



**DEBATES**  
OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**HANSARD**

22 September 1994

**Thursday, 22 September 1994**

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

**REFERENDUM (MACHINERY PROVISIONS) BILL 1994**

**MS FOLLETT** (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (10.31): Madam Speaker, I present the Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Bill 1994.

Title read by Clerk.

**MS FOLLETT:** I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Madam Speaker, the Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Bill 1994 completes the package of electoral legislation that the Government has introduced into the Assembly over the past few years. The Bill is intended to provide for general mechanisms for the conduct of referendums required to be held by other laws of the Assembly called referendum laws. The Bill relies on referendum laws to outline the essential details of each referendum, such as the referendum question and the day on which the referendum is to be held. The purpose of the Bill is to provide for default machinery provisions that are to operate to the extent that they are not inconsistent with a referendum law. In this way the Bill will ensure that referendums are conducted in the same way as elections, as far as practicable, and avoids the need for specific referendum laws to address general machinery provisions. The Bill operates by applying the machinery provisions of the Electoral Act 1992, as far as they are relevant to referendums, and by making modifications as appropriate.

Key features of the Bill, which are to operate unless a referendum law provides otherwise, include: Referendums are to be held on the same day as elections for the Assembly; voting is to be compulsory; procedures set out in the Electoral Act 1992 are to be followed as far as practicable, with suitable modifications made as specified in the Bill; scrutineers may be appointed for a referendum; for and against arguments may be supplied by Assembly members and disseminated by the Electoral Commission; persons incurring referendum expenditure will be required to disclose expenditure and donations details; offences set out in the Electoral Act 1992 will apply with suitable modifications; and referendum results will be able to be disputed before the Court of Disputed Elections. I commend the Bill to the Assembly, and I present an explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

Debate (on motion by Mrs Carnell) adjourned.

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**ELECTORAL (AMENDMENT) BILL (NO. 2) 1994**

**MS FOLLETT** (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (10.34): I present the Electoral (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) 1994.

Title read by Clerk.

**MS FOLLETT**: Madam Speaker, I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

The Electoral (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) 1994 provides for some minor and technical changes to the Electoral Act 1992 that will ensure the smooth running of elections. The Bill will ensure that claims for enrolment that are lodged with the Electoral Commissioner prior to the date of the close of rolls may be added after the rolls have closed. As the Electoral Act stands, it prevents the Electoral Commission from adding persons to the rolls pursuant to claims received before the rolls close, unless the claims are processed before the rolls close. In practice, claims received shortly before the rolls close are not processed until after the rolls close, for obvious reasons. The Bill will correct this unintended consequence.

The Bill will also ensure that public holidays will not delay the election timetable. As the Electoral Act stands, the operation of the Interpretation Act 1967 could disrupt the election timetable if a public holiday falls on the last day fixed for the receipt of nominations or the day of declaration of nominations. This would be the case in 1995 as Australia Day falls on the last day fixed for the receipt of nominations.

The Bill provides that individual candidates who agree to be grouped with other candidates cannot have the word "independent" printed next to their name. Under the current Electoral Act, non-party candidates who choose to be grouped together on the ballot paper may also choose to have the word "independent" printed next to their name on the ballot paper. This amendment will restrict this option to those ungrouped non-party candidates who do not claim any connection with any other candidate on the ballot paper.

The Electoral Act currently requires independent MLAs to disclose all their debts, including private debts. This Bill will ensure that independent MLAs will be required to disclose only debts incurred in relation to election advertising, opinion polling or research. This brings independent MLAs' disclosure obligations into line with the obligations of registered political parties. Finally, this Bill fixes a drafting error, to ensure that the correct calculation of transfer values of votes can be made in the case of filling a casual vacancy. I present an explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

Debate (on motion by Mr Humphries) adjourned.

**LEGAL AFFAIRS - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Report on Coroners (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) 1993**

Debate resumed from 16 June 1994, on motion by Mr Humphries:

That the report be noted.

**MRS GRASSBY (10.37):** Madam Speaker, the Coroners (Amendment) Bill is the major legislative component of the Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. It also follows a review of the 1956 Coroners Act, the first review of this Act since its enactment in 1956. The committee has recommended that the scope of Aboriginal-specific provisions be extended to the whole of the community. Whilst I fully support this, I nevertheless remain committed to supporting the key thrust of the Bill, which is to reduce Aboriginal deaths in custody. What every member in this Assembly should remain aware of is that Aboriginals have a far greater rate of imprisonment than the rest of the community. The ACT Labor Government is totally committed to reducing this. Until we can bring their imprisonment rates into line with the community as a whole, every Australian needs to be more sensitive in dealing with the issue of Aboriginal deaths in custody. Every democracy should be able to bear in mind the plight of sections of society who are disadvantaged in some way. The Labor Government wants to help in every way possible to maintain the dignity of our indigenous people.

In the Bill a very wide definition has been deliberately taken to include many different kinds of custody. This is because the right to a safe personal environment should be afforded to all Australians, irrespective of whether they are in custody or not. If there is some accident or mishap whilst someone is under the care of the Government there should be a full and proper investigation. The creation of the office of Chief Coroner of the ACT will allow full and independent investigations to take place. This office quite rightly will be afforded the powers which are needed to carry out such an important set of duties for the community. The powers of search and entry have been strengthened, and the capacity of the coroner to require a witness to be sworn has been included in the new Bill. Additionally, the Bill includes contempt of court provisions which will aid in the discovery of the truth. The committee has recommended that the power to require a police officer to be available to assist in an investigation be extended to all public servants. This recommendation is sound, but I think that we should be somewhat cautious about taking these matters out of the hands of the specialists, such as the police.

Madam Speaker, the committee has also quite validly recommended that the coroner be allowed to order the availability of any document or other evidence that is of sufficient relevance. This is a particularly important amendment, as the original wording of this Bill might not have included important forms of evidence. The committee has also sensibly recommended that the Government cooperate with national bodies, such as the Australian Institute of Criminology, in the collation of information relating to coronial proceedings for the purposes of analysis and comparison. I fully support this recommendation because when there is an identifiable problem, such as the number of Aboriginal deaths in custody, we need to be able to improve our levels of understanding of the issue. This is difficult without some central agency which is able to provide us with data and specialised suggestions. I strongly support this recommendation.

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I conclude by commending the community groups which chose to come forward and assist us in this inquiry. It is always of great help to a committee when people are prepared to come forward. I would also like to voice my support for the committee's recommendation that this community consultation be continued. I also restate my personal determination and the Government's determination to tackle the problem of Aboriginal deaths in custody and afford all members of the community the rights and dignity that they deserve. I think the Attorney-General has taken all this into account, and I congratulate him. I would also like to thank the committee. We did have many secretaries, as I am sure the chairman of the committee has pointed out; but we managed to come down with this report. I would like to thank all those who worked on it. I would also like to thank my two committee colleagues, Helen Szuty and Gary Humphries.

**MS SZUTY (10.42):** I will be brief, Madam Speaker, because both Mr Humphries and Mrs Grassby have spoken extensively to this report. Members may be aware that on 18 June 1993, at a meeting of the Legal Affairs Committee, I moved that the committee inquire into and report on, by 31 March 1994, the exposure draft of the Coroners (Amendment) Bill 1993 as tabled in the Assembly by the Attorney-General on 17 June 1993. Following the tabling of the Bill, on 16 December 1993 the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs appropriately shifted its inquiry to focus on the Bill as tabled.

It is important to note that there are two areas of focus of this Bill. There are those provisions which relate to the report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and there are those provisions which relate to the updating of the Coroners Act of 1956, in general terms. It is unfortunate, Madam Speaker, that the committee has taken some time in addressing the Bill because of the importance of adopting the provisions which relate to Aboriginal deaths in custody in particular. However, the committee has effectively addressed, I believe, other more general issues in relation to the Bill. We made five recommendations and I am pleased to note that the Government has, in most part, supported all of them. I believe that they are sensible recommendations and I expect that they will get the support of this Assembly.

Madam Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to mention the extremely valuable work which has been done with the coroner's office and the Attorney-General's Department by the National Association for Loss and Grief, ACT Chapter. I concur with both Mr Humphries and Mrs Grassby that the committee is appreciative of the work that the National Association for Loss and Grief, ACT Chapter, has done. I commend them for the ongoing commitment that they have given to working with the coroner's office and the Attorney-General's Department in declaring regulations under the legislation, and their ongoing review of coronial processes in the ACT.



**MR CONNOLLY** (Attorney-General and Minister for Health) (10.45): Members of the Assembly will recall that on 17 June 1993 I tabled an exposure draft of the Coroners (Amendment) Bill for community comment and consultation. The exposure draft of the Bill, which was prepared to give effect to the Government's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and in consequence of a review of the Coroners Act, allowed for community involvement as to the manner in which the recommendations of the royal commission were to be implemented in the Territory by amendment of the Coroners Act. Following the period of consultation, the draft Bill was revised and on 16 December 1993 I introduced the resulting Coroners (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) 1993 into the Assembly. The Standing Committee on Legal Affairs took a reference to inquire into and report on the Bill, and in June of 1994 it issued its report on the Bill. I thank the committee for its detailed consideration of the Coroners Bill and for the support given for the Government's means of implementing the relevant recommendations of the royal commission.

In its report the committee makes five recommendations about the content of the Bill and related matters. These recommendations, which are generally agreed, are addressed in detail in the Government's response. The only recommendation to which I need to refer specifically is recommendation No. 3 - that proposed new section 35 in clause 25 of the Bill, which would allow the coroner to make available "statements" to persons with a sufficient interest, be made clearer. Proposed section 35 currently provides that "a coroner may make available any statement that the coroner intends to consider to any person with sufficient interest". The committee considered that the word "statement" has the potential to limit the evidentiary material that a coroner might make available to a person. The Government agrees with the committee's concerns on this. In order to ensure that this is not the case, it is proposed to replace the proposed section 35 with a new section 35 which may more clearly indicate that a coroner may make available any document or evidence intended to be considered at an inquest or inquiry. The Government later today will be asking the Assembly to consider an amendment to section 35 proposed to be inserted by clause 25 of the Bill to widen the terms of the proposed provision. I am, in fact, circulating those amendments at this stage, before the vote this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, again I thank the committee for its consideration and for the cooperation between the committee and the department. I present the Government's response to report No. 5 of 1994 of the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (10.47), in reply: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues and the Attorney for their comments on this report. I also thank the Attorney for having generally responded positively to the recommendations of the committee. I have noted the report which he kindly provided to me. I think that it will make it clear that the sort of evidence which a person might wish access to in the course of a coronial inquiry can be very much broader than simply a document. It may be some other piece of evidence that is relevant to that inquiry. We are all aware of the great trauma that is involved in any coronial inquiry when someone has died in unusual circumstances. To make that process as open and as transparent as possible should be our goal in the way in which we deal with the legislation that underpins this process. I think that we go a step towards achieving it with the legislation generally, so I welcome the amendment which the Attorney has referred to.

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I also welcome his commitment to engage in consultation, both with bodies such as the Australian Institute of Criminology, which has an emerging interest in areas that touch on coronial matters, and with the community generally, particularly groups like the National Association for Loss and Grief which worked with the committee to produce this report. Those sorts of inputs are valuable in making the legislation relevant to the needs of people who, from time to time, have the misfortune to have to have contact with it.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### **POSTPONEMENT OF ORDER OF THE DAY**

Motion (by Mr Berry) agreed to:

That order of the day No. 2, Assembly business, be postponed until the next day of sitting.

#### **CONSERVATION, HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT - STANDING COMMITTEE Report on Feral Animals and Invasive Plants**

Debate resumed from 25 August 1994, on motion by Mr Moore:

That the report be noted.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### **TOURISM AND A.C.T. PROMOTION - STANDING COMMITTEE Report on an International Airport in the ACT**

Debate resumed from 15 September 1994, on motion by Mr Westende:

That the report be noted.

**MS FOLLETT** (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (10.49): Madam Speaker, the Government welcomes the inquiry into the tourism benefits of an international airport in Canberra. The report of the inquiry acknowledges the importance of the airport and the question of international access by tourists and business to the national capital. Future development of Canberra Airport is very important, given the implications for planning, land management and infrastructure provision.

I commend the committee on its work in relation to this inquiry. Committee members and staff spent a great deal of time meeting with relevant Commonwealth agencies and others to discuss a variety of issues regarding the airport. The report, *An International Airport in the ACT*, makes valuable recommendations, and I am pleased to say that the Government agrees with most. In fact, the Government had already decided on a number of matters prior to the report recommending them. The Canberra Tourism Commission has begun to implement several of these decisions. For example, in the 1994-95 budget, the Canberra Tourism Commission received an additional \$1m funding over the next four years to enhance its international marketing effort, with a particular emphasis on the Japanese market. The commission is preparing long-term strategies with the objective of creating greater incentive for international carriers to utilise Canberra Airport. It has had preliminary discussions with several international carriers regarding the feasibility of international charter flights operating at Canberra Airport. The commission has entered into full membership with Partnership Australia.

Madam Speaker, Partnership Australia is an initiative of the Australian Tourism Commission which involves all States and Territories in strategically and cooperatively marketing Australia overseas. The ACT will benefit from Partnership Australia through cooperative exercises with the Australian Tourism Commission and other States' tourism bodies which will allow the ACT greater and more cost-effective marketing exposure. The Canberra Tourism Commission's international marketing activities will have an impact on the desirability for, and potential viability of, an international airport by further creating and heightening demand for Canberra as a tourist destination.

Madam Speaker, as members will be aware, and as noted in the report, the Federal Government has recently announced its plans to dispose of the assets of the Federal Airports Corporation, the FAC, and fast-track the development of Badgery's Creek airport. Consistent with the report's recommendation, the Government is undertaking a detailed examination of the possible acquisition of Canberra Airport. A full cost-benefit assessment will not be possible until after the Commonwealth Government releases the Federal airport scoping study report later this year or early next year.

The view of Airport Planning Pty Ltd, consultants engaged by the Government to assist with the submission, indicates that regular, direct, scheduled wide-bodied international airline operations at Canberra Airport could not be sustainable for some time beyond the year 2000. This viewpoint takes into consideration the Sydney Olympics in 2000. The submissions to the inquiry from the Federal Airports Corporation, Qantas and Ansett Airlines support the consultants' view, as does the Government's own research. In that context, the Government is not able to agree with the recommendation that further cost-benefit studies be undertaken on the immediate upgrade of the airport to international capacity. Madam Speaker, what is evident is that we must attract more international visitors to Canberra and ensure that we maximise the opportunities presented by the Olympic Games in Sydney in the year 2000 and the celebration of Federation in 2001. Canberra Airport has an important role to play in providing access for these international visitors. The Government is actively exploring the options for its future.

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Madam Speaker, the Government recognises that the ACT has enormous potential to attract international visitors. We have a unique product, a product that is growing and developing, a product which we are promoting in key international markets. In tabling the detailed response to the report, I would like once again to thank the committee for the work that it has put into the inquiry and for its valuable report. I table the Government's response to that report.

**MR STEFANIAK (10.54):** As the committee chair, even though I was not on that committee, I feel that I should briefly respond to the Chief Minister's comments. I thank the Chief Minister for her comments, which are mostly supportive of the recommendations of the committee. I suppose that it is with some disappointment that I look at her comments in relation to what she has been told by Airport Planning Pty Ltd.

In relation to comments made by the Chief Minister about looking into the purchase of Canberra Airport, I note that she has made somewhat more guarded comments today. I think there are a couple of things in the committee report that the Government should bear in mind before it decides to take any further action. I draw attention to paragraph 2.1 on page 3 of the report. The Canberra Airport incorporates RAAF Base Fairbairn. They control the runway and the eastern part of the airport; the FAC basically controls the western part and the terminal buildings; and the other buildings are owned by private bodies. We have to be sure of exactly what we are looking at buying. Also, the committee asked the Government to consider a number of options apart from just the Government buying the airport. The then committee chair was very keen to see either a joint venture or a private purchase of the airport. One of the things mentioned in the Hilmer report was a joint venture in terms of the Government and private enterprise buying and controlling the airport. That would be the way to go, and that is certainly something that I would urge on the Government.

**MR DE DOMENICO (10.56):** I would like to follow on from my colleague Mr Stefaniak's comments, especially about the future possibility of purchasing the airport should the Federal Labor Party decide to go ahead with its privatisation plan for airports. Professor Hilmer made a specific statement following a statement made by the Chief Minister in which she hinted at the possibility of the Government buying Canberra Airport. I think the statement by Professor Hilmer was that governments ought to be very careful in getting into that sort of situation, especially seeing that other airports are more likely to be bought either in a joint venture way or by the private sector, because in that sort of situation there is no doubt that a government owned enterprise would not be able to compete as well as either a joint venture operation or a private sector operation. I think it is important to say that, because the Government's business record over the past year-and-a-half especially is not one that would instil confidence in its ability to run any business whatsoever. Need I mention the infamous VITAB affair to show that sometimes the Government does it get wrong? Most times when governments become involved in areas more rightfully the domain of the private sector they get into trouble. We do not need to look back very far to what happened in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia for us to realise that.

Whilst I welcome the Chief Minister's statement that she will be looking into the possibility of making sure that the administration and the running of Canberra Airport will be in hands other than those of the Federal Airports Corporation, I stress that governments ought to be very careful before they get into buying airports, especially seeing that it is more than likely that other airports around the country will not be owned by governments; they will either be in a joint venture situation or be owned by the private sector. It would be very difficult, therefore, for any such government owned enterprise to compete.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**CONSERVATION, HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT -  
STANDING COMMITTEE  
Report on Smoke-free Areas (Enclosed Public Places) Bill 1993 -**

**Government Response**

Debate resumed from 16 June 1994, on motion by Mr Connolly:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

**MR BERRY** (Manager of Government Business)(10.58): I note that Mr Moore is not in the chamber to speak on this matter. What has occurred in this Assembly is now largely history, but I think it is still important that we draw attention to the issues which surround this *Clearing the Air* report by the Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment. I note that Ms Ellis had the good judgment to present a report which dissents from the majority report of the committee, and for very good reasons, because the committee came up with a couple of recommendations that have been identified by Mr Connolly in his tabling statement. Those two recommendations relate to the adoption of a mechanical ventilation and air-conditioning standard as a standard for acceptable air quality in premises where smoking can occur, and the extension of the smoke-free requirement to all remaining enclosed public places within 30 months of gazettal of the legislation.

I heard Mr Moore saying on the radio this morning that the Government had not done anything in relation to licensed premises, pubs and clubs. Mr Moore misleads the community when he says that. The Government has done a lot. It has introduced its code of practice under the occupational health and safety legislation and, as has always been said by the Government, we intend to take the community with us. It was important that we use the consultative arrangements, of which members would be aware, to ensure that all involved in the industry have a role to play in bringing cleaner air to the people of the ACT who use those establishments. This all began with a commitment to the people of the ACT by Labor at the last election that we would provide smoke-free public places. We delivered on that promise, with the introduction and the carriage of the legislation, save for the blemish which was created by the actions of the Liberals - - -

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**Mr De Domenico:** I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I refer you to standing order 52, which says:

A Member may not reflect upon any vote of the Assembly, except upon a motion that such vote be rescinded.

Mr Berry, quite obviously, is speaking about a piece of legislation that was passed by this Assembly not 48 hours ago, and I would ask you to call him to order.

**Mr Moore:** He can speak on it; he just cannot reflect on the vote.

**MR BERRY:** I am not reflecting on the vote.

**Mr Moore:** You just did.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Berry, you are not to reflect on the vote. Please continue.

**MR BERRY:** I will not reflect on the vote. I would not think of it. I would reflect on the people who publicly attempt to mislead the community on this issue. They are to be reflected on. I have defended - - -

**Mr Moore:** The pot is calling the kettle black. If this is not the pot calling the kettle black - - -

**Mr De Domenico:** Like you did on VITAB.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order!

**MR BERRY:** I have been cleared on that issue. You have not been to an inquiry yet. You go to an inquiry. I have been cleared.

**Mr De Domenico:** No; this Assembly said that you misled it. That is why you are on the back bench, mate.

**MR BERRY:** I have been cleared. You go to an inquiry. We will find out about your collaboration with the Victorian Liberals and how much responsibility you bear.

A number of people have rung me and have said to me that they thought Michael Moore owed the tobacco companies something as a result of his actions. I have defended Michael on that score. I do not believe that. But I have to say that in defending him I think that I might be damaging my own reputation. It is getting harder and harder, I tell you. This issue of mechanical ventilation has been debunked. I heard Mr Moore say yesterday that he was supported by Canberra ASH.

**Mr Moore:** I read from a letter. All I did was read from a letter.

**MR BERRY:** He said, "This is Canberra ASH's position". He pointed to the letterhead and said, "This is Canberra ASH's position". I have since learnt that Mr Moore has had a different letter from Canberra ASH distancing themselves from the position. Mr Moore was not brave enough to bring it to this Assembly and show it to us. Perhaps you would table that letter?

**Mr Kaine:** Do you have a copy of it? Why don't you table it?

**Mr Moore:** Have you got it?

**MR BERRY:** I know that you have it. ASH have distanced themselves from the position adopted by Mr Moore, it seems. The committee's adoption of AS1668, the use of mechanical ventilation and air-conditioning of buildings, as a standard for air quality was wrong, in my view, and, in the view of other experts, the committee's adoption - - -

**Mr De Domenico:** Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order. Mr Berry just said that in his opinion a vote taken by this Assembly two days ago was wrong. I ask you to call him to order under standing order 52.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! Thank you for pointing that out to me, Mr De Domenico; but Mr Berry is talking about the committee's report.

**MR BERRY:** You ought to be sensitive about this because the majority of the committee failed in their duty to the people of the ACT. They in fact have lumbered - - -

**Mr Moore:** I take a point of order, Madam Speaker. The report of the committee was adopted in toto in this Assembly by a vote of this Assembly, as reflected in the legislation that went through yesterday exactly in accordance with the committee's recommendations. For Mr Berry to say that is indeed to reflect upon a vote of the Assembly. He cannot do it. I have no problem with his debating the issue, Madam Speaker, but he cannot reflect on a vote of the Assembly. That is standing order 52.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Moore, he is talking about the committee report. The order of the day is about the committee report. He can say anything he likes about the committee report. Continue, Mr Berry.

**Mr Moore:** I take a point of order, Madam Speaker. I would like to dissent from that. He cannot say anything he likes about - - -

**MADAM SPEAKER:** There is no dissent. Sit down, Mr Moore.

**Mr Moore:** He cannot say anything he likes about - - -

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Moore, I am asking you to sit. Please be seated.

**MR BERRY:** Madam Speaker, I understand why Mr Moore is sensitive about this issue. He says that it is all right with him if I debate the issues. Now it seems that he does not want me to reflect on the committee either. It is a bit hard to debate the issues without reflecting on somebody. What I will do is reflect on the people who have supported it. The rest of Australia was looking for leadership in the ACT and I think they would be disappointed by the committee's report. Unless you get up in this Assembly and agree with the committee's report, it seems that Mr Moore is going to be agitated and will try to use the standing orders to block any discussion of the issue. The fact is that the committee's report is to be criticised, and it is fair that it be criticised, because, as a result of it, the Assembly moved and adopted certain parts of it which offend public health authorities around the country. You are going to have to take the responsibility for that. If you do not like it you should not have gone down that path, for heaven's sake. That is the issue.

The Liberals, led by a health professional, have something to worry about as well. I do not think there would be anybody out there in the community who would believe that a health professional would take us down this path - that is, to adopt a position in this committee which brings us to a point where Australian Standard 1668.2 allows for or encourages tobacco consumption in premises in the ACT. What we do about the culture of smoking out there in the community and how we deal with it has been largely avoided. So I think, Madam Speaker, that there would be a lot of disappointment about the committee's report. I think there would be a lot of support for Ms Ellis's dissenting position, and I support it. I think she did a brilliant job, and she is on the public record as showing the way forward on this issue. It was a great piece of work, in my view.

