital averages. Those figures graphically demonstrate the point that Mr Humphries made, which is that Canberra remains a safe community - safer than other parts of Australia. That is important for us to bear in mind.

**Mr Humphries:** Not safe enough.

**MR CONNOLLY:** "Not safe enough", says Mr Humphries. I would agree. Any crime is unacceptable. In any society where crime occurs we have a problem. We have to address it. What do you say about New South Wales, which has crime rates way in front of ours? Is that the fault of the New South Wales Liberal Government? Our crime rate is supposedly the fault of the ACT Labor Government. Presumably, in New South Wales the crime rate is the fault of somebody else. What we have heard from Mr Humphries is cheap political point scoring - basically, the sort of nonsense that we see in the Liberal Party pamphlet.

The figures show that in the ACT there has been a steady increase in crime, and that is a matter for concern. Obviously, governments are concerned about any increase in crime, but the rate of increase can vary from year to year in the ACT. During the 12-month period the Liberal Party was in office, the increase in the rate of crime in most areas was about the same as it has been in the 12 months since, and in the 12 months before that there was a similar pattern.

There is a consistent rate of increase across the ACT. But to say that it is the fault of the Labor Government is simply cheap politicking. What we need to do is come to grips with fundamental issues. What did Mr Humphries have to offer? He said, "Let us get tough with truth in sentencing". In fact, truth in sentencing does apply to ACT prisoners sent to New South Wales. He also said, "Let us address fundamental issues". That, of course, is what the ACT Labor Government has been doing as part of its community safety policy, which was one of the first policies launched in the election campaign.

Our priorities were to maintain the numbers of police protecting the ACT community, and we have done just that. We have achieved some savings in the amounts we spend on policing - a strategy which was endorsed by Mr Kaine when he was Treasurer and when he was Opposition Leader before the last election, and a policy endorsed by Mr Humphries, who was reported in the *Canberra Times* of 8 July this year as saying that there was no question that cuts to the police budget should be considered and that the police budget should be dealt with like the budgets of other agencies. Those savings, of course, need to be dealt with in such a way that we can continue to deliver services to the community.



Mr Humphries said that he has seen nothing about increasing services to be delivered to the community. Tomorrow morning we will be launching the ACT police crime caravan. We will be setting up around regional shopping centres - we indicated this a week or so ago - a police presence by way of a mobile caravan, a sort of portable police station, with a view to getting the local shopkeepers in particular, but residents who visit the regional shopping centres as well, familiar with individual police officers.

We are developing a strategy whereby at the sergeant level a particular senior police officer will be responsible for a particular suburb. That is moving away from the old style of policing where you had mobile vehicular patrols covering a whole crime district - Canberra, of course, is divided into three crime districts; north, city and south - and, instead, directing individual officers to individual neighbourhoods and localities. The goal of that is to encourage residents and traders to have an individual relationship with that police officer. As I say, we will start to see that policy being implemented this very week. So we are directing our attention and our resources at the end of the crime problem where it should be directed - that is, in the streets, in the suburbs, in the shopping centres.

I was very pleased with the results of the latest version of the AFP community policing survey. I have asked the police force to provide copies with a briefing to all members, and that will no doubt occur at some stage during the coming break. Amongst the highlights of this community policing survey is the fact that we continue to have a 90 per cent approval rating for the service provided by the AFP. But most satisfying is the fact that the public's fear of crime is falling. I table an extract from this report. This report will, as I say, be circulated to all members in due course, but the highlight was that the fear of crime is falling. That is very important, because a safe community is one where people think they are free to get out and about - and they are in this community. Canberra crime rates remain well and truly below State capital averages.

The sort of approach that the Liberal Party encourages is to whip up fear and loathing. A pathetic pamphlet that was circulated nationally was clearly designed to instil in the elderly members of our community a perception that they are unsafe if they go out on the streets. It was clearly designed to intimidate the elderly people in our community, to isolate them, to have them housebound. It is a cheap and grubby political tactic by the Federal Liberal Party and one that, it appears, is not below our local branch of the Liberal Party.

In this propaganda fear campaign that was launched earlier this year, the lady from Hughes - one of the safest suburbs in the safest city in Australia - says, "Some of us are almost prisoners in our own home. We just want to be safe. Remember we used to be safe at night". Despite that, the most recent version of the AFP survey shows that the fear of crime indicator "staying at home alone at night" actually dropped in the period during which the Liberal Party was circulating this. It went down from seven to five. So the Liberal Party have been perhaps unsuccessful in the ACT at trying to whip up this hysteria. They may have been more successful in other cities where the basis for fear is higher; but this community, it seems, is more sophisticated and understands the situation.