I have long been a supporter of action on this score. I think it is regrettable that we have not been able to go down the path that Ms Ellis adopted. I think we are in a position now where we will be criticised, rightly, by public health authorities. Well, some of us will be criticised. I will not be; that is for sure. Some of us will be criticised for our behaviour on this score by public health authorities around this country. Mr Humphries was responsible for the introduction of some groundbreaking legislation some time ago, and there has been, it seems, a complete turnaround on trying to achieve a change in the culture of smoking.

**Mr Humphries:** This is the most advanced legislation in the country, Wayne.

**MR BERRY:** You have gone down the path of supporting the culture of tobacco consumption out there in the community. Your leader suggests that she knows something about health. She certainly has not demonstrated her commitment to public health on this score at least. Madam Speaker, I think Labor has delivered on its promise, in the sense that it brought this legislation to the Assembly. The legislation, as I have said publicly, is better than nothing at all; but it is regrettable that it went down the path suggested by this committee.



I think the committee, on the evidence, adopted information that was inaccurate. It wrongly adopted Australian Standard 1668. Specifically in respect of the statement in paragraph 4.12, Mr Peter Harley, Workcover's manager of scientific services, states that it is inaccurate to report that Australian Standard 1668 is being used as a key mechanism by Workcover in New South Wales for controlling exposure to ETS. That was the stuff that Mr Moore's committee was pushing down our throats. Mr Harley also expressed concern about information provided to the committee by the Liquor Trades Union and cited in paragraph 4.9 of the report. This information is still at an early stage of preparation and has no status as a published document deriving from the Workcover Authority. Yet it was adopted by the committee. Workcover states quite categorically that it recommends that the most effective manner in which to fulfil the legal obligation to provide a safe and healthy working environment is through the implementation of a no-smoking policy in the workplace. That, in fact, is what the Government did with its occupational health and safety code of practice. It will lead to a no-smoking policy. What you have done is the reverse. You have supported a committee proposal which encourages tobacco consumption in certain places.

**Mr De Domenico:** Who supported it?

**Mr Moore:** It encourages smoking?

**MR BERRY:** It encourages tobacco consumption. In fact, it endorses it. It endorses the consumption of tobacco products in certain places. You have the gall to say that it is harm minimisation. What a lot of rot! It encourages harm.

There is also the issue of the standard. Philip Morris, it is reported, is adopting rigorous ventilation standards in the United States to encourage smoking in places like restaurants. The ventilation standard, according to the tabling statement by the Minister, is ASHRAE 62, an American standard, and that is the standard upon which AS1668.2 is based.

**Mr Moore:** No, not based.

**MR BERRY:** So, Mr Moore, I am afraid that you have let us down, as have our Liberal colleagues, in not closely examining this matter. You have now been identified out there in the community as having let down the people in the ACT. You have let down, along with Mrs Carnell  
- - -

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Berry, your time has expired.

**MR MOORE (11.14):** Once again we hear a simplistic presentation from the most simple of Ministers that we have had. Madam Speaker, I say that quite categorically because it seems that Mr Berry has a real difficulty in understanding public health and population health concepts. Population health concepts were clearly set out in the 1986 Ottawa charter. I have pointed that out to Mr Berry in this house before today so that he would have the opportunity to read the charter and try to understand and comprehend what population health issues are about. It seems that the four-page document is too much for him.

To take it further, he continues to mislead the public. Madam Speaker, he will need to have a look at the transcript from this morning, but it may well be the case that he has misled this Assembly. I say "may" quite deliberately, so that Mr Berry can consider it and check. He can get a transcript of what I said this morning, have a look at the *Hansard* of today, and see whether he has misled this Assembly by what he thinks I said this morning. I believe that I did not say what he suggested in the debate this morning, and I encourage him to look at that issue and, if appropriate, to correct what he said in this place.

Madam Speaker, what I said was that Labor did not go far enough. The Bill that Mr Berry presented to this house was inadequate. It was inadequate and it was simplistic. It took a simplistic, prohibitionist stance on tobacco smoke. Those of us who have studied the impact of prohibition and how prohibition on other drugs came about throughout the last 100 years or so would know that the approach that Mr Berry has taken led to it being rolled. Those of us who know the damage caused by prohibition realise that it is better for us to look at harm minimisation, and that is what we have done. We have targeted the critical areas.

One of the most influential things for me was the meetings that Ms Ellis and I attended in New Zealand. We looked at the New Zealand legislation. Although this is landmark legislation for Australia, there was already legislation like it in New Zealand, the United States and so forth. When we went to New Zealand, what did we find? We found that their legislation demanded of people criteria that were already effectively in place in the ACT without legislation. They were talking about a requirement for 50 per cent of restaurants to be non-smoking. I think I am correct in saying that. Ms Ellis acknowledges that. They were talking about legislation that did that sort of thing; legislation way back before what had been presented by Mr Berry in this house and what was passed by this house yesterday. Madam Speaker, the reason I was so influenced by that was that I could see that already the ACT, without having to legislate, had achieved a great deal of what others were doing by legislation. The arguments presented to our committee by a number of people, on both sides, I must say, were the arguments of the evangelist. They were arguments that were extreme and we had to work our way through them. It was very difficult indeed, which is why I think the committee report was not a unanimous report. The issues were incredibly difficult to deal with, and the evidence was quite contradictory. I think Ms Ellis would agree with that. I am very proud of the report because we recognised that we had to target the areas where people were smoking that Labor had missed out on.

I would like to remind Mr Berry that our report identified, from a Victorian study, that people are likely to be exposed to environmental tobacco smoke for 6 per cent of their time, other than the 68 per cent of their time that is spent at home and the 18 per cent of their time that is spent at work. For about 6 per cent of their time indoors people are likely to be exposed. Of that 6 per cent of time indoors, other than at work or in the home, we are talking about a small percentage of time spent in restaurants. Maybe it is one per cent. Probably, at the very extreme, it is one per cent. In clubs and pubs it is probably at a higher level, and at clubs and pubs, as all of us know, the smoke is much more intense. Why has the Government failed to recognise that those are the areas of need, and why has the *Canberra Times*, again and again, failed to report that that is what the committee recommended?

There are real questions over the political correctness of what we do and what we do not report on this. It is easy to report that somebody is going for a prohibition approach and that is what we all should do; but a harm minimisation approach is one that requires greater understanding and greater thinking. It would seem that the ex-Minister, the least popular member of the Labor Party - he probably is amongst the least popular members of this Assembly - would not understand. His success in his ministerial portfolio is also reflected in his success in dealing with this issue. He failed to realise what the real issues are, and he failed to attack those real issues. That, fortunately, was what the Assembly was able to do.

Another part of his lack of understanding, Madam Speaker, has to do with understanding that Australian Standard 1668.2 is a living standard. It changes. At the moment the standard is as set in 1991. Already the process is under way for a review of that standard. One of the positive things that I think will come out is that people will realise that when dealing with the standard of ventilation in buildings they will have to take into account the issue of environmental tobacco smoke.

Madam Speaker, in spite of all the arguments, we do know that the only epidemiological evidence that carries any weight at all about the problems of passive smoking is associated with that 68 per cent of time that is spent in the home. People living with their spouse who were exposed constantly to passive tobacco smoke were indeed at some health risk. We can extrapolate from that, and it is appropriate that we do extrapolate from it and say that there are dangers associated with passive smoking. But there is no epidemiological evidence yet to suggest that there is a problem with passive smoking in restaurants; that it can be shown to be a direct cause. However, it is appropriate that we do extrapolate. But if we are really going to be genuine and extrapolate to restaurants, how much more important is it to extrapolate to the casino?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Moore, it is 11.22 am and it is 45 minutes after the commencement of Assembly business. I will have to interrupt. In accordance with standing order 77 as amended by temporary order, the resumption of the debate will be an order of the day for the next sitting.

**Mr Moore:** Madam Speaker, I wish to move to suspend so much of standing orders as would prevent us from drawing this debate to a conclusion.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You do not need to suspend standing orders. Thirty minutes is the - - -

**Mr Moore:** No; I specifically want to suspend standing orders, Madam Speaker, not for 30 minutes but to allow this debate to be drawn to a conclusion.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** If members want to suspend standing orders we will proceed in that way. There is no need to. We have a provision to deal with this.

**Mr Berry:** Madam Speaker, I would oppose the motion to suspend standing orders. Once you finish this, and if it takes you less than 30 minutes, we would go straight on to the - - -

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**Mr Moore:** Okay.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** That is why, Mr Moore. We have a perfectly good provision.

Motion (by Mr Berry) agreed to:

That the time allotted to Assembly business be extended by 30 minutes.

**MR MOORE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was drawing my speech to a close anyway. Really, the critical thing is that the Assembly has accepted this report. I think we now have a situation which goes much further than the original legislation. I think it is appropriate for us to recognise the contribution that Mr Berry made in introducing this legislation and taking on this issue of environmental tobacco smoke in areas of recreation, and the extension that the Assembly has put on that. In the end I believe that we have come up with a very sensible decision. Apart from the politicking, it is appropriate that the former Minister be given credit for bringing that issue on, and the Assembly be given credit for dealing with it appropriately as well.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (11.24): Madam Speaker, whatever you might say about the legislation that has been passed by the Assembly as a result of this report being tabled in the Assembly, I think even Mr Berry would have to acknowledge that it represents the most advanced legislation on smoking in the whole of Australia, and by a very wide margin. If Mr Berry is concerned about not leading the country he need have no fears, because we certainly led the country with this legislation. The other point is that, as a result of this report of the Assembly, we will lead not just in terms of restaurants where, with great respect, I think the battle is substantially won anyway; but we are also going to be leading in respect of clubs, bars and taverns. That was the crucial area of weakness in that legislation, from the Government's point of view, and it has been corrected. At least a solution has been found in that direction in what this committee recommended and what was picked up by the Assembly in the legislation that was passed. That is a matter of considerable pleasure to me and, I hope, to other members of the Assembly. Clearly, Mr Berry is concerned about his own prospects of re-election and he would like to generate an issue that will help him to overcome what would appear to be considerable shortcomings.

**Mr Berry:** I am not worried, Gary. I would be worried if I were you, though.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Berry is not worried. I am glad that he is feeling comfortable about it, because I certainly know, Madam Speaker, that I would not be if I were in his shoes. But that is fine; he wants to generate an issue. I think it is better, though, for him not to pick up an issue and try to mislead people generally in the community into imagining that we have adopted legislation which, in some way, as he put it, encourages people to smoke. This legislation is far-reaching and it does do a great deal to discourage people smoking in public places, particularly those important social public places where people go and where passive smoking represents a serious danger to their health.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Report on Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 11 of 1993**

**MR KAINE** (11.27): Madam Speaker, I present report No. 14 of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled "Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 11, 1993 - Financial Audits with Years Ending to 30 June 1993", together with extracts from the minutes of proceedings. I move:

That the report be noted.

The audit was a review of all agency financial statements, from which a number of issues of significance were noted. However, the committee observes that with the passage of time and with intervening events, such as the inquiries and reports by the Select Committees on Estimates for 1993-94 and 1994-95 and reports on specific agencies by this committee, many of the significant issues noted by the audit have been addressed in one form or another. For example, audit concerns about unfunded superannuation liabilities and the level of investments by the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Leave Board were noted and discussed by both Estimates Committees.

While the committee accepts that some issues raised by the audit may not be current, it considers that there are a number which still require a specific governmental response. The committee has listed those at paragraph 2.6 of the report. We said, for example, that audit opinions on some 14 agency financial statements were qualified for non-compliance with the financial statement guidelines. That is a matter which the committee believes should be followed up. Also, ACT Fleet made a profit, on the face of it, of \$2.7m; but that was almost fully offset by losses on plant and workshop operations. Almost \$1m of funds provided for the NIES program were unspent at 30 June 1993, representing more than two years' estimated expenditure. There are a number of issues which we believe have not been fully addressed and which the Government should have a look at. The committee has recommended that the Government provide to the Assembly during the current sittings a response on those several issues that we have identified and listed at paragraph 2.6 of the report.

**MS ELLIS** (11.30): As a member of the committee, I join Mr Kaine in tabling this report. As Mr Kaine has said, it was based mainly on audits of agencies' financial statements for the year ended June 1993. Some time has gone by since then. The committee was generally satisfied with the information put before it; but, as has been mentioned by the chair, a small number of issues need to be tidied up. The committee's recommendation is purely to have the Government report back to the Assembly on those issues.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Report on Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 1 of 1994**

**MR KAINE** (11.30): Madam Speaker, I present report No. 15 of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled "Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 1, 1994 - Overtime and Allowances - Part 2", together with extracts from the minutes of proceedings. I move:

That the report be noted.

In considering this report and the matters that the Auditor-General raised, the committee was sensitive to the fact that there is not a great deal of life left for this Assembly. We have a limited number of days on which the Government's response to matters like this can be dealt with. So, in a sense, we truncated the process. We also noted that, in their response to the matters that the Auditor-General had raised, the Ministers generally indicated that action was being taken to rectify the deficiencies that the Auditor-General had noted. In this case, the committee has taken the course of making merely one recommendation. It is that the Government, in responding to this report, advise the Assembly in detail on matters raised by the Auditor-General in his report No. 1 of 1994 and, in particular, respond to some specific matters that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts has identified.

In all cases, the responsible Minister has indicated that corrective action is in progress. The committee accepts that that is the case; but in some cases we would like to know what the end result is. In one particular case, we asked for a further report from the Minister next month. That was to do with the role of janitors where schools are used for community purposes. We have put a short response time on that because it is a matter that has been running for a long time. We noted at paragraph 2.9 of our report that the Standing Committee on Social Policy had reported on the community and cultural use of schools. That was quite a long time ago. We accept that the Minister is examining this matter. He indicated that a report on options will be finalised by December 1994. Given the time that has elapsed already, we would like a more rapid response to that, so we have asked the Minister to report before the end of October. Other than that, the committee generally accepted that the responsible Ministers had these issues under control; but we would like to know the final outcome of them.

**MS ELLIS (11.33):** In addressing Public Accounts Committee report No. 15, I want to make a few very brief comments. In our inquiry process, the committee received advice from Ministers - in fact, it involved the whole of the Executive - on the status of a number of issues raised by the Auditor-General in the second part of this two-part audit process. I remind members that this audit process had been suggested to the Auditor-General by the Chief Minister some time ago. It has proven to be a very useful process. As a member of the committee, I was satisfied with the responses given. I draw members' attention to the recommendation in this report which, as the chair said, is calling for a status report, or a conclusive report, on the remaining issues, all of which appear to be receiving attention and are being developed or worked on by various areas of the Government, except for that one which has had attention drawn to it in relation to the request for information by October 1994. In some cases, understandably, it will be a status report, because some of these processes are ongoing rather than instantly conclusive. In general terms, I have no problem with the PAC's report in this case.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **EXECUTIVE BUSINESS - PRECEDENCE**

Motion (by Mr Berry) agreed to:

That, pursuant to standing order 77(d), executive business be called on.

### **INTERPRETATION (AMENDMENT) BILL (NO. 3) 1993**

Debate resumed from 16 December 1993, on motion by Mr Connolly:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Debate (on motion by Mr Humphries) adjourned.

### **STATUTE LAW REVISION (PENALTIES) BILL 1993**

Debate resumed from 16 December 1993, on motion by Mr Connolly:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Debate (on motion by Mr Humphries) adjourned.

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### **CORONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL (NO. 2) 1993**

Debate resumed from 16 December 1993, on motion by Mr Connolly:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (11.37): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to indicate my party's support for the Coroners (Amendment) Bill (No. 2). Members will recall the debate earlier this morning about the report of the Legal Affairs Committee on this Bill. On behalf of the committee, I indicate that we are pleased with the general support that the Government has given to the thrust of the recommendations and its intention to put forward an amendment, which has been circulated, which will improve that element of the legislation that deals with the making available of evidence to members of the families of those who have died, to allow them to see what the process is producing and what it means to them.

Madam Speaker, as has been indicated, this Bill implements, at least in part, the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. There are some references in the legislation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The committee made a recommendation concerning the width of application of the provisions in this legislation to that community. However, it is probably a mistake to see this simply as being about Aboriginal people in custody. It is much broader than that. The legislation is about coronial processes. I think it is true to say, despite our recommendation, that the legislation applies recommendations from the royal commission to all people in the ACT who have contact with this process. For example, it deals with the way in which the coroner will conduct an inquest or an inquiry into a death in custody, and it makes little distinction between an Aboriginal person and a non-Aboriginal person who might be unfortunate enough to be in that position. The only significant difference between those two communities is that, in the case of an Aboriginal person, the Aboriginal Legal Service is also to be informed of the proceedings so that that organisation may, if necessary, take some role in that inquiry or have some input into dealing with the recommendations that arise from that inquiry.

There is a capacity to have the Attorney-General deal with the recommendations and findings of those sorts of inquiries. He or she then has the power to implement those and make recommendations to the Government about improvements to the proceedings where, for example, people are held in custody in our gaols or holding cells. Generally there is a capacity there to deal swiftly with problems that emerge. As I indicated on a previous occasion, the ACT has been fortunate in not having any recorded cases of Aboriginal persons dying in custody. That is a very proud record, which we should be guarding jealously. I think that the adoption, in broad terms, of the recommendations of the royal commission goes a very long way down the path of making sure that we will be in that position.



Madam Speaker, I take the point that the Attorney made in his response to the committee's recommendations, about cooperation between the coroner and officers of the ACT public service. I accept what he said about the existing provisions of the Public Sector Management Act of this year requiring extensive cooperation from public servants. I think that that addresses the concerns of the committee. I think that I speak on behalf of my colleagues in saying that we are happy to accept that position. As I indicated, I am also prepared to support the amendment that is being brought forward to the Bill to improve that particular access to information.

**MR CONNOLLY** (Attorney-General and Minister for Health) (11.41), in reply: Madam Speaker, I thank members for their support for this legislation. The Coroners Act had its origins in a 1956 ordinance, which itself replaced a 1932 ordinance. That is as far back as I have gone. It is essentially nineteenth century English law that is still applying. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody clearly showed that there were some problems with that. That is what the amending legislation is about. The committee has made some worthwhile recommendations to further improve that and to improve the way in which families, whether they be of Aboriginal persons or others, are treated by the coroner.

We have had an interesting exercise in the ACT in the last 12 months. It became very apparent, due to the tragic death of a religious gentleman from Tibet, that the coroner's proceedings can come into conflict with the culture, beliefs and practices of any one of the myriad ethnic groups that make up modern Australian society. Whereas the nineteenth century British coronial proceedings worked well in a homogeneous society, they do not work as well in a multicultural society. As a result of that, the Government has been conducting an internal review. It has been doing quite a lot of work with Mr Cahill, the Chief Magistrate and Coroner, and with the police, the Attorney-General's Department and a range of people from Canberra's ethnic communities, to ensure that the procedures in place in the Coroner's Court are more accessible and understandable to people from a background other than a traditional English background.

I do not think that that will lead to further changes to the Act. It is more about explaining why we go about certain procedures, particularly in the event of sudden death, when families are in a traumatised situation in any event. To further add to their distress, they are then confronted with what appear to be strange legal proceedings that may require a sudden examination of the body for a coroner's inquiry. In some cases, religious beliefs would indicate that a body should not be touched for a period of some days after death. There can be reasons why that cannot be allowed to proceed. The review is all about explaining that. I am pleased to report to the Assembly that we are making a lot of progress on that. In fact, when we looked around, we found that nobody else in Australia had done the exercise that we are doing in the ACT. Nobody in any Australian State had thought, "How do we make our coronial proceedings more accessible to persons of a non-English speaking background?". When that project is completed, I look forward to not only tabling the final outcome here but also distributing it around Australia, because other States are looking with some interest at what we are doing.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

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## **Detail Stage**

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole

**MR CONNOLLY** (Attorney-General and Minister for Health) (11.41): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to move together the amendments circulated in my name.

Leave granted.

**MR CONNOLLY:** I move:

Page 21, lines 4 to 6, clause 25, proposed new section 35, omit the proposed new section, substitute the following proposed new section:

### **Access to documents etc.**

"35. A Coroner may make available to any person with sufficient interest -

- (a) any document that the Coroner intends to consider; and
- (b) any evidence relevant to the inquest or inquiry to which the Coroner intends to have regard."

Page 29, line 7, Schedule, proposed amendments of paragraph 34S(2) (b) and subsection 34S(4), after the proposed amendments of subsection 34(3), insert the following amendments:

### **"Paragraph 34S(2)(b) -**

Omit 'the Coroner', substitute 'a Coroner'.

### **Subsection 34S(4) -**

Omit 'the Coroner', substitute 'a Coroner'."

These amendments pick up a substantive recommendation of the committee concerning the material that is to be made available by a coroner to the family or a person with sufficient interest. The Government agreed with the committee's concerns about the original definition; so we have broadened that to meet the committee's concerns. The amendments also pick up a couple of things that slipped through. Throughout the Bill we have been changing "the Coroner" to "a Coroner" because it is now possible to appoint any of our magistrates to be coroners, instead of simply a single person. I table the explanatory memorandum.

**MS SZUTY (11.45):** Madam Speaker, as the Attorney-General has outlined, the first amendment is in line with the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs in relation to the Coroners (Amendment) Bill (No. 2), and the second amendment is a technical amendment which has come about because of the revision of the Act that has gone on in recent times. I would like to indicate to the Assembly that I will be supporting both of these amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

Bill, as a whole, as amended, agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

**ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY - ROYAL COMMISSION  
1992-93 Implementation Report**

Debate resumed from 16 June 1994, on motion by Ms Follett:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by Mr Humphries) adjourned.

**COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS - HOBART MEETING  
Ministerial Statement and Paper**

[COGNATE STATEMENT AND PAPER:

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS - DARWIN MEETING]

Debate resumed from 1 March 1994, on motion by Ms Follett:

That the Assembly takes note of the papers.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Is it the wish of this Assembly to debate this order of the day concurrently with the ministerial statement and paper from the fourth meeting of the Council of Australian Governments held in Darwin? There being no objection, that course will be followed. I remind members that in debating order of the day No. 5 they may address their remarks to order of the day No. 6.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (11.47): Madam Speaker, I am picking up this debate on Mrs Carnell's behalf. It is true that these meetings have taken on an added significance in recent years in order that a number of the difficulties which have been faced by governments around the country might be dealt with in a way which brings them into line with each other. The Hilmer report is a crucial part of that process at the present time, as I understand it. "Micro-economic reform" was the way the Chief Minister referred to it in her presentation speech. I am glad to see at least the lip-service that the Government pays to the importance of micro-economic reform. I note the comments made by the Chief Minister yesterday, that Hilmer and the concomitant process of micro-economic reform were not merely about producing privatisation or corporatisation. I accept that that is true. Competition is the most important element in this process. Reading her remarks about the COAG meeting brings one swiftly to the conclusion that there has been an oversight by this Government in respect of those important arms of public policy. Those arms are being examined and implemented not just by Liberal governments in this country but also by Labor governments. I am talking particularly about the Federal Government. That cannot be disregarded as we move towards a process of making our economic arrangements more efficient and providing for real competition, particularly between public business enterprises and private ones.

Madam Speaker, the process that the Government has followed in its participation in COAG meetings has been welcome at least in terms of the lip-service that it has paid to these important issues. By the same token, I think that there is a great deal more that the Government can do. I look forward to their making a real, substantive commitment to implementing genuine micro-economic reform and not merely saying, "Yes, we are in favour of it because it is the flavour of the month; but we will sit on our hands and wait until this particular ideological fad passes, and then we will go back to our old favourite policies of state control of enterprises and no competition in public sector enterprises". Clearly, that is a stupid policy, and the Government should be up front about where it stands on this whole process from beginning to end.

**MRS CARNELL** (Leader of the Opposition) (11.50): The main issue that comes out of the Chief Minister's statements on the COAG conferences in Hobart and Darwin is the abject failure of the Follett Labor Government to make any improvements in the quality and cost of services in the ACT. There is much talk and little action about this important issue. Members of COAG have adopted the Hilmer recommendations and have, therefore, focused on the need for competition in the supply and delivery of services. Competition reform is something that this Government can hardly bring itself to mention, let alone initiate; yet this has never stopped the Chief Minister from attending the COAG conferences, where she smiles in agreement with the other heads of government about competition policy - including her Labor colleague the Prime Minister - and then returns to the ACT with absolutely no intention of honouring anything that has been agreed to at the conference.

Since the report by the Independent Committee of Inquiry into National Competition Policy was brought down by the chairman, Professor Frederick Hilmer, in August last year, there has been widespread agreement that effective competition policy has a critical role to play in transformation of the Australian economy if it is to meet the challenges before it, both now and in the future. The report set out a number of important principles

and determined what role competition should play in the Australian economy and in which areas this could benefit us. It said that no applicant should be able to engage in anti-competitive conduct against the public interest, which I do not think anyone would disagree with; that, as far as possible, universal and uniformly applied rules of market conduct should apply to all market participants, regardless of the form of business ownership; that conduct with anti-competitive potential, said to be in the public interest, should be assessed by an appropriate, transparent assessment process, with provision for review, to demonstrate the nature and incidence of the public costs and benefits claimed; and that any changes in the coverage or nature of competition policy should be consistent with, and support, the general thrust of reforms. The Chief Minister agreed to these principles, although now that she has come back to the ACT we would not really know that she had agreed with those things.

Madam Speaker, competition is not an end in itself, but it is a very effective means of delivering higher-quality services to the people who need them, at lower cost. Certainly, everybody in the ACT is saying that services are becoming more and more expensive and there are fewer of them. Competition is one of the constructive forces which can be used in an economy to the benefit of the consumer in order to create jobs and wealth for everyone in the community.

**Mr Connolly:** That is what I keep saying about petrol competition; but you never believe me.

**MRS CARNELL:** That is because you did not produce a competitive marketplace.

**Mr Connolly:** We have. It was 68.5c today.

**MRS CARNELL:** It is not competitive. The Hilmer report concluded that, unless the national competition policy was implemented by all States and Territories as soon as possible, the Australian economy and people would forgo urgently needed benefits. To give an example of the benefits which have been provided to the Australian people upon introduction of competition into certain industries over the last few years the following can be cited: Domestic air fares have fallen by 25 per cent since domestic deregulation in 1990, and passenger numbers are up by 59 per cent, which is something that ACTION buses could look at; the cost of long-distance phone calls fell by 14 per cent and 23 per cent in the year to June 1993, following the introduction of a competitor to Telecom; and prices charged by 50 Commonwealth and State government trading enterprises subjected to "yardstick" competition fell by 4 per cent in real terms in 1991-92.

Although the Chief Minister, when far away at COAG, endorsed the Hilmer recommendations, it can only be concluded from her inaction in implementing any of the recommendations that she thinks that they have absolutely no relevance for the people of the ACT. There could be no better demonstration of this Government's ignorance of what competition means than the mind-boggling statement of the Urban Services Minister, Mr David Lamont, who said about taxis on 27 July:

... we believe that there is competition within the industry at the moment, to the extent that there is one operator that operates, Aerial.

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That was a very unusual approach to competition, Mr Lamont. You are totally wrong. That is not competition. The Chief Minister herself stated - - -

**Mr Kaine:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Not only is Mr Lamont interjecting noisily but he is also speaking from a place in the chamber which is not his seat.

**Mr Lamont:** All right. You have only one industry of chemists, but you have competition.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I am not sure whether to thank you or not, Mr Kaine.

**MRS CARNELL:** I would be very interested to give Mr Lamont a chance to discuss the various companies that operate in the area, but I will not at this stage.

**Mr Lamont:** Chemists?

**MRS CARNELL:** Yes.

**Mr Lamont:** But you all get paid out when you do not have the ability to continue your business.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Carnell, just ignore it.

**MRS CARNELL:** The Chief Minister herself stated only last month that the ACTION bus network is becoming more competitive. I ask: With whom, Chief Minister? Obviously, it is with itself. The Chief Minister and her Ministers have been confused by the correct definition of "competition". It means "the striving of two or more for the same object". Competition means that you have to have two or more people competing, Mr Lamont. The lack of competition in many of our publicly owned facilities is very evident by their unsatisfactory performance. Consider the monopolistic ACTION bus system. As of 30 June 1993, ACTION employed 1,003 staff and had 425 buses. The Industry Commission, which at the request of the current Labor Government delivered its report on urban transport earlier this year, looked at many bus operators around Australia and in other countries, including ACTION. It found that ACTION recovered only 22 per cent of its operating costs commercially, whereas the New South Wales State Transit Authority recovered 48 per cent. That is more than double. The Travers Morgan benchmarking study, released in October last year, compared several private and public bus operators in Australia, including ACTION. Unfortunately, ACTION's unit costs were substantially higher in almost all areas than those of any of the other operators.

This Government has created a problem and refuses to reform the situation. To add insult to injury, last year the people of the ACT subsidised ACTION by approximately \$66m - they are the budget figures - or \$660 per household, and it will be about \$50m this year. Is \$50m okay? How many hospital beds would \$50m pay for, Mr Connolly? How many child-care places, how many training programs or how many VITABs would it pay for?

**Mr Lamont:** Madam Speaker, could I ask that Mrs Carnell get Mr Kaine to write her speeches in future?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** No, Mr Lamont, you could not. Please proceed, Mrs Carnell.

**MRS CARNELL:** While the Chief Minister may believe that ACTION is a successful tool against social inequity, there is evidence to suggest that it is not the less well off but the more wealthy who actually use our buses. So where is this much-vaunted social justice? Why are these people who need the bus services not using them? They cannot, because they simply do not have access to them.

**Mr Lamont:** Because they are all too busy, lining up at the closed-down chemist shops.

**MRS CARNELL:** Yes; and why? It is because the Federal Labor Government stuffed it up. A 1992 survey found that 54 per cent of work trips were taken by people earning more than the average weekly earnings and that it was predominantly children from private schools who were taking advantage of the public transport system. So much for social justice! ACTION is crying out for reform. Minor internal reform is not enough. (*Extension of time granted*)

As the Industry Commission report showed, when competition has been introduced into systems it has made open access to services more available to people, which means that it has allowed suppliers to design, organise and provide services at fares in line with market preferences so that they actually appeal to people and people can afford them; and it has encouraged operators to develop new routes, introduce more effective work practices and use a range of vehicles to better serve passengers at the lowest possible cost. In other words, they look after the passenger. What a surprise! The introduction of competition has seen innovations in discount fare systems and higher frequency services. That is what competition does - it provides more services, at lower cost, that are more available to the community. We are not saying that; the Industry Commission report is saying that.

Some form of competition or contestability is desirable if ACTION is to become more efficient and provide better services for the people of Canberra. I do not think anyone would doubt that, except possibly this Labor Government. Competition can come in a number of forms. Any competent operator could operate at any fare and at any time, but only after adequate notice has been given to operate the commercial service. Competition could allocate by periodic competitive tender - something that Mr De Domenico has spoken about - to the operator which bids the lowest subsidy for a guaranteed minimum level of service, which is really important.

**Mr De Domenico:** And, in fact, an income to the Government.

**MRS CARNELL:** That is right; the Government would get an income as well. We could certainly require a maximum level of service from these people. We know that, in many circumstances, we could get substantially better school bus services as well, at no cost to this Government. It does not have to be done in one particular way.

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Certainly, this side of the house is not looking at flogging off the farm, as I have heard Mr Lamont say. What we are looking at is a system which will actually provide a better service, available to more Canberrans, at a cheaper price. Who could argue with that sort of approach? If competition were introduced, the savings could be significant. ACTION's multimillion dollar subsidy could be returned to the people of Canberra through reduced taxes and charges or improved community health services, child-care services, aged services, hospital beds - all those sorts of things that, obviously, this Government does not care about; otherwise, it would be looking at ways to achieve these sorts of savings. Those savings were very evident in our alternative budget statement. The Chief Minister must have the courage to stand up for what she was elected to do, which was to serve the people of Canberra, not to serve some sort of ideological commitment to a bus service - heaven help us!

The bus system is not the only public utility which is in desperate need of reform. We all know that. The same thing could be said of ACTEW. ACTEW do a remarkable job under enormous pressure; but they want to be corporatised. That is not our idea; it is theirs. They want to be able to get out there and compete, not just in the Australian marketplace but in the world marketplace. The Liberal Party has been incredibly impressed with what they have done, with the shackles that they operate under; but it is simply not good enough. If the Chief Minister were being true to the things that she agreed to at the COAG meetings, those are the things that would be happening in the ACT at the moment. We would also be seeing competition within departments. We would be seeing internal public sector competition. I do not think the Government even knows what it is.

Debate (on motion by Mr Berry) adjourned.

**Sitting suspended from 12.06 to 2.30 pm**

## **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

### **Government Service - Overseas Travel Allowances**

**MRS CARNELL:** Madam Speaker, my question without notice is to the Chief Minister. I refer the Chief Minister to the Auditor-General's report tabled yesterday which says, in relation to calculations of travel allowances for all overseas travel selected:

... in most of the calculations there were errors ...

Chief Minister, this means more than half. I ask the Chief Minister whether she concedes that the procedures for travel allowance claims are in a complete mess and are another example of poor management of this Government. Why is the processing of travel claims in such a mess? Why has the Chief Minister allowed a situation to develop where the Auditor-General brings down a report citing over half the cases he examined as error plagued?



**MS FOLLETT:** I thank Mrs Carnell for the question, Madam Speaker. In due course, of course, the Public Accounts Committee will be scrutinising the Auditor-General's report and the Government will be responding on that report, and responding in full. Madam Speaker, the Department of Public Administration has taken early action to address this problem which the Auditor-General has highlighted. I do not resile from the fact that it is clearly a problem, but if you read the Auditor-General's report you will also see that he has commented on the complexity of travel allowance arrangements and on the need for more effective guidelines to be drawn up. He has also commented on the fact that there were certainly some overpayments but, equally, a large number of underpayments.

Madam Speaker, I think the fact is that the Auditor-General has pointed to a legitimate concern, and one which I share with Mrs Carnell. Madam Speaker, part of that complexity, particularly to do with overseas travel, of course, is in regard to fluctuations in rates of exchange. That is a matter which I know from personal experience was difficult to address during the business delegation to Japan last year. It is a tricky issue. I can also say that, because overseas travel is a relatively rare event, it is unlikely that many officers get a great deal of experience in those calculations. There is clearly a need for the question to be addressed. The Department of Public Administration is addressing it. The whole issue, as I say, will be addressed as well through the scrutiny of the Public Accounts Committee and the Government's response to that committee.

#### **Government Service - Staff Numbers**

**MS ELLIS:** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister. I ask the Chief Minister: Has the Opposition Leader again been careless with the facts in her allegations about ACT Government staff numbers?

**MS FOLLETT:** Madam Speaker, the short answer to that is yes. Mrs Carnell has, regrettably, been extremely careless; she has been shooting from the lip again when it comes to staff numbers. Yesterday in question time Mrs Carnell said that total ACT Government staff numbers had increased over the last year. In fact, that is not the case. I said yesterday that I did not have the figures with me, but I have since scrutinised them and I am quite amazed at the statement that Mrs Carnell has made. I think she has been very careless. She should have checked the facts. Just a phone call would have quickly set her on the right track. In fact, rather than check anything, Mrs Carnell, as is her wont, whipped out a press release, this time headed "Follett Government spends 17 million on redundancies but PS increases". Quite wrong, quite wrong!

Madam Speaker, let me quote just briefly from page 9 of the Head of Administration's annual report, which was tabled in the Assembly on Tuesday. It says:

The Pay 27 figures for 1993-94 show that the overall staff numbers for the ACTGS experienced a slight decline -

decline, hear that -

from the equivalent period (Pay 26) of 1992-93.

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Just bear with me, Mrs Carnell. Madam Speaker, it is there in black and white. It says "a slight decline", not a real increase.

**Mrs Carnell:** With inoperatives in?

**MS FOLLETT:** Indeed, with inoperatives in. I suggest that you just settle down and listen, and you will get the answer. It may save you from another error. I can advise the Assembly that the total number of staff on the payroll at the end of the last financial year - full-time, part-time and inoperatives included - was 22,141. That is a decline. In fact, it is 664 lower than at the same time the previous year. I think that this is a rather more serious issue than first meets the eye.

Mrs Carnell aspires to lead the Territory and, indeed, she could well be elected as Chief Minister. She is showing us all that she will say and do anything, without checking, in order to get the cheap headline. Time and time again the statistics have been proven to be Mrs Carnell's downfall. Not so very long ago she had to admit an error on the tourism figures; she was forced to admit an error. Today she has been caught out in another error. I have no doubt that my colleagues have proven her wrong on many other occasions. I can advise Mrs Carnell that being a leader does give you a responsibility to act in the best interests of the community. You cannot run around whipping up hysteria in the way that Mrs Carnell does, making very casual and ill-thought out, unfounded allegations. I think, Madam Speaker, Mrs Carnell does need to improve her performance if she wants to be taken seriously as the alternative Chief Minister.

#### **Government Service - Credit Card Cash Advances**

**MR DE DOMENICO:** Madam Speaker, I ask the Chief Minister a question as well. I refer the Chief Minister to a particular incident cited in the Auditor-General's report yesterday which makes reference to a \$1,070 cash advance taken out against a government credit card by an SES officer. The Auditor-General, Madam Speaker, makes reference to the inability of audit officers to obtain evidence that this money has been repaid by the officer concerned. Will the Chief Minister confirm that this incident relates to a matter which occurred as part of her delegation to Japan last year?

**MS FOLLETT:** Madam Speaker, I would ask Mr De Domenico to clarify whether he holds me responsible for this \$1,000.

**Mr De Domenico:** A supplementary question.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr De Domenico:** My question to the Chief Minister was: Will the Chief Minister confirm that this incident relates to a matter which occurred as part of the delegation to Japan last year?

**MS FOLLETT:** Madam Speaker, by innuendo, I believe that Mr De Domenico is trying to cast a slur on my part in this business delegation. I can confirm, Madam Speaker, that it does appear that an amount of around \$1,000 was misplaced, lost or stolen after it was forwarded to Treasury by an officer - not by me, by an officer.

Madam Speaker, there has been an independent inquiry carried out into that matter by a senior officer and, unfortunately, the missing funds were not located during that process. As a consequence of that, the matter has been forwarded to the Fraud Prevention Unit, and the inquiry officer's report has also been forwarded. It is now in the Fraud Prevention Unit's hands to arrange a formal investigation of the circumstances surrounding the missing money. In the meantime, Treasury is implementing revised procedures - much-needed revised procedures, I might say; I totally agree with Mr De Domenico on that point, I am sure - and better controls for the receipt of moneys, to ensure that such errors do not occur again.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You had your supplementary question, I think, Mr De Domenico.

**Mr Humphries:** No.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I would rule that you had two questions.

**Mr Humphries:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: The Chief Minister asked Mr De Domenico to clarify a matter in his question. It hardly counts as a supplementary question. He simply repeated - - -

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! Please be seated, Mr Humphries. Mr De Domenico, you may proceed; but I find it very difficult when members keep on and on with these tedious supplementary questions.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** I assure you that this one is not tedious. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order!

**MR DE DOMENICO:** I ask the Chief Minister, noting that there was an SES officer on her Japan trip last year, whether an officer would have signed an agreement by cardholders which states:

I will not use my ACT Corporate Credit Card to draw cash or its equivalent.

If this is the case, how can Treasury occasionally approve cash withdrawals? Under what circumstances, and for what reasons, was this particular approval granted?

**MS FOLLETT:** Madam Speaker, I cannot indicate to the Assembly whether or not such an agreement was signed or whether, in fact, there was a particular arrangement made for this visit. But I can say that in the course of the business delegation to Japan there were a large number of occasions on which the officer concerned did, in fact, pay for parts of the Government's business - hospitality, dinners, all that sort of thing. If he did have cash arrangements to make those payments - and I cannot say whether he did or not - it would have been well and truly justified in the circumstances. Members will be aware that the allowances, all of the payments made, are subject to acquittal; indeed, this is how there was a repayment effected by the officer to Treasury. It is not his fault that it went astray. I have already said that it went astray in Treasury. So, again, I want it made very clear that there should be no slur on that officer. He has acted entirely appropriately. I have no doubt that, whatever forms are needed to be filled in for the operation of that card, it would have been done appropriately by him.

## **Department of the Environment, Land and Planning - Review of**

### **Delivery of Services**

**MS SZUTY:** Madam Speaker, my question without notice is to the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning, Mr Wood. I understand that some weeks ago the then acting head of your department, Mr Greg Fraser, initiated a review of the processes used by the department in delivering its services. This review was to be undertaken by the assistant secretary of the Lease Administration Branch, Ms Moiya Haynes, with assistance from her branch and from Mr John Collins from Management and Technology Consulting. The review team sought to obtain the views of selected community groups on any matter relevant to the review - a request which required a substantial commitment of time by members of these groups. My question to the Minister is: Can he inform the Assembly when the consultancy for this review was let, for how much it was, and when details of it were published in the *ACT Gazette*? Given the substantial call on the limited resources of the community groups involved, can the Minister also inform the Assembly of when he intends to make the submissions to, and results of, this review public?

**MR WOOD:** Madam Speaker, the background of the inquiry goes back a little further than that, to the time when Mr Townsend, I believe, was then in the position of secretary of that department and was not acting in the other job. As to the actual time of engagement of a consultancy by Mr Collins and the cost of that consultancy, I will find out that information for Ms Szuty. It certainly has been a very comprehensive review. It has, as Ms Szuty said, involved people from groups with which the agencies in DELP frequently deal. It has been exhaustively handled within the department itself. I had a briefing, I think it was late last week, on the final stage of that review as it nears its completion. There is still some level of discussion within the agencies, as final thoughts are touted around, to get responses from the people involved. I believe it is close to finality now. As I guess there will be some outcomes, I will be able to indicate those to Ms Szuty and to others, and I will come back to her on the detail of the two questions she asked.

## **Government Service - Personal Expenditure**

**MR KAINE:** Madam Speaker, through you, I have a question to the Chief Minister and Treasurer. Chief Minister, in the Auditor-General's report tabled yesterday, there were examples cited of personal expenditure and tips being claimed by ACT public service officers as official expenditure. In light of the lack of Treasury direction and guidance in this matter, does the Chief Minister accept any responsibility for the inappropriate charging of personal expenses to the public account? Secondly, how much have these practices and slack management cost the Territory taxpayer? Finally, what action do you, Chief Minister, have it in mind to take to correct this cavalier attitude towards public moneys and the slack management that allows it to occur?

**MS FOLLETT:** Madam Speaker, it is difficult for me to accept responsibility for actions which never came near me. I accept that there is a broad ministerial accountability and responsibility; but the payments of individual allowances are not made by me, they are not approved by me and they are not calculated by me. So, Madam Speaker, as individual items, I do not believe that it is appropriate that I should be involved in that level of detail. As I say, I do take responsibility for the correct administration of the rules.

I have already said in answer to previous questions that the Department of Public Administration will be having a very hard look at the payment of these kinds of allowances and at the acquittal of them. I think members should be aware that the kinds of errors that the Auditor-General has picked up may have been picked up at the time of payment but more likely were picked up at the time that they were acquitted. I regard that as a rather more serious matter because it is that acquittal of expenditure of public money that is usually the final check on whether that money was expended in the public interest. So, where there are errors in acquittal, I do think that is a serious matter. As I have said, I have asked the Department of Public Administration to address this problem.

The Auditor-General has made a number of worthwhile recommendations, including simplification of the processes, and I think that is a worthwhile recommendation because these processes are very complex. So, simplification, appropriate training for the officers involved, and appropriate dissemination of guidelines are clearly matters which need to be addressed, and I would expect the Public Accounts Committee, when it examines the Auditor-General's report, to endorse those kinds of recommendations very fully, as I do myself.

**MR KAINE:** I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Of course, there is no complexity about the points which I am making which have to do with personal expenditure and tips. The directions are quite clear. So, the Chief Minister cannot hide behind the proposition of complexity. Since the Chief Minister only within the last month or so issued the standards, one of which is a standard that covers travelling allowances and the like, has she already issued a directive, in light of this Auditor-General's report and without waiting for the Public Accounts Committee to look at the matter, to have any gaps of this kind, in terms of specifying management responsibility, fixed immediately? If not, why not?

**MS FOLLETT:** Madam Speaker, as I have indicated several times now, the Department of Public Administration will be addressing this matter as an urgent matter, and I expect that Mr Kaine's own committee will also want to look at it in a rather more timely fashion perhaps than they have some other matters, and report back to this Assembly and to the Government.

### **Planning Authority**

**MRS GRASSBY:** My question is to the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning. In view of the willingness of some to criticise planning in the ACT, can the Minister indicate how the ACT Planning Authority's performance is regarded nationally?

**MR WOOD:** Madam Speaker, in times like this, numbers of people can find ground sometimes, as they see it, to criticise planning in the ACT and the Planning Authority. I think members in this Assembly, especially those like me who have contact with the Planning Authority and the PDI Committee - it also has very frequent contact with the authority - acknowledge that the officers in that authority are committed and professional, they are dedicated to the work and they do a good job.

Sometimes it is hard to get that message to the community. For example, I endeavoured this week to point out to some of the media the significance of the very significant award that the ACT Planning Authority received. This award was a national award from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and was for the planning of the Gungahlin Town Centre. Members have followed the documentation of that and any comments I have had agree on the excellence of that planning. It is still, of course, at an early stage. The Planning Authority won the category of best planning study, and they did so in the face of some very strong submissions from all over Australia and South-East Asia. So, it is a great credit to them.

The particular feature that was highlighted by the judges was the process. Members will recall that that process was an open process and involved a great deal of public consultation something the members across the chamber tend to denigrate from time to time. But that process was one where the Planning Authority went out in a different mode to that which is often used. It had no pre-drawings, no ideas on paper, and no concept plan; but it went to the community and said, "What do you want in a town centre?". It reflects the Government's priorities on consultation and, I think, in achieving this award, the very considerable expertise, the professionalism, of the Planning Authority. I think it deserves note.

## **Petrol Station Sites**

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Madam Speaker, my question is also to the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning. I refer the Minister to a statement - - -

**Mr Connolly:** The best Planning Minister.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** The best Planning Minister. You have all given yourselves those tags. I did not realise that this Government had such a self-bestowed tag of excellence on it. I refer the Minister to a statement made by that other excellent Minister, Mr Connolly, in this Assembly on 13 April 1994 with reference to petrol pricing in the ACT, in which he said:

We made it very clear that additional sites - and the Government's position paper that was tabled in this Assembly said that there would be up to six - will be made available on an open bidding process ...

Without denigrating that process, when will the new, so-called independent petrol sites be put out to tender? Can you tell the Assembly of the timeframe for the calling of the tenders?

**MR WOOD:** Madam Speaker, Mr Connolly did make that statement and, in the period since then, my department - the one responsible for leasing matters - has been attending to it and drawing up the necessary documents. As a courtesy to one of our committees which was looking into this matter - - -

**Mrs Carnell:** He said, the day after, "Garbage; throw it out the window".

**MR WOOD:** Hang on! As a courtesy to one of the committees of this Assembly, we did not act and we did not advertise the tender documents until the committee had reported. Now that the committee has reported - - -

**Mr Moore:** Very appropriate.

**MR WOOD:** Yes, indeed, very appropriate. The material was ready and we were in a position to move forward in the interests of reducing the price of petrol in this Territory, but to conform with the procedures of this Assembly we had not done so. You can expect that there will be a response to the committee's report very soon, and, if that response indicates that we will proceed with the release of those sites, then that will follow very quickly.