Of course, all the good work that can be done by way of community policing, by way of locking the police into the community, by way of reassuring the community about what the realities are about their suburb and their environment, can be undone by politicians engaging in cheap politicking by way of kicking the crime can. It is unfortunate that that is a tactic that now seems to be

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favoured within the ACT. I suspect, though, that it will be as unsuccessful today as it has been over the last 12 months or so whenever the Liberal Party has tried to raise this issue. The general perception in the ACT is that it is really a bit of a political try-on and nobody takes it terribly seriously.

When I tabled the DPP's annual report some weeks ago, the general consensus of media comment was, "Well, yes, it does show increases in charges". Most commentators correctly drew the distinction between crime rates, which will come out in due course when we get AFP figures tidied up, and rates of charges by prosecutors. I also note that a number of commentators drew attention to the point made in the report of the DPP following the statement that Mr Humphries read about recent trends showing cause for concern. The next sentence mentioned a request from an agency for more funding. A number of commentators suggested that that perhaps was not unrelated.

Mr Humphries asked what we are doing about other issues. He said, "What about the psych cells at Belconnen?". In fact, they are in use. They are open and in use, and I am advised that two people are using them as we speak. Those cells have been in operation since 2 September. That initiative, which was announced in last year's budget and which work has progressed on, is now in place. Perhaps I should have prepared a media release to advise Mr Humphries of that, but we thought it was just a routine operational matter of providing appropriate facilities for people in the Remand Centre and we did not beat the drum over it. Mr Humphries's rhetorical flourish was, "What have you done about the psych cells? What is happening with the psych cells?". The short answer is that they are well and truly in operation. There is a standing offer for people to go and have a look at them.

The rate of crime in the ACT is a concern. It is in any State or Territory in Australia. We can be reassured that we remain a safer community than any other State or Territory, with the possible exception of Tasmania in a number of areas of crime. I am particularly reassured that the recent police polling shows that fear of crime in this community is reducing. That indicates that our community policing strategy is working. Our community policing strategy will continue. It will be reinforced with our direction of police caravans to shopping centres and a further linking of local police with local communities by way of identifying individual officers for individual suburbs. We are working on the victims of crime issues through the Community Law Reform Committee. We are working with the police for better follow-up for people who have been victims of crime - and that is a very important issue which, in the past, has failed to be addressed by police forces in Australia. The AFP is moving in that direction. I am getting some positive feedback on that initiative.

Madam Speaker, crime always is a concern. We are addressing it through community policing strategies. We are addressing it through taking the people into our confidence and telling them what is going on with crime in their community and with their police force. It is not helped by the sort of junkie, cheap scaremongering strategies that the Federal Liberal Party adopted with this appalling pamphlet circulated nationally earlier this year. It appears that our local Liberals are falling into the same pattern.

**MS SZUTY (3.57):** Madam Speaker, I am not convinced that we are looking at an explosion of crime in the ACT, regardless of the view espoused by the Opposition spokesman on legal and police matters, Mr Humphries. We need to look carefully at the sorts of crimes being committed, the current methods of dealing with crime, the improved methods of detection and intelligence, and the impact of other factors such as unemployment and the disempowerment of sections of the community in relation to crime statistics.

It was outlined in the ACT budget yesterday that in the next 12 months Canberra will spend almost \$10m on the administration of justice and just over \$53m on policing. The Government has identified that the ACT can no longer afford to have an open cheque book for any area of government expenditure - a sentiment I agree with. This attitude gives us as a community the chance to try new, low cost alternatives for dealing with many crimes which are currently taking up court and police time. One of the measures that I feel exemplify this type of approach is the recent change to the Drugs of Dependence Act which will remove one group of people from the judicial system. The number will not be great. Last year only 35 people were charged with possession of cannabis, 70 with cultivating cannabis plants and four with using cannabis.

The necessities imposed on our law enforcement sector by budgetary restrictions already dictate that the focus should be on major crimes, and that focus should be supported by both legislation and funding. I am not saying that some offenders should be allowed to go free. The cost of their crimes and the impact on their victims must be addressed by a fair and equitable justice system. There is a need to intervene in areas where we can identify problems arising and can redirect potential offenders. But first we have to identify the major areas of crime that are prosecuted in the ACT. In the Magistrates Court, 11,724 of the total of 15,715 offenders had cases brought against them for traffic related matters. Three thousand defendants faced charges under the Crimes Act, mostly for assaults, damage to property, burglary and theft. There were 890 other defendants charged with three categories of offences against the ACT Government and with offences under poisons and narcotics and miscellaneous legislation.

An article by Crispin Hull in the *Canberra Times* last month pointed out the fact that most of the people who appear before a magistrate plead guilty, with only 0.9 per cent of defendants being acquitted. This is largely accounted for, in Mr Hull's estimation, by most of the charges relating to minor drug matters, or traffic offences, where the offender admits the offence and pays the consequential penalty. Mr Hull also pointed out that Canberra magistrates tend to give offenders who have drug or alcohol problems time to receive assistance for their substance abuse problems before imposing more onerous sentencing options on them. This approach, it appears to me, is a valid method of addressing problems that present before the courts. The ACT is expected to take another step in this direction in the near future when the Assembly debates further amendments to the Drugs of Dependence Act which will allow for an expansion of the methadone program. When we adopt these measures, we are informing our community that there are people experiencing difficulties in our society and that we want to address those problems before the people involved turn to crime to support their drug habits.

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The phenomenon of homeless youth has been recognised and a figure of 30,000 put on the population of these young people in Sydney. Canberra also cannot escape its responsibility to take on board the care of its young people. When society tells you that it cannot provide the basics of shelter, food and warmth, particularly in such an uninviting climate as Canberra's during the winter months, can we really expect our homeless young people to have respect for other people's property? Is it possible to have concern for the well-being of others when there is apparently no-one looking after your own well-being?

I feel that the emphasis that has emerged in Canberra's policing and community welfare sectors in the past few years is the right way to go. Community policing is the option that will receive and has received the support of the local community, us as legislators and the police themselves. Our energies need to go into making people more aware of the problems our community faces and enlisting their support for their local police force.

There are trends apparent in the incidence of major crime across Australia which the Attorney-General has outlined. But is crime in fact increasing in the ACT or do the statistics reveal a changing trend in social behaviour coupled with a higher detection rate? Fifteen years ago society tolerated people being drunk while driving; child abuse was spoken of as an unfortunate phenomenon that happened among the working classes; domestic violence was viewed as a part of married life; rape within marriage was considered impossible; rape outside of marriage was more often than not considered the woman's fault. Even if people had the courage to report these crimes to police, convictions were rare, as the attitude of society, reflected by the police and the magistrates, did not really view them as crimes.

In recent years we have seen a growth in awareness amongst a wide range of people as educational campaigns open up previously taboo subjects - rape, incest, assault in the home, to name a few. This has resulted in more people reporting these crimes and, more importantly, in the police and the law courts responding in a way that recognises that a crime has been committed and acting on it.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I believe in adopting a preventive and holistic approach, trying to solve some of the hardships and problems that lead to crime by action and education and thereby making our community safer. However, I do not believe that we will ever abolish the need for our police and court systems. That view would be considered to be foolish. But, by emphasising the community as the basis for crime prevention, we are better able to focus our energies on the detection of serious crime and can work to reduce the occurrence of major offences.

**MRS GRASSBY (4.03):** Mr Humphries has regaled us with horror stories about rising rates of crime in the ACT. We all know that there are lies, damn lies and statistics. I am sure that his figures will do marvellous things for small business in this town. After today, no aged persons in Canberra will feel safe in their homes until they have turned them into veritable fortresses. Locksmiths, I am sure, and hardware stores will be really rubbing their hands together with joy about all the sales that Mr Humphries will have them making, with all his scare tactics. Madam Speaker, this is not a laughing matter. However, I cannot help thinking of that television show *Get Smart* and Maxwell Smart's door with its many locks. Of course, under a Liberal government we could not afford to buy locks, with the extra 15 per cent GST.

Madam Speaker, the facts show that Canberra is the safest city in Australia. Canberrans, like all Australians, are concerned about crime. However, the figures show that the public's fear of crime is actually falling. Mr Humphries effectively criticises the police for the crime rate, which I think is a shame. I believe that the falling fear of crime can be put down to the wonderful job the ACT police force is doing. The police have become more community aware and more visible. Programs such as police bicycle patrols and recent shopping centre promotions at Woden Plaza lead to a greater understanding between the police and the community.