## **Environment - Monitoring**

**MR MOORE:** I must say that I was a bit disappointed that Mrs Grassby did not ask the obvious supplementary question, which was: How do the local people feel about the Planning Authority? My question is also to the same Minister, and I refer to the document he tabled yesterday on behalf of the Commissioner for the Environment, the State of the Environment Report, which starts by pointing out in its general assessment that no State in Australia has legislation in terms of a commissioner for the environment - and I have congratulated the Minister on that before - but it also goes on to say:

It is nevertheless appropriate to acknowledge that at this stage, ACT Government responsibility for, and monitoring of, the environment is diverse and not adequately coordinated. The processes and procedures, which would allow reliable and efficient monitoring of indicators of the state of the environment are not yet in place in a manner that allows ready assessment of the state of the environment of the ACT.

Minister, no doubt this is quite embarrassing to you, but what are you going to do about it?

**MR WOOD:** Not at all, Mr Moore. I go back a point, because Mr Moore wanted to score his cheap shot off the Planning Authority. Mr Moore has put his hand up time after time in this Assembly in support of what the Planning Authority has done. On the Territory Plan he had his hand up in the air time after time in support, and now he wants - - -

**Mr Moore:** What about the reservations I expressed time after time?

**MR WOOD:** Yes, time after time, and they were attended to. In the end, the final result is one that you always agreed with. But, come election time - and this was the case three years ago - when Mr Moore wants to run a few issues, he sets out to be the hero of some parts of the community; he wants to be the hero and take a stand on some issues. In fact, Madam Speaker, there is no substance to Mr Moore's stances in front of the community as he sets out to be the local hero.

To come to his question today: I have that underlined in the document in front of me. Let me point out the good news of this Environment Commissioner's report. The good news predominantly is that this Government has said, "We are open to a critical evaluation. We want this critical assessment of the state of our environment". The commissioner has done that. We asked for it, and we got it. Let me repeat what Mr Moore said:

In the five years since self-government was introduced, the ACT Government has taken a number of environmental initiatives, and has made considerable legislative progress towards better protection of the environment.

**Mr Moore:** I quoted that.



**MR WOOD:** You quoted it, and let me quote it again:

... the ACT Government has taken a number of environmental initiatives ...

I will not read the next column that Mr Moore did not read and that indicates all the things that this Government has been doing in respect of the environment. It is there for you to read, on page 5 of the document. Just to confirm that, over the page, at the top of page 6, it says:

Clearly, the Government has identified a course of action which addresses major areas of environmental concern both for the present and for the period of at least to 2020.

So, we have an acknowledgment of what we have been doing - an enormous amount. To repeat what Mr Moore said about the monitoring, and I want to read this out and to read it into the record:

It is nevertheless appropriate to acknowledge that at this stage, ACT Government responsibility for, and monitoring of, the environment is diverse and not adequately coordinated.

I acknowledge that, and it is something that we will be attending to very rapidly. Throughout the report, there are two strong themes running. One is that there are not the benchmarks; there are not the standards that we in the ACT or governments across Australia can rely on to monitor progress. First of all, this report says, in each of the sections, we need those benchmarks. That is the responsibility of the Federal Government, the States and the ANZEC Council, of which I am a member. The Federal Government, at present, is preparing its own state of the environment report. As part of that and as part of a continuing process, there will be the establishment of benchmarks. We need to establish them in the ACT, and we will do that in cooperation with the Commonwealth and the States.

One of the difficulties that the commissioner points to in establishing this report is that there is a lack of background data of just what the condition of water or air ought to be. So, we will attend to that. We will see that we play our part in establishing those benchmarks and then, once that is done, along with that is the need for monitoring - the particular point that Mr Moore raised. There is absolute commitment on the part of the Government to that monitoring.

I can say this: Without wishing to pre-empt the full Government response that will come to this report, I acknowledge one area that the Government will improve. The Government will develop systems within our administration that will allow for ready assessment of the environment. This will involve improved monitoring and coordination between agencies and the further development of indicators to assist with identifying environmental change. We do need that background to assess how we are going. We have done a great deal. I want to be able to prove, as time goes by, that it is working. We will be taking action to ensure that that happens.

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**MR MOORE:** I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I draw the Minister's attention to his answer. When he answered he said that we should look at the second column on the other page because the whole column sets out the ACT Government initiatives, and he even turned over the page. I draw the Minister's attention to the paragraph starting "Other initiatives by the ACT Government". It talks about the 2020 study. Would the Minister concede that over half of that column is actually the initiative taken from the cornerstone of the Michael Moore Independent Group policy - and there are many who concede that - and forced on this Government by the Assembly following a motion by Ms Szuty that established the 2020 study? Will the Minister be gracious enough to concede that in the same way as I conceded at the beginning of my question what he had achieved?

**MR WOOD:** Madam Speaker, I do not know that the Michael Moore Independents have a copyright on the 2020 study. Let me indicate that it was passed through this Assembly on a motion, as I recall, of Ms Szuty. She proposed that motion, it was readily accepted by all members in this Assembly and has been enthusiastically taken up by the ACT Government. I do not think there is any dispute about that. I have never disputed that - for Mr Moore's benefit - and we are continuing our work in that respect. I think it is clearly the case in this Assembly that there is an acknowledgment that the Government has given a very high priority to environmental issues. We have taken a whole string of measures that will be further elaborated today, and I do not think anybody can dispute that, Mr Moore.

### **Government Service - Overseas Travel**

**MR CORNWELL:** Madam Speaker, I am comforted that both the Public Accounts Committee and the Department of Public Administration are establishing guidelines, as the Chief Minister advised in this particular case. However, it would only have to produce an atlas. Why did departmental officers, Chief Minister, explain to the Government Audit Office that travel to New Zealand was to be treated "for approval purposes as domestic travel"? I ask whether your Government needs a lesson in geography and whether in fact you are going to give an apology to the New Zealand High Commission. But what excuse can you give for such sloppy management practices and, I suggest, liberal interpretation of domestic travel across the ACT public service? Will you be tightening up on those overseas travel approvals?

**MS FOLLETT:** Madam Speaker, if I am being asked for an opinion on how officers made that erroneous judgment, I am afraid that I am not in a position to give such an opinion. They were clearly in error and, as I have said on many occasions in the course of this question time, matters to do with travel, with allowances, with acquittal of those allowances will be taken up as a matter of urgency by the Department of Public Administration and addressed on a Government Service-wide basis.

**MR CORNWELL:** I have a short supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I do not know whether you caught the last part of my comment, Chief Minister, but will you be prepared to tighten up on these overseas travel approvals?

**MS FOLLETT:** I thought I had made that very clear, Madam Speaker; but I will say again that it is a matter of public service management that travel requests, movement requisitions, allowances, acquittals and so on for officers of the public service do not come near me, and the matter of tightening up the management of these areas will be addressed. I would also say to Mr Cornwell, in particular with regard to New Zealand, that it is a fact that New Zealand is included on the majority of ministerial councils as a member of those ministerial councils, and officers who travel with Ministers to those councils therefore frequently have to go to meetings in New Zealand. So, that is one reason why that might have been handled as domestic travel. This is actually inherited from the Commonwealth guidelines which were, in fact, part of the Australian Public Service. It is also the fact that later this year travel between Australia and New Zealand will be deregulated, so to speak, and will in effect be treated by the airlines and the Federal aviation authorities as domestic. So, again, that is another possible explanation for their confusion. But an error is an error, Madam Speaker. I am glad that these errors have been picked up. I thank the Auditor-General for that work, and the matters will be addressed as a matter of urgency.

### **Water Supply - Chemical Additives**

**MR STEVENSON:** Madam Speaker, my question is to Mr Lamont and concerns the decision by the Water Board in Sydney to phase out the use of aluminium sulphate, commonly referred to as alum. Of course, aluminium sulphate is used as a flocculant to bind together the fine sediment that then goes through mechanical filters. Their decision came about as a result of research they had commissioned with a particular medical organisation in Sydney. Their head medical officer was part of the research. Because of the possible connection with Alzheimer's disease, they decided to use a different flocculant, probably ferric chloride, iron chloride, which is used quite extensively by water trusts in the UK and some European countries. There were two concerns the Water Board had. The first one, of course, was the health of people drinking the water. The second was potential product liability claims. It was not absolutely conclusive evidence about the connection, but they were concerned. Wherever an alternative is possible they deemed it advisable. The question is: Is aluminium sulphate used in our drinking water in the ACT? Is any action contemplated to handle the potential problem?

**MR LAMONT:** I thank the member for his question. Yes, I am aware of the report that was in one of the Sydney daily papers indicating that the New South Wales Government owned iron chloride plant will probably now produce iron chloride for the New South Wales Government, for them to include in their water, as opposed to using alum. The suggestions that have been made, as far as the causation of Alzheimer's through alum is concerned, are not only not conclusively proven but - - -

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**Mr De Domenico:** You cannot remember.

**MR LAMONT:** Who cannot? Not only is it recognised as being in the very early stages of drawing any conclusions but, in fact, my advice is that there is substantial information which says that the allegations in relation to the testing of alum and its effect on Alzheimer's are grossly overestimated. That is the advice available to me at this stage.

It is appropriate to indicate that alum is not used in the general water supply in the ACT, with the exception of that water which is drawn from Googong Dam. The reason why alum is used at Googong Dam is the amount of sediment in that catchment area. We have not drawn water from Googong, as I recall - and I test it regularly - for over two years. In fact, it is two years, 18 days and a number of hours, if my memory serves me correctly. The proposition, however, is that the alum, as I understand, is released into the Googong water at a fairly distant place from the take-off for general water purposes in the ACT, and that has not occurred as far as water take-off is concerned for our drinking purposes for over two years. I will confirm the relationship and the time, because I am pretty confident that it is over two years, Mr Stevenson, but I would like to be specific about the time.

We are keeping an eye on the available data because of the suggestion - and it is no more than a suggestion - that it could have some effect in relation to the onset of Alzheimer's. In fact, it was in the *Canberra Times* of 19 September, but I think it was also in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. I think you need to also bear in mind that the National Health and Medical Research Council have most certainly not endorsed the types of findings that have been attributed by some. In fact, Dr Leon Flicker, a senior lecturer in geriatric medicine at the National Ageing Research Institute in Melbourne, said that there was still no firm view on the link between aluminium and Alzheimer's disease. Studies comparing the incidence of the disease with aluminium levels in drinking water had produced conflicting results, he said.

There is work being undertaken in order to try to verify a sustainable outcome as far as such trials are concerned, but I think the people of Canberra can rest assured that, firstly, in relation to the amount of alum that is used, it is only in the Googong water supply where there is very heavy sedimentation; and, secondly, of course, when there is any verifiable evidence that is available that makes even the merest suggestion that there could be some connection between these two issues, or in fact alum and any other issue, we will act expeditiously to overcome that problem.

**MR STEVENSON:** I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Will the Minister get the report that was submitted as well as the research from the Royal North Shore Hospital, I think it was, in Sydney that showed a build-up of aluminium in rats during the tests?

**MR LAMONT:** Yes. I will also do a rat survey to see how many rats we have in the ACT who are drinking out of our water supply, so that we can verify the difference - - -

**Mr Kaine:** Would you like to take the question seriously, Minister? It is a serious question.

**MR LAMONT:** If you could keep quiet for long enough, maybe I would get around to answering it.

**Mr Kaine:** You make fun of a serious issue.

**MR LAMONT:** No, I do not make fun of it. But I will tell you what: I am starting to get sick of your interjections.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! Mr Lamont, conclude your answer.

**MR LAMONT:** Mr Stevenson, I will in fact undertake to provide that research material for you, and anything else that I am able to find in that review of information, which will be provided by ACTEW.

### **Calvary Hospital - Paediatric Ward**

**MR STEFANIAK:** Madam Speaker, I am absolutely sick of asking questions of this mob; so, my question actually is to the Leader of the Opposition and it relates to notice No. 8 on the notice paper. I refer Mrs Carnell, the Leader of the Opposition - and, after the polls we have had lately, quite possibly after February the next Chief Minister of this Territory - to the motion on the notice paper which calls on the Government to recognise the overwhelming community support for the establishment of a paediatric ward for non-acute patients at Calvary Hospital. I ask Mrs Carnell: Is this a motion which she feels needs to be debated as a matter of priority? If so, could Mrs Carnell advise the Assembly why she wishes to have it brought on for early debate?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! That question is out of order.

**Mr Moore:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I think your confusion may come from the fact that Mr Stefaniak said "notice No. 8"; but I think he meant notice No. 8 under private members business, which of course Mrs Carnell has carriage of.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** It very rarely arises, but I will allow it.

**MRS CARNELL:** I think it is very rarely done; that is the problem. I thank Mr Stefaniak, who obviously cares deeply about Belconnen, for his very perceptive question. I believe that the question of whether a paediatrics unit for non-acute patients should be established at Calvary Hospital is a very important one because of the chronic lack of facilities there at the moment.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You are not allowed to anticipate debate, Mrs Carnell. That is the problem. Do not anticipate debate.

**MRS CARNELL:** Absolutely. This definitely is a matter which should be debated without delay and, Madam Speaker, I certainly will not be debating the motion today. I will be very happy to do it in the future, but I will not be willing to do it today.

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However, in direct answer to Mr Stefaniak's question, I would like to give the reasons for wanting to bring this very important matter on for early debate. I placed my notice of motion on the notice paper because of the Government's total disregard for the well-being of the children on the north side of Canberra and because there is such overwhelming community support for a ward where children with minor illnesses - - -

**Ms Follett:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order: This is clearly anticipating debate. It is out of order.

**MRS CARNELL:** No, it seriously is not.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Carnell, I am afraid, that to say that there is overwhelming support is anticipating debate. You are giving the reasons why something will happen. That is debating the point. I think you have made your point quite clear.

**Mr Humphries:** Madam Speaker, with great respect, this is a matter which, when Ministers are answering questions, constantly occurs and ought to be accepted when the Opposition has the rare opportunity of answering a question in this place. With great respect, Madam Speaker, it is entirely within standing orders to make that kind of statement, just as Ministers make it every day of the week.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** That is quite right, Mr Humphries, and I take your point of order. However, this is very unusual and very rarely done.

**Mr Humphries:** But within standing orders.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Excuse me! It is very rarely done, and with very good reason. There are notices on the notice paper for motions to be debated. If anybody wants to debate a motion, they bring it on. You do not use question time to debate motions.

**Mr Kaine:** Ministers do it all the time. They make 10-minute statements.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! Mr Kaine, I will take your little comment as well. Members ask questions but do not talk about motions that they themselves have put on the notice paper. I am just pointing out why it is such a rare and unusual thing and why most houses do not allow it.

**Mr Humphries:** But our standing orders do.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! You understand very well, as you test me continually, that the standing orders are not the answer to every detail of what is done in the house, Mr Humphries. Now, Mrs Carnell - - -

**Mr Kaine:** When we have a specific standing order, that applies.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Excuse me, Mr Kaine! I am explaining to you - - -

**Mr Kaine:** No, you are not; you are debating the issue.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I am explaining what the ins and outs of it are. You are being extremely rude, Mr Kaine. I ask you to be quiet. Mrs Carnell, you may proceed; but take good heed that, if you debate the issues now, then there is no point in having a motion on the notice paper.

**Mr Lamont:** Madam Speaker, I would seek your clarification. The Government is prepared to support Mrs Carnell if she wishes to suspend standing orders to bring the matter on for debate forthwith.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I would have thought that was entirely the appropriate course of action and, if Mrs Carnell chooses to proceed with that, she may. Question time is all but finished.

**MRS CARNELL:** I will finish the answer. Is it your ruling that it is to finish?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I believe that you just about have. Will you continue and finish?

**MRS CARNELL:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Another important reason for wanting to debate this matter as soon as possible and getting some action for the children and their families who would use this facility is that the Minister is putting forward entirely false information about the need for it. I want this matter to come forward for debate to correct the Minister's statement in the Assembly that Sydney has only two paediatric wards. Debate in this Assembly will provide an opportunity to point out that Sydney does not have two paediatric wards, but 21 hospitals with paediatric beds.

**Ms Follett:** On a point of order: I believe that Mrs Carnell is treating this Assembly with contempt by continuing to anticipate debate on this matter.

**Mr De Domenico:** Sit down. He did it this morning.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr De Domenico, I have long wanted to tell you, and I will say it today: I am tired of your interjections asking people to sit down. You are not at a football match, you are not coaching a team; you are in a parliament - - -

**Mr De Domenico:** I am not at school either, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I am afraid you are.

**Mr De Domenico:** No, I am not.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** If I want people to sit down, I will ask people to sit down. You will remain in order. Please desist from interjecting and asking people to sit down. Mrs Carnell, you have finished?

**MRS CARNELL:** No, I have not.

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**MADAM SPEAKER:** I am upholding the Chief Minister's point of order. The house has clearly made its will felt that they wish to proceed with suspending standing orders and debating this issue.

**MRS CARNELL:** It is my motion. I have not asked for that.

**Mr Berry:** She does not want to debate it.

**MRS CARNELL:** Very dangerous, Wayne.

**Mr Humphries:** Madam Speaker, are you ruling that Mrs Carnell cannot complete her answer?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! The house will come to order. Mr Humphries, do you have a point of order? I will listen to it.

**Mr Humphries:** I have a question, Madam Speaker. Are you ruling that Mrs Carnell may not complete her answer to the question?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** What I am suggesting is that Mrs Carnell has debated the issue for long enough. If Mrs Carnell can finish her question without debating the issue, she may proceed. Proceed, Mrs Carnell.

**MRS CARNELL:** Thank you. New South Wales has 59 hospitals with paediatric beds and almost 1,500 designated public - - -

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Carnell, will you please finish your answer? You are out of order.

**MRS CARNELL:** I am not debating the issue at all. New South Wales has almost 1,500 designated paediatric beds. Given this massive disparity, which the Minister denies and even went so far as to possibly mislead the community about the need for a paediatrics ward, it is clear that the debate should be brought forward as a matter of urgency before the Minister does any more damage.

**Ms Follett:** So, bring it on. We are waiting.

**Mr Lamont:** Bring it on; here it is. Here is the opportunity. You are guaranteed nine votes. Do you have the guts to get up and do it? You sit down and say nothing. You do not have the guts to debate it.

**Mr Kaine:** Would you tell the Minister not to tell people to sit down.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Please do not do that, Mr Lamont.



## Weed Control

**MR BERRY:** Noting that spring has sprung, and it is obviously in the blood of those opposite because they are rampaging at the moment, we have the growing season with us and we know that there is going to be some weedy growth around - not to be confused with the ones opposite - would Mr Wood tell us what the Government is going to do about the growth of weeds as compared to weedy growth?

**MR WOOD:** Madam Speaker, the incidence of weeds in the Territory is one that concerns many people. Let me give credit to one of our committees which has looked at this issue. It is not perhaps generally known that we spend \$1m a year in combating weed growth. That is a very substantial amount of money; yet it appears, from time to time, that we are flat out keeping up with the outbreaks. St John's wort, of course, is an example of that. Since we spend so much money in this area, the Government has decided to assess the way we combat the weeds. We have allocated \$44,000 to a specific study to see whether what we are doing in weed control is absolutely the best way to proceed. That \$1m is a lot and we need to ensure that it is being well spent. So, we are going to assess very carefully the various mechanisms, the different sorts of controls, the spraying, and the like, to see what the best outcome might be.

I should mention the outstanding work that a great number of Canberrans do through groups such as Parkcare, Landcare, or Paddockcare. These groups - there are over 70 of them in the ACT - spend many hours in a year working in our nature reserves and other parts of Canberra, and they should get credit for that work. Among the work that they do is a great deal of weed control. They will remove the weeds from the areas for which they have a responsibility and, of course, they get very considerable help in that from the Department of the Environment, Land and Planning. We provide the trucks. We do a great deal to assist them. But I think it is proper to acknowledge that outstanding effort by a great number of Canberrans in caring for this local community. It is one that we give strong support to.

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

## PARTY AFFILIATIONS

**Mr Connolly:** Madam Speaker, I just want to raise a point of order. During question time Mr Moore referred, in answer to Mr Wood, to a person whom he described as Ms Szuty of the Michael Moore Independent Group. I look in *Hansard* and I see no record of any such person or party affiliation; I see two Independents. I seek your guidance, Madam Speaker, as to whether there have been party affiliation changes and whether that impacts on resourcing and other such matters. Do we still have two Independents or do we have a new party?

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**Mr Moore:** Madam Speaker, if I could have the opportunity to clarify, under standing order - - -

**MADAM SPEAKER:** No; I have taken that question on notice. I am not interested. Please be seated, Mr Moore. I have taken that question on notice. We will leave it alone, Mr Moore.

### **PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS**

**MR MOORE:** Madam Speaker, I seek to make a personal explanation under standing order 47.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You may; that is not a problem.

**MR MOORE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I make it under standing order 47. It may well have been that I was misheard or misunderstood, so I point out the fact that Ms Szuty was elected under the same platform as I was, as the Michael Moore Independent Group. I make that clarification for the Minister's understanding.

**MRS CARNELL** (Leader of the Opposition) (3.26): I seek leave to make a personal explanation under standing order 46.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Please proceed.

**Mr Wood:** I thought you were going to debate something.

**MRS CARNELL:** Never. I have never been known to do it, Mr Wood. Under standing order 46 I seek leave, as I said, to correct some statements the Chief Minister made in question time about comments that I had made the day before in a question to her about staffing figures. I seek leave to table the particular documents that I quoted from, which were the ACTGS staffing figures for 1993-94 and, of course, the quarterly staffing analysis September 1993 to December 1994, which show categorically that the staffing figures for 1992-93, at pay 26, were 22,805 and at the end of the year 1993-94 were 23,023. If they are wrong, Chief Minister, it is your own figures that are wrong.

Leave granted.

**MS FOLLETT** (Chief Minister and Treasurer): If I may make an explanation as well, Madam Speaker. Where Mrs Carnell is in error is in her reading of table 5 of appendix F of the annual report. Mrs Carnell, unfortunately, has added together the columns headed "Total" and "Inops". Mrs Carnell, that is an error. In fact, the inoperatives are included throughout the table and are shown separately in their own column as well.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MEMBERS**

Motion (by Mr Berry) agreed to:

That leave of absence from 3 to 7 October 1994 inclusive be given to Ms McRae.

Motion (by Mr Humphries) agreed to:

That leave of absence from 5 to 20 October 1994 inclusive be given to Mr Cornwell.

## **ABSENCE OF SPEAKER**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Members, leave of absence has been granted by the Assembly to both me and the Deputy Speaker, Mr Cornwell, for the period 5 to 7 October. In the event that the duties of Speaker may be required to be performed in that period, I propose that Mrs Grassby or in her absence Mr Stefaniak, as Temporary Deputy Speakers, be authorised to perform the duties of the Speaker during that period.

Motion (by Mr Cornwell), by leave, agreed to:

That:

- (1) the Assembly authorises Mrs Grassby, or in her absence Mr Stefaniak, to perform the duties of Speaker for the period 5 to 7 October 1994, during the absence of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker from the Assembly; and
- (2) the foregoing provisions of this resolution have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

## **SOCIAL POLICY - STANDING COMMITTEE**

### **Report on Early Intervention Services for Children - Government Response**

**MS FOLLETT** (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (3.29): Madam Speaker, for the information of members, I present the Government's response to the Standing Committee on Social Policy's report No. 6 into early intervention services for developmentally delayed and disabled children. I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

The Government welcomes the report into this important issue and thanks the committee for its deliberations. It is particularly pleasing to note that the Government's submission to the inquiry has provided such a valuable source of information for the report.

The Government is proud of its achievements to date in relation to early intervention services for children with developmental delays and has taken the opportunity of responding to the committee's report to outline a number of its initiatives in this area. These include a new client intake system for the Department of Health's Child Health and Development Service, which will improve the provision of information, access to service and referral functions; an extended multidisciplinary outreach support service at Melba Preschool for babies and young children with moderate to severe disabilities; and the establishment of three new early intervention units in Scullin, Village Creek and Fadden to prepare children with developmental delays for mainstream preschools and schools. These and other important developments in this field reflect the Government's continued commitment to ensuring that there is a range of effective and accessible services and support mechanisms for children and their families.

In addition, the Government has a strong commitment to providing a coordinated and seamless approach to early intervention services, which is characterised by ease of access for parents and children to the full range of services necessary to meet individual needs. This commitment will be further reflected in the development of an early intervention services policy, to be drafted over the coming months. The policy will have, as a major objective, improved coordination and interagency cooperation and will include a service delivery and coordinated case management model. It is envisaged that a draft policy will be released for public consultation before the end of 1994.

To return to the committee's report, the Government notes the wide-ranging nature of a number of the recommendations relating to early intervention services. Recognising this breadth of issues, the Government has adopted a coordinated and cross-agency approach, both in terms of drafting its response to the report and in terms of the proposed process for implementing its conclusions. The Government agrees in principle with the report's recommendation that early intervention services be amalgamated into one administrative unit, noting, however, that the Government wishes to consider the amalgamation of early intervention services in the context of the overall framework within which the services are delivered and the relationships that exist between early intervention services and the full range of children's services generally. This recommendation will involve major issues of Government policy and decisions which will impact on other children's services and the structure and operation of agencies.

In relation to the committee's recommendation that case management services be provided to families with developmentally delayed or disabled children, I have already mentioned the Government's intention to pick up this issue in a draft discussion paper due for release later this year. The Government is also in agreement with the committee's recommendation that funding for therapy and respite care be increased to a level where they can at least meet the basic needs of their clients. With this in mind, the Government is committed to ensuring that, where therapy services may be reduced due to long-term staff absences, therapists will be replaced, wherever possible.

In addition, the response notes that the Government is presently reviewing the nature and level of respite care services available for young children with a disability as part of its current review of intellectual disability services and that the recommendations of the review will be considered in the 1994-95 budget context. The Government also notes the number of other important issues covered by the committee's report, including the

introduction of a client purchasing model for early intervention services and the funding by the Government of a pilot program run on the principles of conductive education. In relation to this issue, the Government acknowledges the need for a more intensive program and intends to explore the options for such a program within government and through non-government organisations.

Madam Speaker, each of the issues raised by the committee in its report is addressed in the Government's response and will be given appropriate consideration by the Government in the development of its early intervention policy. Finally, I take this opportunity to restate the Government's continued commitment to appropriate and relevant consultation with the community, which has been in the past and will continue to be an integral part of the development of policies and programs relating to early intervention services. Once again, Madam Speaker, I thank the committee for its consideration of this important issue. I commend the Government's response to the report for members' consideration.

Debate (on motion by Mrs Carnell) adjourned.

## **PAPERS**

**MS FOLLETT** (Chief Minister and Treasurer): Madam Speaker, for the information of members, I present the following papers:

Canberra Theatre Trust - Annual Report 1993-94, including financial statements and the Auditor-General's report, pursuant to the Audit Act 1989

Department of Education and Training - Annual Management Report 1993-94, including financial statements and the Auditor-General's report for the department and the ACT Schools Authority

Department of Urban Services - Annual Report 1993-94 and audited unitary financial statements for the department and annual reports for -

Commissioner of the ACT Fire Brigade

Chief Inspector, Dangerous Goods

Architects Board of the ACT

Canberra Public Cemeteries Trust

Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Board

Essential Services Review Committee.

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## **TEENAGE UNEMPLOYMENT**

**MS FOLLETT** (Chief Minister and Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave of the Assembly to make a ministerial statement on teenage unemployment.

**MADAM SPEAKER** Is leave granted?

**Mr Humphries:** No.

**MS FOLLETT:** Why not?

**Mr Humphries:** Because we have not been given notice of the fact that you were to make a statement. You can move to suspend standing orders, if you want to.

Leave not granted.

### **Suspension of Standing and Temporary Orders**

Motion (by Mr Lamont) proposed:

That so much of the standing and temporary orders be suspended as would prevent Ms Follett from making a ministerial statement on teenage unemployment.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (3.36): Madam Speaker, I simply wish to quote some words of Mr Berry in 1990. He said:

I would like to put the Government on notice that, in future, when clear notice is not given to the Opposition of matters which are going to be raised as ministerial statements, then leave will not automatically be granted ...

The issue in question is whether or not the Government has the common decency to inform the Opposition of what it intends to do by ministerial statements, as is the practice in other places and in particular in the Federal Parliament.

Mr Berry went on to describe the failure to give notice as operating by stealth and duplicity.

**Mr Cornwell:** When was that?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** It was on 5 June 1990.

**MR BERRY** (Manager of Government Business) (3.37): Mr Humphries has taken a fair point; but the circumstances in 1990 were quite different. The Government repeatedly refused to provide the information. We usually provide it. I accept responsibility for the fact that you were not advised. If you will accept my apology, I will offer it.

**MR MOORE** (3.37): Madam Speaker, obviously, there has been an oversight in this case. I was certainly aware, and I understand that Ms Szuty was aware, that the Chief Minister was intending to make this statement. So, on this occasion, it has been an oversight. It is not usual. We usually know what is going on. So, in speaking in support of the motion, I would ask the Liberals to concede that there was an oversight on this particular occasion and to allow the Chief Minister to proceed.

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

### **Ministerial Statement**

**MS FOLLETT** (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (3.38): Madam Speaker, I thank members. I join Mr Berry in offering apologies for the fact that not all members were advised.

Teenage unemployment has been, and continues to be, an issue of great significance to the Government, to members of the Assembly and, of course, to the community generally. As we move towards the end of the 1994 school year, I believe that it is important that the Government reflect on its efforts to date and examine areas in which new actions might be taken to tackle the matter. This is made all the more important now that the details of the implementation of the Commonwealth's Working Nation statement are becoming clearer. It is particularly desirable that the ACT maximise the extent to which it can benefit from and adapt to the measures now being put in place under the aegis of Working Nation. But, first of all, let me put teenage unemployment into its proper context. After all, workable solutions cannot be developed if the nature of the issue is not understood.

In July 1994, there were nearly 24,300 15- to 19-year-olds in the ACT. Just over 10,600 were not in the labour force. Nearly all of these were in full-time education. Another 7,500 teenagers were counted as being in the labour force because they either had jobs - part-time, mainly - or were looking for jobs; but at the same time they were in full-time education. In total, over 17,500 teenagers, or 72 per cent of all teenagers, were in full-time education. Of the remaining 6,800 teenagers not in full-time education, 4,600 were employed, 1,600 were unemployed, and 600 were neither in the labour force nor in education. It is also important to recognise that approximately half of those who are unemployed are unemployed for less than six months. By way of contrast, older people generally experience much longer periods of unemployment. In summary, out of 24,300 teenagers in the ACT in July 1994, nearly 22,100, or 91 per cent, were in either education or employment, while 1,600, or 7 per cent, were not in education and were seeking work. While it is true that some teenagers in education would prefer to be in employment, if more jobs were available, we should keep in mind that all the evidence

indicates that teenagers who make the successful transition from school to work tend to be those with greater periods of schooling. Conversely, early school leavers tend to be in greatest danger of becoming long-term unemployed. However, the overall picture is clear. The great majority of teenagers, with varying degrees of difficulty, successfully make the school to work transition.

It is also important to understand the teenage job market. The retail sector is the single most important source of jobs, employing 51 per cent of teenagers. The recreation and personal services sector is the second most important, employing 20 per cent of teenagers. There has clearly been a major change in the shape of the labour market over the past few years. Employers generally no longer look for young, inexperienced workers to fill full-time jobs. For example, in 1992 teenagers made up only 0.4 per cent of the public sector work force in the ACT, compared to 3.8 per cent in 1985. At the same time, there are now many opportunities for part-time work for young people, particularly in the retail, hospitality, recreational and personal services industries. As an illustration of this, between May 1990 and May 1993 the number of teenagers in part-time employment grew by 16 per cent. The move towards part-time employment for teenagers, with the accompanying decrease in full-time employment, is not unique to Canberra. It is part of a national trend. Participation in part-time work may also have longer-term benefits. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teenagers who have had part-time jobs are more attractive to employers than those who have had no job, probably because they have a better understanding of the work ethic and a proven track record.

In thinking about teenage unemployment, and indeed employment generally, it is important that we do not regard the Territory as an island. The ACT economy will always be part of the Australian economy. A national economic downturn will result in rising unemployment levels, and policies which keep unemployment low in the ACT compared to the rest of Australia will result in unemployed people from other States moving to the ACT to seek work. Therefore, to address the problem of unemployment effectively in the ACT, it must be tackled at all levels.

Now that I have clarified what we are dealing with, I will turn to some of the solutions. The first and most obvious solution is the creation of jobs. The ACT has recorded good job growth over recent years. The ACT Government, through sensible economic and budget policies and support of local business, has established the right environment for continued job growth. The Government's major contributions to the tourism industry, our establishment of the Business Services Centre, our support for the national industry extension service program, the establishment of the industry assistance package and our financial contribution towards the cost of ACT businesses attending the CeBIT information technology exhibition in Germany are just a few examples of our commitment to ACT business.

While the Commonwealth has primary responsibility for employment creation and income support, this Government believes that it should also do what it can to provide direct assistance to the unemployed. In particular, we must assist the unemployed to develop and maintain their labour market skills, including their confidence and self-esteem. There are a number of existing ACT programs that are of particular relevance.



The employment and training grants program, through funding to such activities as Involve, Jobline, Caloola Farm and the Work Resources Centre, provided assistance to nearly 600 15- to 19-year-olds in 1993. The trades and technical women on the move program, which encourages girls and young women to consider the broader range of career options available to them today, thus giving them more skilled employment opportunities, visited 52 schools and was seen by over 10,000 students in 1993. The venture and development assistance program provided grants to organisations such as the Belconnen Youth Centre, Quest, Barnardos and the Work Resources Centre to run projects to assist young people to train for, seek or gain employment. The workers compensation rebate scheme assists employers to meet some of the costs associated with employing first-year apprentices or trainees.

In addition, in last year's budget the ACT Government funded the Youth Joblink program, which is run by the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This program takes job-ready teenagers and places them in jobs created in the private sector. In its first half-year of operation, over 80 unemployed young people were placed into jobs in the private sector. However, the ACT Government's role does not end there. It is also an employer, training provider and educator, and there is much being done in these areas. In the 1994-95 budget, the Government provided an additional contribution of \$700,000 to the Canberra Institute of Technology and an additional \$1.4m in 1995-96 to meet the Territory's commitment to national objectives within the vocational education and training sector. The institute will offer an additional 208 part-time student places in 1994-95 and a further 204 part-time student places in 1995-96. In addition, there will be an increasing number of training places made available through Commonwealth growth funds under the ANTA agreement.

Madam Speaker, there has been an extensive range of pilot projects in the ACT under the Australian vocational certificate training system. This has resulted in the introduction of paid entry-level training arrangements, similar to apprenticeships and traineeships, into a wide range of industries. These developments have been strongly supported by the ACT Government. Young people will be able to obtain a portable qualification which is recognised in both public and private sectors.

The introduction of more structured vocational education and training into the school system will give students a greater understanding of the world of work and real job skills which they can draw on in permanent post-school work. The employment of more than 150 trainees over the last three years makes the ACT Government Service one of the largest public sector employers of trainees in the ACT. Furthermore, I believe that there is a role for the ACT Government Service to work cooperatively with the private sector to ensure that, where practicable, the skills and training that the ACT Government Service provides to young people are also appropriate to private sector needs. I have asked my department and the Department of Public Administration to address such cooperative arrangements in the development of policies related to base-grade recruitment, entry-level training and employment opportunities for people exiting training programs in the ACTGS.

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Madam Speaker, one of the initiatives of the Commonwealth's Working Nation statement is the decision to expand Jobstart arrangements to the public sector. The Department of Public Administration is currently looking at ways in which these subsidies can be used to increase teenage employment in the public sector and thereby increase the skill levels of unemployed people who could then compete for work in the private sector. The number of trainees which the Government currently takes on and the increase in Commonwealth subsidies could mean that it will be worth while for the ACT Government Service to operate as a group training scheme. This option is being closely examined.

The ACT Government Service is taking steps to become a registered training provider. This will ensure that the high quality of our training is maintained. I also believe that it is important that the ACT Government look at its own performance as an employer of young people. In this context, I have also asked the Department of Public Administration to examine, as a matter of priority, means by which the ACT Government can increase its capacity to provide employment opportunities on merit to teenagers. I have also asked the Minister for Education and Training to give priority to expanding the number of occupations in which traineeships are available to young people and employers in the ACT and to explore the possibilities for innovative arrangements such as group traineeship schemes for the management of trainees in particular occupations.

As members may be aware, the Commonwealth Government recently established the National Employment and Training Taskforce - Nettforce - and gave it the task of expanding the number of traineeships nationally. Along with the national training wage award, this will present unemployed people and employers with a greater range of options.

While there are still some issues to be resolved, the ACT will be working with the Commonwealth to increase opportunities for longer-term unemployed people through the Nettforce arrangements. In addition, I have asked the Minister for Education and Training to look at ways of informing impending school leavers and the wider community about the school to work transition. Students and their parents need to be aware that the period of unemployment which many school leavers may face will, for most of them, be relatively short. School leavers also need to understand that those with lower levels of schooling are less likely to make a successful transition. On the other side, employers and the wider community should know that, overall, the ACT education system turns out school leavers who have good employment skills and who can make a real contribution to the community.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to turn to the recent Working Nation package released by the Prime Minister and its effect on the ACT. As I have already mentioned, the ACT Government is looking at ways to use the subsidies available for the public sector to assist with training for unemployed people. The Prime Minister recently wrote to me about the Working Nation initiatives. He pointed out that the Australian Public Service is a traditional leader in implementing labour market programs and that this commitment would continue through the implementation of Working Nation. Of particular interest to the ACT is the Commonwealth's commitment to recruit an additional 2,000 trainees in 1994-95, many of whom will be located in the ACT. I have advised the Prime Minister

that the ACT Government is most supportive of the high priority that his Government has given to addressing the issue of unemployment and its impacts on the community. The ACT Government is committed to working cooperatively with the Commonwealth to ensure that the ACT community can take maximum advantage of the benefits of Working Nation.

The ACT Government has also fully supported the development of the national training wage award through the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and is actively facilitating the broad application of the award across the ACT's private sector and in the ACT Government Service. As members may be aware, Working Nation also promised to expand the number of entry-level training places by 50,000 nationally. The implementation of the national training wage award will facilitate the provision of many thousands of other on-the-job training places. It is important that the ACT obtain its share of these positions. The Commonwealth is also introducing client case management for unemployed people, both through a new arm of the CES, to be known as Employment Assistance Australia, and through private sector providers. Under the new arrangements, teenagers 18 and under who have been unemployed for three months will receive individual case management. This will be particularly important to early school leavers who are having difficulty making the school to work transition.

Madam Speaker, as I have clearly demonstrated, there are many developments already under way in both the ACT and Commonwealth governments to help reduce the number of unemployed teenagers. In fact, my major concern is to put in place arrangements that will ensure that the unemployed in the ACT benefit from these changes. I have, therefore, given the ACT Government Service Social Justice Committee, chaired by the Secretary of the Chief Minister's Department and comprising representatives at the most senior levels of all ACT government agencies, the task of ensuring that the implementation of these arrangements by the responsible agencies occurs in a coordinated and timely fashion. Specifically, I have given it the following terms of reference:

- (i) coordinate the implementation of training arrangements with the ACT Government which link in with the needs of the private sector and which take maximum advantage of funding made available through the *Working Nation* package;
- (ii) coordinate the implementation of the National Training Wage Award in the ACT and the establishment of traineeships in a wide number of industries throughout the ACT;
- (iii) coordinate information dissemination within schools and the wider community, to prepare school leavers and their families better for the school-to-work transition.
- (iv) coordinate the examination of means by which the ACT Government can increase its capacity to provide employment opportunities on merit to teenagers; and

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(v) review the mix and delivery of ACT Government labour market programs with a view to ensuring that they continue to meet the needs of unemployed young people in the ACT, particularly given the changes taking place in Commonwealth labour market programs.

Madam Speaker, I have asked the Social Justice Committee to work to a timetable which will, in the first instance, maximise the extent to which we can respond positively to the needs of 1994 school leavers who are about to enter the work force. The Government has a fine record of providing a broad range of initiatives to assist the unemployed in the ACT. In relation to teenagers who are unemployed, the Government has a well-developed understanding of the size and nature of the issue. We understand what is needed to make a successful transition to the work force. We have targeted programs in place to enable this to occur. With the initiatives that I have outlined today, we are moving decisively to maximise the extent to which the Territory can benefit from the Commonwealth's recent initiatives and to ensure that our own efforts are as effective and well focused as possible. I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

**MS SZUTY (3.55):** Madam Speaker, I welcome the Chief Minister's statement on teenage unemployment. This is an issue on which I recently made representations to the Chief Minister, and I am pleased to see that she has responded to those representations today. The Chief Minister's statement sets out in broad terms what the current unemployment situation is among the ACT's 15- to 19-year-olds and, in particular, notes that 7 per cent of that age group was seeking work in July of this year. Of interest to all members, I am sure, is the Chief Minister's comment on the nature of the labour market; namely, that there has been a major change in the shape of the labour market over the last few years, with teenagers comprising 0.4 per cent of the public sector work force in 1992 compared with 3.8 per cent in 1985.

The Chief Minister has also given the Assembly a summary of ACT programs which are of relevance to the issue of teenage unemployment. These include the employment and training grants program, the trades and technical women on the move program, the venture and development assistance program, the workers compensation rebate scheme and the Youth Joblink program. The Chief Minister has also outlined a number of other initiatives within the vocational education and training sector and pilot programs under the Australian vocational certificate training system. The information on these programs and initiatives, in conjunction with that on Commonwealth programs, and in particular those resulting from the Working Nation statement, give members a good understanding of what is being done about teenage unemployment today.

Having set the scene, the Chief Minister has identified additional actions which she has taken in the areas of teenage unemployment. I welcome these initiatives, which include the examination by the Department of Public Administration of means by which the ACT Government Service can provide employment opportunities to teenagers;

the expansion of the number of traineeships provided by the Minister for Education and Training through his department; the examination of appropriate information programs for impending school leavers, again through the department of the Minister for Education and Training; and the coordination and oversight role given to the ACT Government Service Social Justice Committee for the initiatives, with specific terms of reference.

Madam Speaker, as members will be aware, I have had a longstanding interest in the issue of teenage unemployment in the ACT, an interest which predates my election to the Assembly. Members will be aware that on 12 May 1992 I raised, as a matter of public importance, that the ACT Assembly urgently address the major social issue of youth unemployment. In speaking to this matter, I noted that 25 per cent of our young people were unable to find work, or in raw terms 1,100 people in the 15 to 19 age group. I also noted that, in polling preceding the 1992 election, the Michael Moore Independent Group identified that youth unemployment was seen by 90 to 95 per cent of respondents as a major problem for those in government. In speaking to that matter of public importance, the Chief Minister said:

The most notable feature of our unemployment statistics is the fact that young unemployed people continue to face severe disadvantage, and the unemployment rate for young people is at an atrociously unacceptable level.

Following debate on the matter of public importance, during which a number of members voiced their concerns, I moved a motion to establish a select committee of the Assembly to investigate youth unemployment. This motion was:

That:

a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on youth unemployment in the ACT with particular reference to the level of youth unemployment and strategies to alleviate the impact on the community;

... ..

After some debate, Mr Berry moved:

That:

(1) the motion be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy for consideration and report as to the necessity for a select committee and further inquiry.

On 18 June 1992, the Standing Committee on Social Policy reported back to the Assembly, as required by Mr Berry's motion. The report stated, in part:

It has the potential to legitimise the practice of establishing a select committee each time a proposed inquiry is not supported by a majority of members on the relevant Standing Committee.

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So, Madam Speaker, a select committee on youth unemployment was not appointed, and the Standing Committee on Social Policy elected not to take on the issue as a self-reference. On the same day as the Standing Committee on Social Policy reported to the Assembly, Mr Berry, on behalf of the Chief Minister, made a ministerial statement on youth unemployment and tabled the paper, "ACT Youth Labour Market - Paper No. 1 - prepared by the Economic Priorities Advisory Committee, dated 19 May 1992".

My concern about teenage unemployment has remained, and I have kept a close watch on the statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in this area. I noted particularly that in October 1992, following representations from the Chief Minister to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the regular qualification to the teenage unemployment figures - namely, that they were "subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes" - disappeared, due to an increase in the sample size used by the bureau. I acknowledge that the Chief Minister indicated at that time that she would make representations to the ABS.

Madam Speaker, what was most disturbing about the teenage unemployment figures in the latter part of 1992 and early 1993 was that they were all 39 per cent or higher. My concern about this continuing high level of teenage unemployment led me, on 30 March 1993, to give notice of a motion calling on the Government to establish a task force to inquire into and report on teenage unemployment in the ACT. This notice of motion remains on the notice paper. Since giving notice of this motion, I have continued to monitor teenage unemployment. I was briefed on the issue by members of the Chief Minister's Department on 24 June 1993. I continued to monitor the teenage unemployment statistics and noted that, while they had decreased below 40 per cent, they were still, in the main, well above 30 per cent.

I took note of the Commonwealth's green paper on unemployment. I took note of the initiatives contained in the Commonwealth's Working Nation statement. I tracked the initiatives in the ACT budgets for 1993-94 and 1994-95. I sought further statistics in the teenage unemployment area from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, for which I must thank the ACT Statistician, Ms Dalma Jacobs. I was briefed again by officers of the Chief Minister's Department on 27 July this year, and I was briefed on relevant training programs on 5 September this year.

I then undertook an analysis of all this information that I had gathered on teenage unemployment. This analysis showed cause for concern in a number of areas. While there has been a reduction in the very high teenage unemployment levels, of well over 40 per cent in late 1992 and early 1993, there were more unemployed young people in the ACT in July 1994, when there were about 1,700, than there were in July 1993, when there were about 1,500. The trend appears to reflect a gradual increase in the number and percentage of young people looking for full-time work. The ACT teenage unemployment figures and trends appear to be worse than those for Australia as a whole.

There remains an at-risk group that has difficulty in making the transition from school to work. Typically, the at-risk group includes young people with a poor school background; those from a low socioeconomic background or with little family support; those from certain ethnic groups, particularly from an Aboriginal background; and those living in certain rural areas. These groups tend to experience not only high rates of unemployment but also protracted periods of unemployment.

While average unemployment duration in this age group has historically been lower than in other age groups in the ACT, it seems to be increasing and converging with the average unemployment duration for the 20- to 24-year-old cohort. In the period, May 1990 to May 1993, there was a decrease of 2,200 full-time jobs for teenagers in the ACT, from 5,000 to 2,800, with females accounting for 56 per cent of this decrease. The number of teenagers employed part time in the ACT as at May 1994 was 7,800 - a decrease of 1,100 since May 1993. In the 1990s and beyond, the type of work being undertaken by APS staff will shift towards value added analytical work. Different skills will be required, as the need to undertake routine clerical tasks will largely disappear. Teenagers are likely to remain a small proportion of the intake. Base-grade entry will become increasingly less important as a means of recruitment to the APS. As this is a traditional entry point for young people, the APS's willingness to employ teenagers will diminish, in the absence of special programs.