Madam Speaker, the high profile of the police within the community is building better bridges with our youth. The police are there to assist and protect, and their message is being received widely, as is shown by the positive response from the recent community survey. Madam Speaker, recently a member of my family had occasion to come in contact with the police after an unfortunate robbery in their house. As I said to Assistant Commissioner Dawson when I wrote to him, the police could not have been more helpful. They attended the house within 10 minutes, and within another 10 they had arrested the person responsible because my relative was able to give them a very good description of him, having seen him leaving the house.

This is what Mr Humphries should be concentrating on - the wonderful progress the Canberra police have achieved in solving crimes in the ACT. Canberra police, I understand, have a record for solving crimes that is second to none in Australia. This is a record that we should all be proud of. We should be singing their praises, not criticising them. I cannot imagine what Mr Humphries hopes to achieve through this unwarranted and irresponsible attack on our police force. Not only are our police very efficient, but by their efficiency they have been able to bring the criminals to justice. It all boils down to efficiency. The figures that Mr Humphries gave show that we have an excellent police force. They show that police forces in other States are not anywhere near as good.

The sad fact is that the Liberal Party is not being original. However, I believe that the integrity of members opposite far outweighs that of their northern colleagues who are conducting a scare campaign based upon an idea imported from the USA. In 1988 we all watched as the Republicans ran the same sort of law and order line against Governor Dukakis in the presidential election. It worked for Bush in 1988 and now the Liberals want to try it out here. But a word of advice: The LA riots show that law and order is not some tawdry political issue. It is an issue that can backfire very quickly and, I might say, very tragically, as it did in the US. Recently I have been concerned about brochures that have been circulated showing little old ladies barricading themselves in their homes against crime. Several constituents have spoken to me about the fears that these brochures have given them. Such pictures do nothing to ease the minds of aged people in our community, and the political party responsible should be ashamed of itself. The campaign is clearly political opportunism of the worst sort.

In closing, I wish to say that the truly criminal event we are seeing here is that a major Australian political party is trying to score cheap political points from frightening the very old people they pretend to represent. I can only sing the high praises of our police force. I have had experience of them after a robbery. I think that they do an excellent job and, as we know, they are second to none in Australia in being able to bring people before the courts for their crimes. I think we live in a very safe city, and we should be very grateful to the police force we have.

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**MR DE DOMENICO** (4.09): Madam Speaker, I rise in this debate, first of all, to assure Mrs Grassby and other members of the Assembly that - we will all agree - Mr Humphries did no such thing as to criticise the police force. I heard nothing in what Mr Humphries said in his speech that criticised the ACT police force. As Mrs Grassby said, we are very delighted that we have such an effective police force in the ACT. For anybody to stand up and say that Mr Humphries or anybody else here is criticising the police force is, of course, just not true. We are talking about a thing of great concern to the whole community; we are not trying to score political points. Mr Humphries issued a press release which stated:

Liberal police spokesman Gary Humphries has applauded his Labor counterpart, Attorney-General Terry Connolly, for trialing a scheme aimed at reducing court delays.

The press release went on to say:

The Attorney-General, Mr Connolly, and the Chief Police Officer, Assistant Commissioner Dawson, should be congratulated for introducing a six-month trial, particularly as the scheme has the potential to release police officers from excessive paperwork.

So nobody can stand up and say that we are critical of the police force. In fact, sometimes we are so non-political on the whole thing that we deign to say what a wonderful job Mr Connolly is doing - and, to give credit where credit is due, Mr Connolly does a lot of good things.

**Mr Connolly:** This is not going to help me in the preselection rooms.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** And if it helps you in preselection, Mr Connolly, I am delighted. If we could get some more right-wingers in the house it would be fantastic. Like Mr Humphries, I want to say from the outset that the ACT does have a comparatively low crime rate, compared with other States. There is no dispute about that. Mr Humphries and the Liberal Party have said that and will continue to say that. There is no dispute about that whatsoever. Madam Speaker, there is also no dispute about what DPP Ken Crispin, QC, had to say in his 1991-92 report. For the edification of Mrs Grassby and other people who have contributed to this debate, I remind them of what Mr Crispin in fact did say. He said:

Historically, the ACT has enjoyed a low crime rate compared to other Australian jurisdictions and, even now, can be regarded as a fortunate community in many respects.

However, he went on to say:

However, recent trends offer obvious cause for concern and there is no reason to imagine that they will not be sustained at least for some time.

So there is some recognition there from Mr Crispin that there is a problem. Madam Speaker, there is clear evidence that the crime rates are increasing much faster than our population growth. There is no denying that. We are not blaming the ACT Labor Government for the fact that crime rates are increasing. What we are saying is that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. I am sure that we all agree with that.