While the Department of Employment, Education and Training report, "Australia's Workforce in the Year 2001", highlights an increased participation rate in education as one solution to teenage unemployment, this has largely already occurred in the ACT. According to a paper on teenage unemployment in the ACT - "Paper 1, ACT Teenage Labour Market" - at paragraph 45:

The recent rise in full-time unemployment may be a reflection due to the educational participation rate reaching saturation point in the ACT, given its historically high levels.

It is important to ensure that the increase in the skill base represents a genuine improvement in the productivity of the work force and is not simply feeding growing credentialism. An increase in the skill base in response to the latter would result in costly overinvestment of public resources in education and training systems. In the period May 1990 to May 1993, there was an increase of 1,200 part-time jobs for teenagers in the ACT - with females gaining 1,500, to 8,900, and males losing 330, to 7,700, as at May 1993.

In the light of these factors, I have been redrafting my notice of motion on the notice paper. When I held discussions with the Chief Minister I had amended the motion to read as follows:

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That:

- (1) the Government establish a task force to inquire into and report on youth unemployment in the ACT with the following terms of reference:
  - (i) establish the nature and scope of youth unemployment in the ACT, with a particular emphasis on gender differences;
  - (ii) determine the extent to which youth unemployment in the ACT is structural in nature, with particular reference to changed employment patterns in the Commonwealth Public Service and the ACT Government Service;
  - (iii) establish the education, training and employment opportunities available to young people in the ACT;
  - (iv) determine the likely patterns of employment in the ACT in the next five, 10 and 15 years;
  - (v) determine the extent to which the available education and training opportunities reflect the skills needed by the work force in the next five, 10 and 15 years;
  - (vi) examine the factors preventing the access of young people to education, training and employment opportunities;
  - (vii) examine the particular factors which have contributed to, or can be correlated with, high youth unemployment levels in the ACT, with particular emphasis on the impact of disillusionment among some high school and college students about future job prospects; and
  - (viii) propose solutions which will lower youth unemployment levels in the ACT, taking into account that such solutions should not transfer the unemployment burden to other age or demographic groups or defer the unemployment burden to future generations of school leavers.

The rest of the motion remains largely the same as appears on the notice paper. Before proceeding formally to amend my motion and initiate debate on it in the Assembly, I thought it appropriate to make representations to the Chief Minister on the issue of teenage unemployment, in the light of my concerns, my analysis and the revised motion. I did this some weeks ago. I would like to thank the Chief Minister for her receptive hearing on this issue.



Madam Speaker, I would like briefly to compare the specific points raised in the terms of reference of my motion with the information that the Chief Minister has given in her statement and the terms of reference which she has given the ACT Government Service Social Justice Committee for their task. In particular, I believe that the Chief Minister has addressed the nature and scope of teenage unemployment in her statement, and I trust that the Social Justice Committee will also specifically address the emerging issue of gender differences. The extent to which teenage unemployment is structural has been addressed, in part, in the statement, but may again merit consideration by the Social Justice Committee. The establishment of education and training opportunities is again addressed by the statement and the first two terms of reference for the Social Justice Committee. The likely future employment patterns and related training needs have not been explicitly addressed in this statement and may merit consideration by EPACT. The issue of providing information to school leavers and the community has been addressed by the Social Justice Committee's third term of reference. The Chief Minister has proposed a range of solutions, effectively to lower teenage unemployment levels. Madam Speaker, in conclusion, I would once again like to thank the Chief Minister for her receptiveness to my representations. I trust that the measures she has outlined in her statement will go some considerable way to lowering teenage unemployment in the ACT.

**MR DE DOMENICO (4.10):** Madam Speaker, I would like to make some brief comments on the Chief Minister's statement. Whilst there is very little in the statement that one could disagree with, because it is a mere retelling of the story that the Chief Minister has told us time and again, I would like to comment on some of the other things that I believe the Government has done that and have not helped the fact that we have had teenage unemployment of over 30 per cent since Ms Szuty put her motion on the notice paper on 30 March 1993. Let me take the first comment that the Chief Minister made. She said:

It is important that we do not regard the Territory as an island.

I agree with the Chief Minister. In fact, it is important that we do not regard the Territory as an island. What the Chief Minister says and what the Chief Minister's Government does are usually opposites. There is no better example of that antithesis than in the occupational health and safety measures which were brought in by the former Industrial Relations Minister, Mr Berry. On the one hand, we are told that it is important that we do not regard the Territory as an island. However, we note that a designated work group in New South Wales is 20; a designated work group in Queensland is 30; and what does the ACT Government do?

It makes a designated work group in the ACT 10. The Chief Minister has acknowledged, and the whole community acknowledges, that the major areas in the future for youth employment in the ACT will be the areas of retail, hospitality, tourism and personal services. I can recall that, when the former Industrial Relations Minister, Mr Berry, moved to change the designated work group from 20 to 10, he targeted those very industries as the ones likely to be affected by such a change in the legislation. That was the first point I wanted to make.

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The second point is that there are other things that the ACT Government could have done but has not done. Ms Szuty, quite correctly, recalled a number of recommendations made by the Government's own Economic Priorities Advisory Committee. I think that there was a report in May 1992 that had 37 recommendations, or in the high thirties anyway. I stand to be corrected on the exact number. I am advised that, at one stage, there were about 80 such recommendations spanning three reports. Very few of those recommendations, I believe, have actually been taken on board. Advice is often given to this Government. Sometimes the advice is listened to, but then nothing is done about it.

We all recall the Burmah Fuels situation, where certain small businesses have said that their employment prospects will be affected once again by a direct decision made by this Government. That will impinge on the potential to employ more young people. We have said a lot about the VITAB affair and the potential that it had - - - (*Quorum formed*) No-one will ever forget the enormous potential to cause unemployment that VITAB had - and still has, I suppose. Ms Follett, and Ms Szuty also, talked about Joblink and the potential success that that may have. Yet earlier this week we heard the CES complain about the doubling up in the process between CES, Joblink and the Canberra Chamber of Commerce. So, perhaps that is something that we need to look at to make sure that we are getting the optimum benefit out of areas like Joblink.

We have also noticed over recent times that the Canberra Business Council has decided to express its great concern about the future of employment in this town by going out on a marketing campaign. I note that two or three weeks ago the Chief Minister herself acknowledged the fact that we need to create 1,000 jobs additional to the 5,000 per year that we are to be creating now, in the private sector alone, in order to hold the unemployment level literally at the level it is at now. We saw very little in this paper about exactly what the Government has it in mind to do to create the atmosphere in which the private sector can produce more jobs, especially more jobs for young people. There is no doubt - and you do not have to be a genius to realise it - that one of the major concerns that the private sector has is the cost of employing people. That includes workers compensation, government red tape and all the sorts of things that business has to comply with. There was very little in the statement about that.

Ms Szuty quoted some very interesting statistics. We know that there are now more unemployed people than there were a year ago. There are also fewer employed people than there were a year ago. We know that the educational situation has reached saturation point. That can be added to those two statistics. We also know that we have a high population growth rate here in the ACT, especially in areas like the Tuggeranong Valley. On top of that, we know that the Government can directly contribute a little more than it has done by not underspending in the public works area. We know that the public works area and the building and construction industry are areas that employ a lot of young people. So, there are three or four things that the Government has done that, I believe, have perpetuated the rate of unemployment or have allowed it to hover around the 30 per cent mark. There are also things that it could have done but has not. I refer to things that are the direct responsibility of the Government.

Ms Szuty said that, from the end of 1992 to the beginning of 1993, the youth unemployment rate in the ACT was around 39 per cent. Notwithstanding what we might think politically about what governments can or cannot do, I am sure that all members of the Assembly realise that that is totally unacceptable. My concern, though, is the fact that unemployment is still hovering around the 30 per cent mark, which is totally unacceptable. Whilst we always boast that, in a lot of respects, we have a better economy than anywhere else, we also know that in the national capital we now have one of the highest, if not the highest, rates of youth unemployment in the country. That is something that we really need to be looking at.

The greatest concern that I have is that, about two weeks ago, statistics came out, telling us that there has been a gradual increase in the number of full-time, long-term unemployed people, including young people. I think that, whilst in the ACT there was an increase of 15 per cent in the number of long-term unemployed, there has been a decrease in every other jurisdiction. That is a trend that ought to be ringing alarm bells in the ears of the Chief Minister. It tells me that, whatever has been done over the past two or three years, quite obviously it is not working. When there is an increase of 15 per cent in the number of long-term unemployed at the same time as you have fewer people in the work force and saturation point in education, alarm bells ought to be ringing, because that is a recipe for disaster. There is no doubt about that.

Madam Speaker, in summary, I welcome the Government's concern about teenage unemployment; but we have been welcoming the Government's concern for three years. We know that that concern is straight from the heart and that the Government has done a lot of things. But it has perpetuated and accelerated the rate of youth unemployment, especially, in this Territory. We also know that, by not spending its full quota of public works expenditure the Government has stopped increasing employment, because of the trigger effect that building industry increases would have. We also know that the Chief Minister literally had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to reduce the level of payroll tax, and she did it only after Mr Fahey had done it in New South Wales.

We have certain motions and a private members Bill on the notice paper. I am prevented from talking about them directly. They will be a test of whether the Government is fair dinkum about reducing the unemployment rate. I look forward to the Government translating its rhetoric into action and I look forward to seeing the unemployment figures that come out from time to time. The fact that the ACT's youth unemployment rate is the highest in the country, standing at around 30 per cent, is something that this Government should not be proud of. It should do something about it.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION**  
**Ministerial Statement**

**MR LAMONT** (Minister for Urban Services, Minister for Housing and Community Services, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport), by leave: Madam Speaker, this year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the formation of the International Labour Organisation. Australia is one of the 171 member countries which are celebrating this anniversary. It is important that the Assembly and the people of the ACT are aware of the ACT's role as a partner in the Australian system of State and Territory support for our national role in the ILO. It is for this reason that I wish to make the following statement.

At the outset it is important to clarify the role and nature of the ILO, as it appears to some people to be misunderstood. The ILO arose as an aftermath of the First World War. It was formed, at the time of the peace conference in France in 1919, as an agency of the League of Nations. It brings together governments, employers and workers as partners of equal status in common action to improve social protection and conditions of life and work throughout the world. It is no coincidence that it is the only United Nations agency with a tripartite structure and the only United Nations agency which has continued from the formation of the League of Nations until today. The ILO, obviously, has evolved over time. Its initial motivation was humanitarian. There were serious concerns about the conditions of workers as the pace of industrialisation increased. There were also economic and political motivations. But at the heart of the ILO is the concept that universal and lasting peace can be achieved only if it is based on social justice. No other international agency has the capacity to bring together the social partners in an endeavour to shape policies and programs built on this fundamental principle of human rights.

The organisation is not, as commonly thought, a body of trade unionists. Rather, it is a well-functioning tripartite body capable of delivering broad-based backing for integrated social and economic policies. In Australia, the ILO has strong support from the major employer bodies as well as the Australian Council of Trade Unions and governments. At the same time as the ILO celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Philadelphia is being celebrated. This declaration is the Charter of Universal Human Rights and Freedoms, which launched the ILO into a new era of action for the welfare of working people throughout the world in 1944. The declaration was identified by United States President Franklin Roosevelt as a landmark in world thinking, and it anticipated and set a pattern for the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration opens with a reaffirmation of the fundamental principles on which the ILO is based - notably, that labour is not a commodity; freedom of expression and of association is essential to sustained progress; and, most importantly, I believe, poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. The declaration then elaborates the cornerstone statement of the 1919 ILO constitution, as follows:

All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity.

There follows a statement of 10 program objectives for the ILO, covering most of the essentials of social progress - full employment and the raising of living standards, job satisfaction, training, wage policies, the right to collective bargaining, social security, occupational health and safety, child welfare and maternity protection, workers' nutrition and housing, and equality of education and vocational opportunity. The ILO has done a remarkable job in developing international labour standards and in working with member countries to assist with implementation of and adherence to those standards.

With the globalisation of economic activity and therefore of the world of work, the requirement for basic principles and standards about what happens in the workplace is more pressing than ever. Respect for human rights, decent living standards, safe and healthy working conditions, fairness and equity in employment opportunity and economic security are the core elements of social justice which the ILO strives to guarantee for working people everywhere. These are just as relevant in the 1990s, as we approach the twenty-first century, as they were when they were built into the ILO charter in 1919. It is important to understand that peace, security and economic and social development cannot be achieved as isolated goals. Rather, they must be pursued as part of a comprehensive strategy that reflects their interdependence at a State, Territory, national and international level. This is why this Government takes its ILO responsibilities seriously. Development and implementation of international labour standards are central to the role of the ILO.

In June each year, after considerable preparatory work, representatives of governments, employers and workers organisations of all member countries meet at the International Labour Conference in Geneva to adopt or revise those standards, which will become international labour conventions or recommendations. The conventions are binding on countries which ratify them. There are currently 174 conventions in place. These standards are subject to constant supervision by the ILO. Each member country agrees to present periodically to the ILO a report on the measures taken to apply, in law and in practice, conventions once they are ratified. These reports are then examined by a committee of international and subject matter experts, and advice is provided to member countries. Measures taken at the national level to put the conventions into force are a crucial factor in the standards process. ILO standards play an important part in the elaboration of national legislation. In the Australian context, this means not only Commonwealth law but also State and Territory legislation and administrative practice. A number of provisions in the Federal Industrial Relations Act of this year are based directly on ILO conventions which Australia has ratified.

Since self-government in 1989, the ACT has played an active role in the Australian convention ratification and implementation process. The first ACT Labor Government and the present Labor Government have placed a high priority on ensuring that the ACT acts as a responsible player in the ILO standards process. It has done this by establishing responsive machinery within the process of government. It has identified an officer in the relevant part of the public service to act as an ILO technical officer, with responsibility for coordinating the ACT response to all ILO requests to the Federal Government, and subsequently to the States and Territories, for information and advice on both existing conventions and potential new conventions.

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Further, ILO matters are regular agenda items for the Industrial Relations Advisory Council. IRAC brings together representatives of unions, employers and government in the Territory, reflecting the tripartite structure of the ILO itself. The most recent meeting of IRAC gave its full support to my making this statement to the Assembly to celebrate this important anniversary. Additionally, IRAC assists in examining and advising the best approaches for implementing particular conventions. For example, the Government established the ACT Work and Family Advisory Service as a result of its obligations under convention No. 156 - workers with family responsibilities - following discussion at IRAC.

Overall, the ACT has now provided its agreement to the ratification of most of the major conventions. A number of these have been ratified at the national level, and several more are expected to be ratified by the Federal Government over the next couple of years. The bulk of this progress has been achieved under a Labor government. By agreeing to the Federal Government moving to ratify a particular convention, the ACT is agreeing that it complies with the convention and will provide periodic reports on how it is achieving compliance. This action demonstrates that the Follett Labor Government takes seriously its responsibilities towards its work force and its workplaces and that it is an active partner with the Federal Government in complying with its international obligations. This process must be pursued if the ACT is to demonstrate business leadership in the Asia-Pacific region, where opportunities for the ACT and its businesses are emerging. We need to show that we are playing our part as a responsible global citizen.

In addition to its standards setting role, the ILO is also involved in the provision of technical assistance to member countries. Technical assistance programs are generally implemented to support a country in the implementation of standards, and take the form of vocational education and training programs, assistance in the establishment of labour inspection and occupational health and safety arrangements or establishment of employment services. Much of the technical assistance has naturally been directed at the developing nations, many of which are located in the Asia-Pacific region. As a consequence, Australia and the ACT, in particular, are well placed to provide a regional base for technical assistance programs for this Asia-Pacific region. These could take the form of a regional headquarters for the ILO as it expands this aspect of its work or provision of expert services, for example, through ACT WorkCover. The ACT has indicated, through a recent meeting of Commonwealth, State and Territory technical officers, that it will shortly be in a position to comply with a set of occupational health and safety conventions.

Debate interrupted.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order! It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

**Mr Berry:** I require the question to be put forthwith without debate.

Question resolved in the negative.

## **INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION Ministerial Statement**

Debate resumed.

**MR LAMONT:** Progress towards compliance in this important area will depend on the ACT adopting a series of national OH and S Commission standards, which are expected to be incorporated into ACT regulations over the next six months. In addition to occupational health and safety conventions, the ACT has also been able to advise other States, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth that it can comply with several human rights conventions covering minimum age for work, rural workers organisations, migrant workers, labour relations in the public sector and collective bargaining. In many instances, the ACT is leading the way amongst the States.

Madam Speaker, the ACT has a proud record of achievement in responding to our national responsibilities towards the ILO. In this year of its seventy-fifth anniversary, the Labor Government pledges to continue to remain responsive to the principles and programs of the ILO, in the interests of the ACT work force. In doing so, we are also positioning the ACT to take advantage of economic opportunities in the local region, across the nation and among our neighbours in the Asian and Pacific regions. We are also furthering the social justice objectives of this Government.

Madam Speaker, I am extremely pleased to have been able to make this statement to the Assembly today, because I believe, when we look around the world at the great social change that has occurred since the end of the First and Second World Wars, that it has principally been the charters of the International Labour Organisation as they have been ratified and implemented that have really shown the way. I believe that, if we were to compile a history of the ILO, that history would be a history of the world. It would be able to identify quite clearly the great social advances that the world has made in the last 40-odd years. I present a copy of this statement, and I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **CEMETERIES TRUST**

**MR LAMONT** (Minister for Urban Services, Minister for Housing and Community Services, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport) (4.33): Madam Speaker, yesterday during question time Mr Humphries asked whether I was aware of a report from Mr Peters concerning an issue involving the Cemeteries Trust. Mr Humphries also asked that a copy of that report be tabled. Madam Speaker, I undertook to provide an answer for Mr Humphries today. The report was of an investigation arising from a personnel grievance. It related to allegations of improper practice and management deficiencies. The report found that the allegations raised were not substantiated, but did recommend changes to management procedures, which the trust has accepted and implemented. Because the report relates to personnel matters and individuals, it would be improper to table it. However, I am prepared to offer to Mr Humphries the opportunity to read it in confidence.

## **QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I have received a letter from Ms Ellis proposing that a matter of public importance be submitted to the Assembly for discussion, namely:

The need to ensure that all possible measures are undertaken to guarantee the quality of the ACT environment.

**MS ELLIS** (4.34): Madam Speaker, the ACT environment is the envy of the rest of Australia. We can be proud, as Canberrans, of the exceptional environment that we enjoy here in the capital. The Government firmly believes that a healthy, natural environment should be a birthright for all, and that future generations have a right to the same choices and benefits that we have enjoyed. It is our responsibility, as members of the community, to manage our environment to achieve this. While I believe that this responsibility encompasses the whole community, the Government must also ensure that opportunities are provided to the community not only to enjoy our environment but to enhance and improve it. In saying this, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say that the ACT Government has an enviable record as managers and custodians of the ACT's environment. However, the Government is not resting on its laurels. There is still much to be done, and the development of strategies in all areas of environmental protection, management and enhancement is vital.

A key ongoing priority for the Government, Madam Speaker, is the development of the ACT environment strategy. A draft of the strategy was released in December last year by the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning for public comment. Comments on all aspects of the document reflected the interest of a wide range of general community, environment and industry groups as well as professional bodies and individuals.



When finalised later this financial year, the environment strategy will provide a framework for the development, review and revision of a range of strategies and legislation needed for effective environmental management into the next 30 years. For example, Madam Speaker, it sets out the need for development of an environment education strategy, which is, I might add, currently being drafted. It also details the need for greater integration of existing environmental legislation.

With this in mind, the Government is currently reviewing all existing pollution control legislation. Madam Speaker, despite our enviable environment, the Government must continue to work on pollution control. Pollution can so easily creep up on us and become a health and environment problem, as is easily seen in larger cities in this country. Without a positive, proactive and honest approach to this issue, the ACT does risk pollution control problems that can become almost impossible to eradicate. It is only with reviews like this, with an attitude to the environment that develops and changes as our environment does, that we can continue to address these ever-evolving issues.

Madam Speaker, I was very pleased last year when the Minister, Mr Wood, displayed his ongoing commitment to the environment by releasing the discussion paper entitled "Proposal for Integrated Environment Protection Legislation" as a first stage of community consultation on the development of the new legislation. It will replace the Air Pollution Act 1984, the Water Pollution Act 1984, the Noise Control Act 1988, the Pesticides Act 1989, and the Ozone Protection Act 1991. The proposal will develop a framework for legislation which will ensure an integrated approach to environmental management. This new legislation will go a long way to ensuring that our pollution levels are controlled as the population grows and the pressures of urban life in the 1990s and beyond increase.

As I have already stated, there are a number of different Acts dealing with pollution. Separately, these Acts do not achieve what integrated legislation can - that is, guarantee effective environment protection and improved environmental performance as a whole. The Government's approach to integrating the legislation will recognise the relationship between the various parts of the environment as well as the links between environment protection and economic and social development. It will look at different environmental impacts as a whole and not as separate entities. This will ensure the best environment outcomes while minimising the burden on business and industry. This approach will be welcomed by many in the community. Madam Speaker, our urban environment is very important. This approach by the Government is the right one, and it emphasises the responsibilities we all have in ensuring that our urban environment remains acceptable while we continue to enjoy modern life.

Madam Speaker, we are in the unique position of having a capital city which enjoys the most modern technology and living standards while preserving and enjoying our clean environment. This is something we can all value but in no way underestimate. Whilst this Government is committed to a high level of achievement and innovation in environmental management, it is very conscious of the need to maintain accountability to the community for its management of the ACT's valuable natural resources.

Perhaps most significantly, the Government has established a Commissioner for the Environment to independently monitor performance on environmental management. I understand, Madam Speaker, that the creation of this statutory office represents a first in Australia. The commissioner has the dual function of investigating complaints about the management of the environment, as an environmental ombudsman, and preparing annual reports about the state of the ACT's environment. The first State of the Environment Report was tabled yesterday and it noted that the ACT Government has made considerable legislative progress towards better protection of the environment. The Commissioner for the Environment has produced a remarkable report, in my opinion. Its scope is enormous and it will be of great value to the Government in its ongoing environmental endeavours. The State of the Environment Report is a major development in the ACT's environmental initiatives. The Government will use it to assess its own performance and pinpoint areas where work is needed. This report will ensure that our Government remains accountable, and its yearly assessments will provide a base on which we in the ACT need to work. The value, of course, is not only to the Government but to the community as a whole, particularly the environmental groups and the individuals who participate in and help with the care of our environment.

Members would also be aware of the recent amendments to the Nature Conservation Act of 1980 to provide for the identification and protection of endangered native plants and animals and their ecological communities. These amendments were a very significant nature conservation initiative by the Government and they cannot be overlooked. The amendments covered three main points. Firstly, there is a listing process, whereby species and ecological communities that are threatened with extinction, or processes that threaten the viability of species or communities in the wild, are identified and formally declared. Secondly, there is a management response to declaration, whereby conservation measures are determined and management actions are formulated. The third component is the development of a long-term conservation strategy for the ACT.

Madam Speaker, the native plants and animals of the ACT are part of our natural heritage - a heritage with substantial cultural, economic and ecological values. It is our collective responsibility to conserve all of this for the benefit of future generations. The amendments to the Nature Conservation Act also addressed broader objectives for conservation of our biological diversity by providing for the Conservator of Wildlife to prepare a nature conservation strategy for the ACT. That strategy will contain proposals for ensuring the continuing survival in the wild of the native flora and fauna of the ACT, with particular attention being given to the management of potentially threatening processes and the development of community programs to promote nature conservation. Amendments to the Act are planned to be developed to enable the Government to meet current and future nature conservation responsibilities in a more effective way through increased efficiencies, provisions which more adequately take account of current trends and issues, and increased flexibility in policy development.

At this time, Madam Speaker, while drought is gripping much of the country and, in fact, has been declared here in the ACT, it is timely to note the efforts that the Government has been putting into the efficient and wise use of our water resources. ACT Electricity and Water recently released its long-range future water supply strategy for the ACT to assist

with planning for the next 50 years. Discussion on future water supply needs in the ACT always includes the question of cost. There are very strong and convincing arguments of an environmental nature which must be taken into account when we talk about water use and supply. We may have a relatively good water supply here in the ACT now; but this is the driest continent in the world, and we must take an environmentally responsible attitude to water usage. I believe that this Government has demonstrated foresight and has long-term planning measures which ensure appropriate supply and use.

Linked to our strategy on water supply and use is ACTEW's development and study of water reuse schemes. Notably, a pilot plant is being constructed which will supply high-quality treated effluent to irrigate the Southwell Park playing fields. Also, the new Conder-Banks oval in Tuggeranong will be irrigated by secondary water from the Point Hut pond system. I am not sure that all members are aware that 80 per cent of Canberra's stormwater is intercepted by an integrated system of traps, wetlands, ponds and lakes, to minimise the amount of sediment and other pollutants entering the Murrumbidgee River. City Parks has also achieved outstanding success in reducing its water use for irrigation by about 30 per cent over the last two years - a record, I am sure, that City Parks is proud of. I would also like to draw members' attention to the environment improvement plan recently launched by the Minister for Urban Services and the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning. This improvement plan will minimise the impact of Canberra's sewage treatment discharges in surrounding waters and is the first of its kind in Australia.

Madam Speaker, in all this discussion about the environment, one thing is very clear. We must always remain flexible and have the ability to meet new demands and ever-changing developments which will always require environmental vigilance. We only have to consider our current situation here. We are experiencing a very severe drought, with one of the driest winters on record. We are facing a severe, high risk bushfire season during the coming months; and a problem which, I am sure, is of concern to many in our community is the incredibly high number of kangaroos living in the ACT. That number is increasing because of the drought conditions. Our rural lessees, in attempting to deal with the drought, are having to feed their stock while at the same time playing host to very high numbers of kangaroos on their properties. I have had members of the community bring to my attention their horror at seeing some people - only a small number, I might add - release their dogs specifically to watch the sport of their so-called pets chasing and mauling kangaroos. This is happening well within our urban areas. Of course, Madam Speaker, I am sure that we are all aware of the danger to traffic caused by straying kangaroos.

I am aware of the differing views held on how best to deal with this problem. The Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment, of which I am a member, dealt briefly with this issue in the report *Feral Animals and Invasive Plants in the ACT*. I understand the views and the emotions on this issue. The recommendation of the report, Madam Speaker, was:

... that the current policy which does not allow the issue of permits for the culling of kangaroos be modified to provide for the issue of such permits where:

- (a) it is established that a particular species of kangaroo is present in such numbers that they pose an economic threat to leaseholders or are a danger to public road traffic in the ACT;
- (b) culling poses no threat to public safety; and
- (c) culling complies with accepted codes of practice including the appropriate national code of practice.

Madam Speaker, I know that the Minister has referred the issue to two of his community advisory committees for their consideration. However, I urge the Minister to address this important issue as soon as possible.

Bushfire threat, droughts and the resulting problems are temporary in one way, but they are serious issues that this Government must continue to face with the community and develop workable strategies to deal with. The ongoing environmental work which involves long-term planning, constant development and improvement remains with our community always. I encourage the Government and the Minister to continue all of the efforts in this area. Doing this will see the ACT well prepared for the twenty-first century.

**MR STEFANIAK (4.46):** While listening to Ms Ellis I was reminded of a book I read a couple of months ago. If you want to get a point across and perhaps criticise someone, you do it in three ways. You start off with something positive, then you come to the criticism, and you end with something positive. I think, in fairness to the Government, that when one talks about the environment that is appropriate. On behalf of the Minister, the State of the Environment Report - a nice glossy publication - has been produced and tabled in this Assembly. It is, I suppose, a reasonable start. I was pleased to see the Environment Commissioner, Joe Baker, say that the next report will be a lot more critical and will beat the Government about the head on things it has not done. I suppose, in fairness to the Government, that producing this report is a start, even though there could be more substance in it and more critical bits and pieces, because there are certain things that this Government has not addressed and which it needs to address.

In relation to some of the problems, I suppose that it is proper to read in full the press release of the Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra Inc. It deals with the environment report. I would not go as far as querying the Minister's competency, because I have always found the Minister interested in the environment. Whilst there are a lot of things he could do better, I would not necessarily say that he is incompetent. I think what the report says should be put on the record. I quote:

The first ACT State of the Environment Report glosses over the environmental problems faced by the ACT and raises real questions about the administrative competency of the Environment Minister Bill Wood, according to the Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra. Director of the Conservation Council, Mr Craig Darlington, claimed that the most significant aspects of the Report were the lack of key indicators on the state of the environment in the ACT and the lack of coordination between government agencies responsible for environmental issues.

"The Commissioner for the Environment states in the report that 'ACT Government responsibility for the environment is diverse and not adequately coordinated' and that efficient monitoring processes 'are not yet in place'", Mr Darlington said. "This lack of coordination and the Government's piecemeal approach to both human and natural environments can be laid directly at the Minister's door".

"The Minister inherited a Territory with a majority of its land area in reserves and has had almost three years to get the environmental coordination right, but still we see development occurring against the wishes of the community and the best interest of the natural environment", claimed Mr Darlington.

Although the Environment Minister has claimed that the Report gave the Government high marks on their environmental performance, the Conservation Council contends that the Report actually hides more than it reveals. One example given is the Urban Environment Section that Conservation Council President Jacqui Rees has described as "reading like fairy floss", as it paints a rosy picture but completely ignores the five inquiries into planning that are currently underway in the ACT.

Other issues of concern are:

- . The lack of monitoring of benzene (a carcinogen) and manganese compounds which are major pollutants from unleaded fuel;
- . The lack of data on levels of airborne particles under 10 microns which can cause permanent lung damage;
- . The continued use of aluminium compounds, associated with central nervous system diseases, as a water purifier;
- . The lack of a contaminated land register and contaminated land legislation; and
- . The Urban section gives no indication of the level of despoliation of urban areas; and

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. Urban and rural despoliation of native species and their habitats through weed invasion, overgrazing and inappropriate developments.

"The Report should have set goals for environmental sustainability in the ACT and dictated to Government a comprehensive monitoring process to assess our progress towards these goals", said Mr Darlington.

"Instead the Minister has released an incomplete, self-congratulatory document that shows up the Minister's lack of competency in administration and coordination".

That is the Conservation Council's opinion, and I suppose that the report could go further; but, in fairness to the Minister, it is a start.

There are a number of issues which I think do need looking at. Certainly, coordination between government departments is always a problem. That is certainly a problem we face in the ACT. In an area like the environment, that certainly is of key concern. Perhaps because of a lack of coordination in those areas we have a number of very real problems which have been alluded to on occasions in recent times. Last year I noticed a fair amount of publicity given to when there was a sewage overflow from the Lower Molonglo treatment works. Some of the effluent and some of the pollutants that have gone into our river systems and the Murray-Darling river system as a result of that have certainly had some very big effects on the environment.

The ACT, as a supposedly responsible Territory, a Territory that is very concerned about protecting not only its environment but the environment of the region as a whole, really does need to keep a very sharp eye on that; to monitor that situation and to take whatever steps are necessary to rectify it. A number of experts I have spoken to have indicated that overflows from the sewerage works, and other pollutants from construction sites all along the Murrumbidgee - the Murrumbidgee runs within close proximity of Canberra's suburbs - and especially from such things as the Belconnen tip, cause a lot of damage to the environment. Indeed, over a period of years, people who are very knowledgeable in the area have indicated to me that certain types of wildlife, especially fish, have died in the Murrumbidgee River and that, they say, is directly attributable to overspills and pollutants from our tips and from the sewerage works.

It is interesting to talk to some experts about the problems at the Belconnen tip which I think do need to be addressed. Mrs Grassby, I think, was at a meeting I attended where Bryan Pratt, who is very knowledgeable in these areas, addressed the Belconnen Community Council and went through a number of areas where there are real problems arising from that tip. He has indicated that the life use of that tip expires in the year 2000, and steps need to be taken now to work out what to do. Chemicals are dumped at that tip and there are a number of ponds in the tip leading down towards the Murrumbidgee. Three ponds lead down through what is basically a creek system. There have been overflows from that and there is real concern as to whether the methods being used there are effective in terms of stopping pollutants getting into the river system. There are drainage problems associated with the tip as well.

There is another pond system where, I understand, water is being sprayed onto adjoining fields which are leased to farmers. People have found dead cows lying there on occasions, and farmers further downstream in New South Wales have been complaining of dead livestock.

That all points to an environmental problem emanating from the Belconnen tip. I think it is a problem of some magnitude, especially when one considers that Australia is also subject to a number of international agreements with other countries which say, for example, that our livestock are free of various toxins, that they are properly fed and that we are not getting contaminated livestock. There is a fair bit of livestock along the Murrumbidgee which, I am told, would be subject to any despoilants that go through our system there. I have already mentioned reports of dead livestock, and that should be of some concern as well. We have a responsibility to ensure proper management of our effluent and proper management of our tips.

**Mr Wood:** Whom are you quoting there?

**MR STEFANIAK:** Why do you not talk to Bryan Pratt, for starters, Mr Wood, and other members of your fishing council who have seen me in relation to this? I have spoken to three or four people on this issue. It is interesting that, in terms of the tip and the sewerage works, they are all concerned about what they do to the Murrumbidgee and to that river system.

Ms Ellis, quite properly, mentioned some other points as well. I was pleased to hear her quote from the report *Feral Animals and Invasive Plants in the ACT*. Again, on a more positive note, I congratulate the Minister and all parties concerned with the recent Bill to amend the Nature Conservation Act, to which the Opposition also had an input. Hopefully, that will go some way in relation to some of the problems which have been alluded to today.

I will not repeat what Ms Ellis said in relation to paragraph 13.7 of the committee's report - the recommendation regarding kangaroos - except to note that I think it was quite proper that she mentioned it. Farmers and motorists have been crying out about the need for proper culling of, certainly, the eastern grey kangaroo, which now appears to be in plague proportions in parts of the ACT. That creates a problem for farmers and for road users. Also, because of the lack of feed and the number of that type of kangaroo, a lot of them perhaps are starving. It probably would be more humane, as much as anything else, to that variety of kangaroo to take up the recommendations of this report. I think there is quite a ground swell in the community for that to occur.

Feral cats and pigs are another problem which needs to be faced in relation to the ACT environment, especially in Namadgi National Park and throughout the rural areas of the ACT. That is a very real problem, and again the Minister needs to take note of it. The culling of feral pigs and feral cats is something that the Government needs to look at, as well as other means of eradicating those animals which are a quite significant pest.

**Mr Moore:** Will that include the eastern grey kangaroo, as the report recommended?

**MR STEFANIAK:** Yes.

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**Mr Moore:** Unanimously?

**MR STEFANIAK:** Yes. I mentioned your report, Mr Moore, and that, I think, is a sensible suggestion, with the appropriate safeguards. I was pleased to hear Ms Ellis read that. I will not read it out again, but I certainly agree with what is said there. I think there is considerable community support for that type of action.

I do not know what we should do in relation to Mr Moore's suggestion of registering the suburban moggy. That, I suppose, is a real problem. Dogs, of course, are registered, and you cannot have more than three dogs. The average moggy is a real problem. I have had a number of cats, one of whom was quite a terror in terms of killing wildlife. It was a bit of a worry. This cat would kill five or six birds a week. Controlling the cat was a real problem. We did try. Luckily, the cat we have at present is a bit of a wuss. It is called Mozart and it has trouble looking after itself. It is a male cat, and it has trouble stopping the other cats in the area eating its food. It is yet to kill any native species, mice, or anything like that. I suppose that, if you have to have a cat, it is preferable for the environment to have something like the cat we have. But there is a real problem caused by cats. The figures quoted as to just how many small animals and birds the average suburban cat can kill are frightening.

So, Ms Ellis and Minister, there are a number of issues that are very relevant to the environment in the ACT. I have only touched on several; but all have a big impact on our community, and some have an impact on south-eastern Australia and our main river system in this country. That makes it all the more important for this Territory, and this Government, to start with, to get it right. There are a lot of areas where, quite obviously, it has not got it right. We are the bush capital and we must do the right thing by the environment and ensure that adequate measures are in place to ensure proper environmental protection of not only Canberra but the region. Having a reputation as the bush capital is terribly important for tourism. We need to ensure that Canberra remains the bush capital, and that the necessary environmental benefits that Canberra enjoys continue and are expanded upon so that we can remain the envy of not only Australia but also many other parts of the world.

**MRS GRASSBY (5.00):** Madam Speaker, let me say from the outset that I am very proud to be part of one of the most green governments in Australia and to have an Environment Minister who is so green that some people think his blood runs green.

**Ms Follett:** It does.

**MRS GRASSBY:** He is certainly not blue-blooded, Chief Minister. He must have something green in his blood. My colleague Annette Ellis has provided details of some very significant achievements of this Government in its environmental management of the ACT, but members of this Assembly would be well aware by now that this is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the busy work program of this Government to protect and enhance the ACT environment. The initiatives which I will discuss today are testimony to an administration mindful of the multitude of environmental responsibilities it faces.



We will continue to develop innovative programs, coordinated across government, to produce an integrated approach to environmental management. That is very important to our city. We have already brought forward much new legislation to the Assembly which, to use a pun, is a landmark. However, the development of further legislation is complex. It involves consultation and public feedback, and it will, necessarily, take some time. When I talk to people from other cities and other areas I find that they do not have the public consultation that we have in this city. We are very lucky that that is part of the Government's program. While a second discussion document is soon to be released, the Government has not delayed in effecting amendments to existing legislation where necessary.

Members will recall the recent amendments to the Air Pollution Act which have enabled improved management of air quality in Canberra, particularly during the autumn and winter months. The amendments responded to concerns about emissions from incorrectly operated solid fuel heating appliances and the lead content of leaded petrol. We all fear, on very frosty winter nights, driving through Canberra and seeing pockets of smoke caused by fuel heaters. We hope that the plan the Government has put in will bring it under control. These amendments also bring all domestic solid fuel burning equipment under the scope of the Act and provide for compliance certification of new domestic solid fuel heating appliance models manufactured in or imported into the ACT from 17 December 1993. This will be an improvement on the air quality in winter in Canberra. The amendments give effect to the Government's commitment to introduce national emission standards for new solid fuel heating appliances. I sat on the committee with Mr Moore and we did a lot of work on solid fuel heaters. There is not a lot that can be done, although an excellent pamphlet has been put out by the Government showing people how to operate these fuel heaters. We cannot force people to do that; but, from December 1993 on, there will be an improvement in heaters brought into the ACT or manufactured here. I congratulate Mr Moore on the fact that he worked with me on that committee. I cannot remember who else was on the committee, Mr Moore. We worked very hard on that.

One of the most interesting statistics from yesterday's State of the Environment Report is the massive fall in recorded lead levels. This was a worry, particularly when a count was taken in Northbourne Avenue early in the morning when there was peak-hour traffic. The lead levels in the air were always a worry. From a peak in Civic of about eight micrograms per cubic metre in 1982, lead levels have dramatically fallen to well under half a microgram in 1994. A lot of this is as a result of unleaded petrol, but the hard work of the Government ensured that this happened. This is a full microgram under the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines. There is absolutely no doubt that this is because of the introduction of unleaded petrol in 1986 and other controls on lead emissions. Of course, as old cars are sold and new cars come onto the market, I think it will fall even further. Madam Speaker, our lead levels had fallen to below the recommended maximum level before the Federal Government introduced the unnecessary tax on leaded fuel last year. The way in which this Government has gone about progressing the new integrated environment protection legislation and the amendments to the Air Pollution Act is testimony to its willingness to listen and to act on community concerns.

The development of endangered species legislation has also undergone an extensive community consultation process. The amendments will ensure the identification and protection of endangered native plants and animals, and I congratulate the Minister, Mr Bill Wood, on the hard work that he has done in this field. This Government's commitment to the protection of ecology communities is also evidenced by the most recent addition to the already impressive Canberra nature park scheme. A total of 740 hectares of open forest, lowland woodlands and native grasslands in Gungahlin is to be reserved as the Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve. The diverse habitat types within the reserve have been shown to contain a range of rare and uncommon species of flora and fauna. The addition of Mulligans Flat to the reserve system will afford it the protection it warrants, whilst providing the residents of Gungahlin and the rest of the Canberra community with an excellent - I say excellent because I have been in that area - recreational and educational opportunity.

An important concern faced by our nature reserves managers is the control of invasive weed species. The recent report of the Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment recommended the development of a 10-year weed strategy. A decade approach is necessary, as virtually all troublesome weeds in the ACT require a maximum of eight to 10 years of control action before effective eradication can be expected. This Government is serious about protecting the extensive network of conservation reserves from threats such as invasive weeds, whilst also looking to develop management strategies which maximise their natural appeal to the community.

**Mr Humphries:** Are you talking about the button wrinklewort?

**MRS GRASSBY:** This is the report that has been handed down, yes. Last financial year the ACT Tourism Commission prepared for public comment an issues paper on the development of ecotourism in the ACT with the objective of establishing guidelines for the effective planning, development and management of sustainable tourism in natural areas. The commission, in conjunction with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and community and tourism industry representatives, will be preparing the formulation of an ACT ecotourism policy in 1994-95.

Mr Stefaniak was at that meeting on the wetlands in the area of Belconnen. One of the things that came out of the meeting we held last week related to ecotourism in the area of Lake Ginninderra, at the top end beyond the bridge. The fauna and flora and fish species in that area could bring a lot of tourists to Canberra. I must say that it was a very successful meeting. Dr Bryan Pratt from the tackle shop in Belconnen immediately said that he would give \$500 to get it started. So, there are many people out there in the community who believe in this area and want to keep it as beautiful as they can. They are prepared, as I said this morning, to put their money where their mouth is.

Another mechanism which the Government successfully uses to involve community action is the provision of direct grant funding. An environment grants program has been established to enable community groups to apply for funds in order to undertake worthwhile projects of an environment enhancement and rehabilitation nature.

The program will provide full calendar year funding beginning in 1995. Before I conclude I would like to add that, whilst the ACT is a small jurisdiction, the Government considers that the ACT's involvement in the development and implementation of national and international environment agreements is very important. Local action can and does make a difference. We have already alluded to the Government's active participation in the development of national agreements, and in forums such as the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council. The ACT will continue to contribute and foster the links established with our State and Territory counterparts, to achieve a safe and healthy environment for all Australians.

**MR MOORE** (5.11): It is a pleasure to rise to speak to this very important matter of public importance, namely:

The need to ensure that all possible measures are undertaken to guarantee the quality of the ACT environment.

I would like to begin my speech, Madam Speaker, by referring to Mr Wood's answer to my supplementary question at question time. My question drew attention to the initiatives of the ACT Government that Mr Wood was so proud of and which go back to *Canberra in the Year 2020*. They are initiatives of the platform on which Ms Szuty and I were elected. On the front page of the platform, under the heading "Principles", we stated:

We must look to 2020, thirty years hence, and work towards a sustainable future. We must deliver for our children a sustainable and stable economy, a sustainable and enriching environment, with equal rights to health, education, employment. Our plan to 2020 must set social priorities.

Planning is the centre of this vision for Canberra. It is a vision in which all members of the community share and it is through a visionary approach and a planning strategy we have gained the Canberra we have now.

By planning to the year 2020 we accept the same challenge as the planners in the early 60's who formulated the decentralised town centre concept: the plan that has delivered to us a Canberra where the urban environment is second to none in the world.

Yesterday, following presentation of the report, I congratulated the Commissioner for the Environment on the report, and I discussed with him the issues of the urban environment. He said that that was the area that was the most difficult to deal with. No doubt all of us would recognise that. He said that he was looking forward to the next state of the environment report, when he would be able to put more effort into it. Of course, he will have some assistance to do that. We are aware of a number of inquiries at the moment that are designed specifically to deal with the issues of the urban environment.

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Madam Speaker, it is important that we continue to pursue that; but fundamental and simple questions remain to be answered, and they must be answered. How much development are we going to have? Where is it going to happen, and when is it going to happen? Those are the fundamental questions that have to be asked, and that is the challenge for this Minister - to ensure that those questions are answered appropriately. They are simple questions to ask. They are, of course, particularly complicated questions to answer. Although the Planning Authority received a landscape architect award, and congratulations to it - I think we all share in congratulations for any award that our public servants are given - it still has to answer those challenges. It has not done so. Even though, as Mr Wood correctly pointed out, I supported the Territory Plan, I did express reservations on those issues, and on its lack of a strategy. A strategy has to answer those questions. I have continued to raise that issue. Mr Stefaniak, no doubt, will remember that I raised it in the last Assembly, prior to the last election. I will continue raising that issue because it is a critical one.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to move on to the natural environment. Following the report of the Commissioner for the Environment, the issue of feral animals and invasive plants has been raised. Ms Ellis first raised the issue of the need to cull kangaroos. It is a vexed question. It was then supported appropriately by Mr Stefaniak. This has been the subject of a report of this Assembly in which the unanimous view was that, when a species such as the grey kangaroo that is flooding rural areas around the ACT is totally out of balance with the rest of the environment, it is going to be necessary for us to take a hard decision. It is a decision that carries with it a great deal of emotion. That is why it ought not be just simply a decision of the Minister for the Environment. I was pleased to be a member of the Environment Committee - in fact I chaired it - that recommended the need to take steps to very carefully go about culling kangaroos. None of us take any pleasure from the thought that we may have to take this action, but it does have to be taken because we have an environment that is out of balance.

Madam Speaker, I would like also today to raise the issue of water conservation. It is an issue that I have raised on a number of occasions. I remind members that water is a renewable resource. We must deal with water in a very different way from the way that we might deal with other elements of our environment which produce waste, and other elements of our environment, such as petroleum products and other fossil fuels which are non-renewable resources. Water is a renewable resource and the Commissioner for the Environment tells us that we have sufficient storage capacity in our existing reservoirs to provide water for a population of 400,000. That view was based on average water use over the previous year. We have now put into place further conservation measures. I believe that over the next few years we will see that we will have enough water in storage, because of a sensible approach to our water, to take us through to a population of 500,000 or more. We do not expect to reach that population, according to demographic projections, Madam Speaker, for at least 15 years, and probably longer. We have to take great care, when dealing with water, that we recognise that it is a renewable resource.

I must say that the recent video and the work of the ACT Electricity and Water Authority in dealing with water revealed a sensible approach. The only hiccup in that relatively sensible approach, I think, was that the Electricity and Water Authority decided on a weird system for charging for water. I must be careful that I do not reflect on a vote of the Assembly. I shall take great care in saying that we should look to a time when we are charging people for water based on the amount of water they use, in the same way that we do for electricity. The Electricity and Water Authority, in order to do this, should be working out a progressive system of installing meters in all urban residences to ensure that that can be implemented.

I would like to conclude this afternoon, Madam Speaker, by mentioning two issues. Mrs Grassby thinks that the Minister has green blood running through his veins. Maybe one of his relatives slit their wrists in the fountain outside that has gone green. For the sake of *Hansard*, that is going to be difficult for somebody reading it later, is it not? They will not realise that, because of the pending victory by the Raiders, the department, I presume, has coloured the water in the fountain outside green.

Madam Speaker, in spite of that, I remind the Minister that we still have a soft attitude on the insulation of ceilings in housing. That is an issue that I have raised in this Assembly. I feel that it has been dealt with in an unsatisfactory way and there is much left to be desired. The other thing that I think is critical is the issue of the urban environment. I raised the issue of how much development, where, and when, and no doubt you will hear more about that a few more times before the year is out. Whatever approach we take in terms of infill we still have to ensure that we have enough room for people to plant plenty of trees, to have their grass around them and to have their amenity. People are also part of the environment and their urban amenity is critical. The thing I enjoy most when flying back into Canberra, Madam Speaker, is looking down and seeing trees with a few houses intermingled, except in the newer suburbs that have not got to that stage. When you are flying out of Sydney or Melbourne you see roofs with a few trees intermingled. I think we have to be very careful to ensure - - -

**Mr Cornwell:** You must always get a window seat.

**MR MOORE:** I insist on a window seat, Mr Cornwell, unless I am very late. Madam Speaker, in conclusion, that is something that we have to protect, and that is what we will do.