The annual report from the Director of Public Prosecutions confirms the severity of the problems. Let me quote again from Mr Crispin's report. His report is a refreshingly unbureaucratic one. We are not suggesting that Mr Crispin is some Liberal Party apparatchik, or some Tory, as Mr Connolly wants to call people from time to time. Mr Crispin says:

The most disturbing aspect of the year was the continued escalation in the crime rate.

That was said by Mr Crispin, our Director of Public Prosecutions, not some member of the Liberal Party. No wonder he says that. The number of charges laid under the Crimes Act has almost doubled in the past three years. There is no denying that. These figures are in Mr Crispin's report - in 1988-89, 2,854; in 1991-92, 5,523. These are not my figures; they are Mr Crispin's figures. The total number of defendants in the ACT in 1988-89 was 8,290, and in 1991-92 it was 15,715 - nearly double.

**Mrs Grassby:** The police have been able to catch them all. Isn't that wonderful? That is why the police are so good. They have been able to catch them all.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** It does not matter whether we catch them, Mrs Grassby. I am delighted that we catch them. We catch some of them. The point is, though, that the fact that crime is occurring in the ACT is something that I think we can bipartisanly put our minds to. The drug offences figures are also very interesting. Drug offences have also increased substantially. They have gone from 246 in 1988-89 to 546 in 1991-92. That is an increase of about 122 per cent. That is a substantial increase, in anyone's language.

Mr Crispin's report said that it had been hoped that drug offences would recede after the previous financial year, which set a new record for drug prosecutions - almost twice as high as the previous record. The report said:

Unfortunately, that has not occurred and there has actually been a further increase. It has long been recognised that the drug trade is a spur to other serious crimes.

We are all aware of that. He went on:

It is an insidious trade which brings great human misery to the community.

No-one can deny that what Mr Crispin says is true. We are not saying that it is the fault of the Labor Government, a Liberal government or any government. We are saying that the problem does exist. Let us acknowledge that it exists and look at why it exists and what we can do to try to fix it. As Mr Humphries said, notwithstanding a 122 per cent increase in the drug related problem, the population increase is only 6.5 per cent. It seems that people ought to be expressing some sort of concern about that.

The DPP report is just one of the indicators of the size of the problem. As Mr Humphries said quite correctly, there are other reports such as the police reports and the reports of the NRMA and other insurance companies. As someone who had a lot to do with the insurance industry over many years, let me also say to the house that there is always an increase in crime - especially

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burglaries, arson and car theft - during depression, recession and hard economic times. There is no doubt that the crime rate is a corollary of the fact that we are suffering from one of the greatest recessions since the early 1900s. Notwithstanding who is in government, when times are tough more people tend to turn to crime than at other times. So what we are saying is that we should look at the relationship between high unemployment levels and a high crime rate.

**Mr Berry:** Ditch the "frightpack".

**MR DE DOMENICO:** Mr Berry interjects. I have tried very hard not to become political; but, if Mr Berry wants to interject about Fightback, let me remind him that a Federal Labor Government has been in power since 1983. It is a Federal Labor Government that has given us the high unemployment. Coincidentally, since 1983 burglaries have doubled, Mr Berry.

**Mr Lamont:** Six a year is double three a year.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** Australia-wide, Mr Lamont. Because burglaries in Australia have doubled since 1983, since the high unemployment level given to us by a Federal Labor Government, one can therefore assume, Mr Berry, that if we had less unemployment we would have less crime and fewer burglaries.

If we want to get political, let us take the gloves off and get political; but I am trying very hard not to. When there are high crime rates for burglary, it is not only the people being burgled who suffer. The more insurance claims there are, the higher the premiums become for everybody. There is a monetary suffering by everybody in the community once crime rates go up. Therefore, it becomes a community problem of great importance. The Liberal Party is not attacking anybody; we are not blaming anybody. What we are saying is that we have a problem. Let us acknowledge that we have a problem and let us see whether we can fix it. If by fixing it we can also employ a heck of a lot more people who are unemployed and fix two problems at the one time, let us do it.

People on the opposite side of the house should know that the majority of the so-called petty crimes that have occurred - there are a lot of them - are usually committed by people under the age of 20. So we are talking about the youth unemployment level. The higher the youth unemployment level, the higher the rate of what people, unless they are directly involved, consider to be minor crimes. All one needs to do is go to one's letterbox and read the information put out by Neighbourhood Watch.

In the suburb where I live, Gowrie, we know that in the month of August, for example, there were 27 incidents which the police were called in to investigate. That is in one suburb alone. A lot of those incidents were probably altercations, but the fact that the police were called out 27 times in one month in one suburb convinces me that there is a problem. I agree with Mrs Grassby. There are lies, damn lies and statistics. We can stand up here and accuse one another of having a cheap shot or, as Mr Connolly did, of being Tories. But the fact is that even Mr Crispin, QC, and the community say that, notwithstanding how safe Canberra is - we acknowledge that we are one of the safest communities in this country - if we can become even safer still, it would be better for our citizens.



Mr Humphries and other members on this side of the house give credit when credit is due. We acknowledge when things are done well. Mr Connolly has a good record of doing a lot of the things very well, and we will always give him credit for that. As I said, if that helps you, Mr Connolly, in your future preselection, so be it. But let us give credit where credit is due. There is a problem. Crime is a problem. Let us acknowledge that it is a problem and let us try to work together to make sure that we fix it.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** There being no further speakers, the discussion is concluded.

**MILK AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL (NO. 2) 1992**

Debate resumed from 13 August 1992, on motion by **Mr Connolly**:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR WESTENDE** (4.19): The Liberal Party supports the Bill. The Bill clears up ambiguities in the definition of milk in the current Milk Authority Act. It is important to do this because of the implications for the pricing of milk and milk products, also the sale and distribution of milk, the granting of vendor permits, licensing and so on. It is rather a pity that the Government does not apply the same degree of clarity and precision to the quality. That is about all I have to say, Madam Speaker. As I said, the Opposition supports the Bill.

**MR CONNOLLY** (Attorney-General, Minister for Housing and Community Services and Minister for Urban Services) (4.20), in reply: I am pleased that the Opposition is supportive of this Bill. It further clarifies the regulatory powers of the Milk Authority.

**Mr Berry:** They did not sing your praises for long, though, did they?

**MR CONNOLLY:** No; it was a short singing of the praises of the Government. Nonetheless, we are happy to receive all praise, whether it be long or short. This bipartisan support for the concept of the ability of the authority to regulate the milk market in Canberra is important. Australian Co-operative Foods has recently commenced work at Kingston on a new \$5.5m processing plant for the Canberra milk market. Obviously, that investment is premised on a market in Canberra that will continue to be regulated and controlled, as opposed to the totally unregulated market that existed here some decade or so ago.

I am pleased that the Opposition is supporting this minor change but, most importantly, that it is supporting the concept that the Milk Authority continue to have a role in regulating milk; or, more to the point, that the Assembly and, through the Assembly, the authority, have a role in continuing to regulate this market in the interests of Canberra consumers.

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 Berry**) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

## Employee Relations

**MR WESTENDE** (4.21): Madam Speaker, I would like to clarify a few things in this adjournment debate. First, Ms Ellis made a statement this morning on the York Park development. Ms Ellis accused the Opposition, including me, of not caring for workers. I take that as a personal affront. I have been managing and employing people for some 40 years, and I know that you cannot run a successful business or manage people unless you care for your workers. Your business will be only as good as those who are left, if you do not care for them.

For Ms Ellis's information, the company I am associated with employs some 32 people, five of whom have commenced since 1 January. We have done our bit to assist workers and to provide jobs. I further tell Ms Ellis that the company I am associated with had a superannuation scheme in place for all workers two years before that became compulsory. Ms Ellis should check her facts before she accuses us or makes a broad statement about our not caring for workers. I speak to practically every one of my employees at least once a week. I like getting up early in the morning, and fortunately they start a bit earlier than this place does. I manage to have some time in the morning to go there and see them.

I would appreciate it if in future Ms Ellis, before she makes such a sweeping statement, would check her facts and make sure that what she is saying can be applied. I did not want to take the time this morning during the debate to raise a point of order. I would rather use the adjournment debate, where we are not wasting the time of the Assembly. I took personal affront at that statement, Madam Speaker, and I wish Ms Ellis to take that into consideration.

## National Carers Awareness Week

**MS ELLIS** (4.24): Madam Speaker, members may not be aware, although as I have this badge on they may now be, that this is the first National Carers Awareness Week. Carers are those people who provide care and support for a parent, partner, brother, sister, child or friend who has a disability, is frail, or suffers from dementia or a chronic illness. They make an extremely important contribution to our society in ways that the rest of us sometimes take for granted or are not aware of at all. There are so many carers within our community that most of us will at some point in our lives either give care or need care. In fact, one in four people will be faced with this situation at some time.

Carers Awareness Week recognises the important contribution that carers make to our community. It is widely recognised that giving care in the home provides dignity and security for those requiring the care. However, governments have also recognised that caring for people within the community is less expensive than institutional care. However, Madam Speaker, it has been recognised throughout Australia that the decision to remain at home should not be at the expense of the carer and that support, both emotional and physical, is needed for the carer. For those of us who are not carers it is easy to forget, or perhaps difficult to understand at all, just how much stress, loneliness, overwork and lack of support carers endure.

Madam Speaker, most of these people spend their days at home caring for people who often demand 24-hour-a-day attention. They cannot leave their work and come home and relax for eight hours. Their very special but very demanding work is with them all the time. In Canberra the Carers Group ACT, through the ACT Council on the Ageing, provides support for carers through newsletters, information, counselling, guidance and, of course, Carers Awareness Week. Carers Awareness Week, which was launched officially last Monday by the Federal Minister for Aged, Family and Health Services, Peter Staples, will include a wide range of activities. There will be a series of confident carer workshops providing advice and information for carers on a range of subjects as diverse as the ins and outs of emergency alarm systems, caring for a disabled child at home, caring for a person who is incontinent, and so on. There is also an information seminar and open days at various health centres.

At the launch on Monday I heard from several carers that they are not looking for reward or recognition; that their actions are selfless and when they find themselves in the situation where a family member or friend needs care they respond in the way that they believe is right and natural. I believe that the contribution they make warrants the recognition that the creation of Carers Awareness Week provides. This week also throws a spotlight on the stresses that carers face and will help the rest of the community understand the needs of these people.

Currently the Carers Group operates through the auspices of the ACT Council on the Ageing. However, there are many people who care for others who are not aged. For this reason the Carers Group will be forming the Carers Association, which will be an autonomous umbrella association providing support for all carers. The public meeting to inaugurate this association will be held on 8 October, and I understand that an application is being prepared for funding of the association. The members of the Carers Group should be congratulated on expanding their services to assist all carers and particularly on putting together a comprehensive program for Carers Awareness Week. Without the efforts of these people, many carers would not have the support they really require to care for their loved ones at home.

### National Carers Awareness Week

**MR DE DOMENICO** (4.28): Madam Speaker, I am going to be very brief. I endorse what Ms Ellis has said. Often we tend to forget about the great amount of voluntary work done by a lot of people in our community. Many of us on both sides of this house are involved from time to time with various voluntary organisations such as the Guide Dog Association, Canberra One Parent Family Support, peer support foundations, Friends of the Brain Injured, L'Arche and Mirinjani, just to name a few, Madam Speaker. Governments of all political persuasions all over this country save millions and millions of dollars a year because of the carers who do a lot of voluntary work. Anything that this house can do to acknowledge the fact that this week is Carers Awareness Week and help the endeavours of its organisers we ought to do.

### Mr Stuart Gill

**MR STEVENSON** (4.29): Madam Speaker, last year I made a number of statements in this Assembly concerning links between organised crime and the pornography industry in Australia. I had received information on these matters from Stuart Gill, who told me that he had been a senior investigator with the Costigan royal commission. He had also said that he was working with the Victoria Police as a consultant and had worked in that capacity for some time. That was later confirmed in a letter of 24 May 1991 by Inspector Cosgriff of the Victoria Police Internal Security Unit.

I hired Gill on staff to assist me in matters relating to pornography and organised crime. During that time Gill told me that a man named Gerald Gold had been named as a leading eastern States crime figure in a confidential segment of the final report of the Costigan royal commission. As a result of that information, I made statements in this Assembly concerning Mr Gold that I now believe were wrong. I later came to understand that Stuart Gill was not a police consultant but was, in fact, an informer for the Victoria Police. Gill left my employ in October last year.

Yesterday the Victorian media reported on allegations about widespread police and political corruption resulting from an investigation named Operation Iceberg. The Victoria Police Commissioner, Mr Kel Glare, stated yesterday that the allegations were not only unsubstantiated but utterly false. The commissioner said that the Operation Iceberg document was not a police report but had been prepared by a police informer. That police informer has been named as Stuart Gill. I am aware that Stuart Gill was born under the name of Paul Dummett and has also used the name Andrew McAuley.

I wish to take the opportunity to apologise to Mr Gerald Gold for any difficulties he may have been caused by statements I made in this house. Gill also stole documents from my office and spread misleading stories about me to the media. I have formed the opinion that Gill is a pathological liar. I have spoken to other people in Victoria - I made a trip to Victoria - and they have told me of certain fraud and other offences which they have said have not been prosecuted. Perhaps this situation in Victoria will give the police an opportunity to put this matter to justice.

**Mr Gerald Gold : Deputy Chief Minister : "The Land" Art Exhibition**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (4.31): Madam Speaker, first of all, I commend Mr Stevenson for that statement. I have had many representations from Mr Gold. I think it took some courage for Mr Stevenson to come into the house and say that he was wrong in things he had said about Mr Gold based on information supplied to him. That is good news for Mr Gold and a tribute to Mr Stevenson.

Madam Speaker, I cannot be quite as charitable about the Deputy Chief Minister, about whom I want to raise a couple of matters. I have been approached by constituents who unfortunately are most dissatisfied with the delay which they have encountered in having representations to the Minister dealt with. On 23 October last year Ms Robyn Manley wrote to the Health Promotion Fund seeking appointment as an arts representative on the fund's advisory committee. Ms Manley received no reply until 4 March this year and was rather upset about the fact that it took so long for the ACT Government to respond to her concern. She waited from 23 October 1991 to 4 March 1992, a period of well over four months, for a reply.

She wrote to me about the matter. I took it up with the Deputy Chief Minister, who wrote back to me after a month or so, indicating that these things had happened, giving me the dates, and then saying:

I can assure you the correspondence is being answered appropriately and effectively by officers of the Department of Health.

I do not think that four months' delay is appropriate or effective. That is too long to have to wait for a reply to what was for this person a quite important matter that she wanted dealt with expeditiously. Similarly, I wrote to the Deputy Chief Minister in May of this year to ask about the supply of CPAP machines under the ACT equipment scheme to sufferers of sleep apnoea. I received a reply to my letter only this week, again after about four months. The person on whose behalf I wrote has been suffering from that disorder during that time and would obviously have liked a reply long before now.

While I am on my feet I want to offer not just criticism but some praise for an important venture going on at the moment in Kingston. Last week I attended the preview of an art exhibition for the National Heart Foundation at Studio One Printmaking Workshop. It was an exhibition of 12 prints called "The Land". Those 12 prints constitute a folio of hand printed etchings, lithographs, and screen and relief prints which are the culmination of 12 months of work between the ACT Division of the National Heart Foundation and Studio One.

One print was donated by each of 12 Australian women artists - some of them quite well known, some of them not so well known; all of them very talented, as members who visit that exhibition, which opens on 25 September, will realise. They include Mandy Martin, a very well-known Australian artist; Ruth Waller; Roslyn Kean; Pam Debenham and Jacqui Driver. Some of them are local; others

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are not from the ACT. This exhibition is a major venture between the arts sector and the business sector in the ACT. The artists, as well as the people who have produced the prints for them, have donated their work to help the Heart Foundation with research and education programs. It has been a tremendous effort on their part.

The exhibition will raise, I believe, a great deal of money, particularly if people make the effort to go there and look at the exhibition and perhaps even buy some prints. I bought some myself. They are of very high quality. Buying them was not hard to do at all. I recommend the exhibition "The Land". If people would like to assist the National Heart Foundation to do its important work, they could do much worse than to go to Studio One and look at those prints. I am quite certain that they would be very happy to buy some or all of the prints on offer.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**Assembly adjourned at 4.36 pm**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION**

**QUESTION NO.246**

**Housing Trust -Waiting List**

MR. CORNWELL asked the Minister for Housing and Community Services

Concerning your reply to question on notice No.194 that there were 5,775 applicants totalling approximately 13,514 people waitlisted for Housing Trust properties in March 1992 and that "there is no six month ACT residency requirement to join the waiting list" -

( 1) How are people allocated Housing Trust accommodation in order if there is no six month ACT residency requirement for the waiting list.

(2) Does the ACT six month residency requirement still apply.

MR. CONNOLLY -The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

( 1) People on the normal waiting list for Housing Trust accommodation are allocated a residence in the order that their registration is received.

Applicants approved for a priority allocation of public rental housing receive an allocation in order from the priority waiting list.

(2) There is no six month residency requirement for applicants to join the waiting list for public rental housing in the ACT . There is a six month residency requirement to be allocated a home, which may be waived in certain circumstances, such as circumstances that warrant priority allocation.

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