**MR WOOD** (Minister for Education and Training, Minister for the Arts and Heritage and Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning) (5.21): Madam Speaker, I will make a few comments in response to those made by my colleagues. I thank them for their views. Let me acknowledge that, in common with the ACT community, members of this Assembly do afford a very high priority to environmental matters. I think Mr Moore was talking to me at the time and I did not fully hear what Mr Stefaniak said. I think he was quoting someone who was claiming that animals have died downstream from the ACT because of effluent from our tips. If that was what someone else was claiming - and Mr Stefaniak nods - that claim is simply wrong. It is based either on prejudice or on lack of knowledge of what happens.

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I do recall one newspaper article a little time ago that there was direct effluent flow into the Murrumbidgee. It is simply not the case. There are a number of storage dams. Any effluent that is quite undesirable is not allowed to leach out; it is tanked away. The systems are very sound. There is a holding dam and there is a further dam beyond that to prevent any overflow in the case of heavy rain or breakage of walls. I have noticed one fishing commentator's articles from time to time, but I believe that he is expressing a jaundiced view. Nothing that he has said in that respect can be sustained.

Comment has been made about kangaroos. It is a sensitive issue, and it is clearly the case that we really do have more kangaroos in the area than we need. The Government has long been developing a policy; it has been a long process. First of all, we put out a discussion paper to community groups, including of course those most interested in the environment and in conservation. That paper was then refined and sent to two of our advisory committees - the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and the Environment and Conservation Consultative Committee. They have carefully reviewed the policy. Each of those bodies looked at it, and they have sent us back those policies, I believe with endorsement and with comment. As a result the Government will be in a position to examine this issue carefully and decide what best might be done about this vexed question.

Mr Moore also raised the question of insulation in ceilings. Let me point out that from 1 July next year we are moving to a very tough energy standard, a five-star rating. I would think in very many circumstances houses are going to need insulation in the roof in order to get their four-star level. There are, of course, significant things they can do in respect of solar efficiency. We are planning our suburbs now to make it easier to align your house to the sun. With that new five-star rating, houses can use the sun, but not every subdivision can have a house so aligned. There will probably be circumstances where it will be necessary, in order to attain the four stars that are required, for insulation to be in the roof. I think it will become commonplace. We acted not so long ago to require it in walls as a matter of compulsion, and we just did not want to move, in consideration of costs, too rapidly to make it compulsory in the roof. The obvious reason is that it is not difficult, subsequently, for a home owner to come back and put insulation in the roof, whereas it is difficult and expensive if that is to happen with the walls.

I want to elaborate a little on what I said yesterday in respect of the Commissioner for the Environment report. There are five sections of it relating to various components: Atmosphere, water, land, urban environment, and plants and animals. Each section has been prepared, might I say with some emphasis, as a public process - by public consultation, by invitation broadly to the community to participate. In particular, we drew upon some very considerable scientific environmental advice.

If you look through this document, you will see who the people were who were responsible for writing each of those chapters. You will see that they reflect some of the best scientists and the best brains in this town. They have done a very thorough job. Mr Stefaniak read out a letter from one group. I do not know what the extent of their participation was, but any comment that that group made must be taken in the context of the high quality of people who have contributed to this report. Dr Baker, who got

a bagging, I might say, from that group when he was appointed - and that was very unfortunate - is one of Australia's most eminent scientists, who now comes up with another distinction - heading up the Federal Government's inquiry into green jobs. He is a most distinguished man. He has taken the sectoral reports, if you like, and then he has combined them. He has worked on them, and he has given his overview to it. Dr Baker, as I said yesterday, has done an outstanding job.

I particularly want to commend those scientists, the environmentalists, the conservationists, who put their dedication and their very considerable knowledge into making this such a good report. It is a good report, because it puts the onus back on the Government. There are areas, as I indicated in answer to a question from Mr Moore, where it tells us, as it ought to, what we ought to be doing in the future. That is what we wanted, and that is what we got. We have a great environment - the report acknowledges that - but we must see that we maintain it. We must take those steps to be quite sure that we know what makes the environment good, and that is the point that this report makes. We do not really know what those benchmarks are. So, we have to establish them and then very thoroughly monitor what is happening, to ensure that our environment can only get better.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The discussion has concluded.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion (by Mr Berry) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

#### **Canberra Raiders**

**MR MOORE** (5.29): Madam Speaker, I rise in this adjournment debate to do the obvious thing - and I presume that other members will join with me - and that is to wish the Raiders the best of luck on Sunday. I hear Ms Follett wanting to sing the song, so when she leads off in a minute we will all join in.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** No; the Speaker will rule that out of order.

**MR MOORE:** I was even prepared to go ahead with it; but, Madam Speaker, I accept that it would be entirely inappropriate to do such a thing in the Assembly. But I think we do recognise the contribution that the Raiders have made to the spirit of Canberra, and I would just like to say all the best to all of them on the weekend.

**Members:** Hear, hear!

**MADAM SPEAKER:** It is agreed unanimously.

### **Ginninderra Wetlands**

**MR STEFANIAK** (5.30): Madam Speaker, I believe in giving credit where credit is due. That often does not happen in this house. I neglected to do this in the debate. On behalf of the Opposition, I would like to congratulate Ellnor Grassby for something she did, which she alluded to in her speech. Maurice Griffin-Warwicke, from the Belconnen Community Council, came to Ellnor with a very sensible proposal in relation to developing the Ginninderra wetlands. Ellnor did a lot of work to get that up and running, and we had, as she said, a committee meeting at the Belconnen Community Centre last week. A committee is up and running. It is a project that will cost very little money and has immense potential, not only for tourism but also in terms of just getting the community involved, especially getting kids involved. I look forward to working with Ellnor and the Belconnen Community Council on that. So, I would like to congratulate Ellnor for her work to date on that.

### **Mr John Lomax : Passive Smoking**

**MR BERRY** (Manager of Government Business) (5.31), in reply: I would just like to echo the words of support for the Raiders. I do not know how the appeal that was lodged by John Lomax will go, but I wish him well. It is to be heard tomorrow. Our best wishes go to John Lomax. I think it was a most unfortunate turn of events, which ended up seeing him turfed off the paddock. Of course, it would have been a big personal blow for him. He is a very tough young footballer who plays his heart out on the football field, but one who has always been fair, on my observation of any of the games that he has been involved in. So, good luck, John.

There is one other matter I would like to raise during this debate. Yesterday Mr Moore said, in the course of debate about epidemiological studies, that he would only rely on epidemiological evidence that we have dangers of passive smoking, and there was some agreement between him and Mrs Carnell later on in relation to epidemiological studies of non-smoking women living with smokers. Mr Moore said that if we had any evidence we should provide it and that would be great. I produce evidence - and I will table it, Madam Speaker - which shows that the excess risk of lung cancer among women ever exposed to environmental tobacco smoke during adult life was: In the household 24 per cent; in the workplace, 39 per cent; and in social settings, 50 per cent. It comes from the JAMA, which is the *Journal of the Medical Association*. It was an extensive environmental tobacco smoke and lung cancer in non-smoking women study conducted in the United States. I seek leave to table that.

Leave granted.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**Assembly adjourned at 5.32 pm until Tuesday, 11 October 1994, at 2.30 pm**



**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS  
MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION**

**QUESTION NO 1336**

**Men's Refuges**

MR CORNWELL - Asked the Minister for Housing and Community Services -

- (1) How many men's refuges, or crisis accommodation houses, by name, are there in the ACT.
- (2) How many (a) full-time and (b) part-time staff are employed by each refuge by name.
- (3) How many persons can each refuge, by name, accommodate.
- (4) What was the average (a) period of stay and (b) level of demand, for each refuge, by name, in 1993-94.
- (5) What criteria for admittance does each refuge have.
- (6) What government subsidy is paid per annum to each of the above, by name.

MR LAMONT - The answer to the Member's question is as follows

- (1) There are four services funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) in the ACT that provide accommodation to men as one of their target groups. They are:

Ainslie Village  
Cura Casa  
Cura Casa Annexe  
Bethany

Ainslie Village provides crisis, medium- and long-term accommodation for single men and single women. Cura Casa and Bethany provide crisis accommodation for families, including men with children. Cura Casa Annexe provides medium-term accommodation for families, including men with children.

- (2) The four services receive funding from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program for the following number of workers:

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Ainslie Village	8.56
Cura Casa	4.125
Cura Casa Annexe	2.5
Bethany	1.5

(3) The four services receive funding from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program to provide the following number of beds:

Ainslie Village	240
Cura Casa	14
Cura Casa Annexe	10
Bethany	11

(4) Information on the average length of stay at each service in 1993-94 is not available. Available data indicates that the level of demand in 1993-94 was sufficient to keep each service at capacity for most of the year.

(5) To be eligible for admission to a SAAP-funded service, a person must identify as part of the relevant target group as described in (1) above and be homeless or in crisis.

(6) The following grant to be paid to each of these services under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program for 1994-95 is:

Ainslie Village	\$672 946
Cura Casa	\$189 054
Cura Casa Annexe	\$123 286
Bethany	\$56 410

**MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1338**

**Men's Refuges**

MR CORNWELL - Asked the Minister for Housing and Community Services In relation to funding for the proposed men's refuge in Civic

- (1) Has a site been selected; and if so, where is the site.
- (2) Does a Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Consultative Committee exist to consider such proposals and if so, which organisations were represented upon the Committee for this specific proposal.
- (3) How many men were on the Committee at (2).
- (4) If such a Committee does not exist, why were we advised it did at a public forum on 12 July 1994.

MR LAMONT - The answer to the Member's question is as follows -

- (1) The St Vincent de Paul Society has been chosen as the auspice under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program for the Single Mens Shelter. The ACT Housing Trust, together with representatives from the St Vincent de Paul Society and the ACT Office of the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Regional Development are currently examining options for the location of this service.
- (2) Yes. The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program/Crisis Accommodation Program (SAAP/CAP) Ministerial Advisory Committee is a requirement of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Agreement signed between the Commonwealth and ACT Governments in 1989. The Committee provides a formal mechanism for community representation and advice on SAAP and CAP issues.

The Committee has fourteen members, comprising one independent chair, nine community representatives, two ACT Government representatives, and two Commonwealth Government representatives.

Community members are selected for their knowledge and involvement in particular target groups, with the following representation:

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Youth	2	
Women	2	
Single Men	1	
Families	1	
People from Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds	1	
Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders	1	
Broader community/housing	1	

(3) Three.

(4) See response to (2) above.

**MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, LAND AND PLANNING**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION**

**QUESTION NO 1340**

**Heritage Places Register**

Mr Cornwell - asked the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning:

Further to your replies to my questions on notice Nos 1216 and 1217, has the Heritage Council concluded consideration of options on concessions or compensations for certain heritage properties' occupants and, if so, (a) what are the findings; if not, (b) when will these considerations be concluded.

Mr Wood - the answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Heritage Council has not yet completed consideration of options on concessions or compensations that may be available for the owners of heritage listed properties' in the ACT. However, I am aware that the Council wishes to take into account a national study on the economic implications of heritage listing, which should be completed later this year. I have written to the Heritage Council to seek advice as to when its considerations on this matter will be finalised.

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**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION**

**Question No. 1343**

**Canberra Institute of Technology -  
Student Fees**

MR CORNWELL - asked the Minister for Education and Training on notice on 23 August 1994:

- 1) Why are Band One fees at the Canberra Institute of Technology charged at a 100 hours rate when the maximum course per semester is 54 hours.
- 2) What are the Band One fees and how many semester courses are less than 50 hours duration.

MR WOOD - the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- 1) Student fees at the Canberra Institute of Technology are based on the number of tuition hours studied in a course per semester. There are fourteen incremental fee bands, which relate directly to tuition hours. Fee Band One relates to 1 - 100 course hours per semester and the fee is \$150.

The fee band system involves a higher charge in Band One, similar to "Flag Fall" for taxi charges. This is the minimum fee that all students are charged, and is weighted to include a component to cover administrative, course materials, equipment and building *maintenance costs*.

It should be noted that students may undertake in excess of 700 course hours per semester.

- 2) The Band One fees are \$150 per semester for 1 -100 hours course tuition. There are currently 29 courses that are less than 50 hours duration.

**MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1344**

**Housing Trust - Three-Bedroom Houses**

MR CORNWELL - Asked the Minister for Housing and Community Service -

- (1) How many three bedroom houses were constructed from ACT Housing Trust Capital Works funds from the 1993-94 Budget.
- (2) Why was this so when Trust stock of three bedroom houses is over 60 per cent and waiting list demands are only 11 percent.

Mr LAMONT: The answer to the Member's question is as follows -

- (1) The Trust constructed 31 three-bedroom houses during 1993-94. .
- (2) As of 30 June 1994, 18 per cent of households applying for public housing were registered for three-bedroom houses. The 31 three-bedroom houses referred to in (1) above represents 23 per cent of all dwellings constructed. The percentage of the Housing Trust's total stock which is represented by three-bedroom houses is approximately 51 per cent.

The percentage of households registered for the various categories of dwellings differs across districts in the ACT. As of 30 June 1994, 33 per cent of households applying for public housing in Tuggeranong were registered for three-bedroom houses. Twenty-six of the houses constructed in 1993-94 were in Tuggeranong.

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**TREASURER FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION**

**Question No. 1355**

**Treasury - Computer System**

**MR CORNWELL** - Asked the Treasurer upon notice on 23 August 1994:

- (1) Is it a fact that all ACT Treasury payments are now processed by computer.
- (2) Was the computer down around the 20-21 July period; and if so, (a) why and (b) for how long was it unable to process cheques.
- (3) When was the system installed and how many days since then has the computer been down.
- (4) Has consideration been given to producing cheques manually during periods of computer breakdown.
- (5) Does the computer being down mean that Government employees and small businesses cannot be paid for services to the Government during those times.
- (6) What (a) was the cost of the computer system and (b) is the name of the computer company that provided, installed and maintains the system.
- (7) Can action be taken against the computer company by either the Government or by small businesses whose due date of payment is not met.

**MS FOLLETT** - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) Yes - in normal circumstances.
- (2) System reports were not able to be produced on the morning of 20 July 1994
  - (a) it is believed that the system was not available due to intermittent printer "addressing" problems
  - (b) one day.



(3) The software application was installed progressively from July 1987 until July 1988.

Accurate measurements of accounting system downtime are unavailable -system unavailability may result from many factors other than software difficulties eg. hardware downtime, network downtime.

In the 1993 Calendar year downtime of nearly 30 hours between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. was recorded - with this figure being a mix of mainframe, application and network difficulties.

The difficulties experienced on 20 July 1994 did not arise from payment application software downtime.

(4) There are processes for the production of urgent manual cheques in the event of protracted difficulties with automated cheque production processes.

(5) No. Government employees are paid by the Commonwealth Department of Finance (on an agency basis) and other payments normally provide a period of 2 days before due date for payment is reached. Please see also the answer to (4).

(6) (a) Unavailable.

The "computer system" and its associated costs are difficult to define. The system, which has evolved and been enhanced since before self-government in the ACT, includes a leased mainframe . associated hardware . terminals and printers . network software and hardware

In addition, there are costs associated with  
hardware hardware maintenance  
. application software maintenance  
. network software maintenance  
. user support in Treasury and other administrative units  
. enhancements since 1986

Some system costs (eg network software) are shared across several applications.

(b) The software was purchased from Australian Business Solutions, heavily modified by the ACT Government and is maintained by the ACT Government.

(7) No.

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**MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1357  
Housing Trust - Sales to Tenants**

MR CORNWELL: To ask the Minister for Housing and Community Services In relation to the Sales to Tenants Program run by the ACT Housing Trust

- (1) How is each particular house valued; does landscaping and an established garden area add considerably to the value of a property.
- (2) Who performs the valuation.
- (3) Are items such as contributions made by the tenant, eg carpet, heater, established gardens, taken into account in setting the value.
- (4) Is there an amount of "credit" for such items which is deducted from the valuation price to ascertain the cost of the house to the tenant.
- (5) If so, is there a limit to the amount which can be so "credited" to the tenant or is the tenant "credited" for all improvements he/she has made.
- (6) If a house was new and unlandscaped when the tenant moved in, is that tenant given greater "credit" for the condition of the garden and yard areas of the property compared with a tenant who moved into an established property; if not, why not.

MR LAMONT: The answer to the Member's question is as follows

- (1) A pre-valuation inspection is undertaken by the Trust to identify "allowable tenant improvements" and a valuer is briefed accordingly. Landscaping is not an "allowable tenant improvement".
- (2) A licensed valuer.
- (3) Yes. All "allowable tenant improvements", other than landscaping, are valued and deducted from the total value of the property.
- (4) Yes, but note this does not include landscaping.
- (5) There is no limit. All "allowable tenant improvements" are taken into account.
- (6) The valuers are advised that gardens and landscaping are not to be taken into account when determining valuations. The guidelines for the program clearly state that no allowance will be given for landscaping.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1359**

**Primary Schools - Gungahlin**

MR CORNWELL - asked the Minister for Education and Training on notice on 23 August 1994:

In relation to the advice (Estimates Committee uncorrected proof transcript, 24 June 1994, page 331) for primary schools in Gungahlin

1. What population does the Government work upon to assess the need for a primary school.
2. What is the cost of a primary school accommodating a peak of (a) 600 and (b) 750 students.
3. Did the reference to the 17 primary schools include non-Government schools and, if so, how many would there be in that total.
4. How many Government (a) high schools and (b) colleges are planned for Gungahlin.

MR WOOD - the answer to Mr Cornwell's question is:

1. The Government works on the basis of providing a primary school for a population range of 4,500 - 7,000.

The range is a result of factors influencing the need for provision of a primary school which include: the timing of the establishment of residential areas, population density, type of development and access factors.

2. Recent primary schools have been built to have a permanent capacity for 460 students and to have core facilities; that is, general purpose hall and canteen, resource centre, toilets, administration capable of accommodating 750 students. The estimated cost of such a school is \$7.05 million. A 600 core capacity school would cost about \$350,000 less to build.
3. Reference given to the reservation of sites for the possible establishment of 17 primary school sites in Gungahlin is for potential development of government primary schools.

It is anticipated that the establishment of non-government primary schools will occur on a similar ratio and for a similar student capacity basis to other areas in the ACT.

4. Sites have been reserved in Gungahlin for the development of five government high schools and two colleges.

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**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1360  
Nicholls Primary School**

MR CORNWELL - asked the Minister for Education and Training on notice on 23 August 1994:

In relation to the shared resources at the proposed Nicholls primary school, exactly what facilities/resources will be shared between the Government and non-Government schools.

MR WOOD - the answer to Mr Cornwell's question is: The schools will share the following facilities:

general purpose hall including the canteen; resource centre including an audio visual room and multi purpose rooms; car parking; and the neighbourhood playing fields.

The Government and the Catholic Education Office are also discussing the possibility of administration buildings which will be shared or have some common spaces.

Any arrangements for sharing of resources in addition to the facilities and associated resources mentioned will be the schools' responsibility.

**MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1361**

**Housing Trust - Narrabundah Property**

MR CORNWELL - Asked the Minister for Housing and Community Services -

- (1) Is it a fact that an ACT Housing Trust property at 57 Matina Street (block 9, section 2) Narrabundah has been repaired and refurbished twice this year; if so, why was this necessary.
- (2) Has any charge been raised against wilful damage in respect of these repairs and refurbishment.
- (3) What is the total cost of repairs and refurbishment in respect of the property.

MR LAMONT - The answer to the Member's question is as follows

- (1) No, repairs and refurbishment work have only been carried out once.
- (2) Orders for Tenant Recoverable Maintenance work were issued on 28 June 1994. A sundry debtor account will be raised to recover the cost once contractor payments have been finalised.
- (3) \$3184.23 was the total cost for the orders raised for Tenant Recoverable Maintenance.

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**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1369**

**Education and Training Portfolio -  
Expenditure**

MR CORNWELL - asked the Minister for Education and Training on notice on 24 August 1994:

In relation to the Treasurer's Quarterly Financial Statement for the period 1 April to 30 June 1994 -

- (1) Why is the total expenditure in government schooling for 1994-95 some \$2.747 million over budget (\$206.316 million : \$203.569 million).
- (2) Why is the total expenditure in non-government schooling for 1994-95 some \$930,000 over budget (\$61.903 million : \$60.973 million).
- (3) Why is the total expenditure in higher education and training for 1994-95 some \$204,000 over budget (\$3.030 million: \$2.826 million).

**MR WOOD** - the answer to Mr Cornwell's question is:

- (1) Additional funding was provided to government schooling during 1993-94, as part of the usual operating procedures. This additional funding amounted to \$2.7m or just over 1% of the original budget and was provided for increased teacher salaries as a result of the Assembly's amendment to the Budget (\$1.5m) and costs associated with a number of adjustments including the Targeted Separation Scheme and increased litigation (\$1.2m).
- (2) Most of the additional funding provided during 1993-94 to non-government schooling related to the passing on of Commonwealth funding for per capita grants (\$1.151 m) and the matching Territorial component (\$0.231m). There was also an increase in the Junior Secondary Bursary Scheme (\$0.165m). These increases were offset by the Commonwealth's One Nation Package funding ceasing earlier than anticipated (-\$0.61 lm).
- (3) The additional funding that was provided to higher education and training during 1993-94 was primarily related to the passing on of Commonwealth funding.

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**MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, LAND AND PLANNING**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION No 1374  
Residential Leases - Subdivisions and  
Dual Occupancy**

Mr Cornwell - Asked the Minister for pa Environment, Land and Planning - In relation to residential leases in the ACT -

- (1) From 1 January 1993 to 13 August 1994 (a) how many applications for split leases have been received by the Department and (b) how many applications have been approved.
- (2) What process is involved in gaining approval to split a lease.
- (3) What criteria are used in assessing such an application.
- (4) What cost is borne by (a) the original lessee of the full block and (b) the eventual lessees of the smaller blocks.
- (5) What is the gain to the Government in the event of a block being divided.

Mr Wood - I understand that Mr Cornwell wishes me to include applications for dual occupancy in my reply. An application for dual occupancy does not require a subdivision of the block. However, once a lease has been varied to allow dual occupancy, the lessee can apply to unit title the lease.

I will include information on dual occupancy applications after I have replied to the questions asked.

The answers to the Member's questions are as follows:

- (1) A total of 7 applications to subdivide residential leases, were lodged between 1 January 1993 and 13 August 1994. Of those 5 have been approved and 2 are still under consideration.
- (2) The process is as for other variations of lease, and is set out in Part VI of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991.
- (3) The criteria are set out in the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 and the Territory Plan.

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(4) All costs are borne by the lessee of the block. These costs may be passed onto transferees, but this is not a matter within the control of the Department.

(5) Betterment is payable by the lessee of the block. In addition, rates are collected on the individual blocks.

In respect of dual occupancy applications I can advise as follows:

(1) A total of 567 applications for dual occupancy, were lodged between 1 January 1993 and 13 August 1994. Of those, 345 required a lease variation. The remaining lessees were already entitled under their leases to build up to 2 residences and only needed Design and Siting approval.

(2) Of the 345 applications to vary the lease 255 were approved, 7 were refused, 22 were withdrawn and 61 were still under consideration as at 16 September 1994.

(3) From 25 May 1993, when the Unit Titles Act 1970 was amended to allow a minimum of 2 units, to 13 August 1994, 160 applications for Units Plans comprising 2 units have been submitted. Of those, 114 were approved.



**MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION**  
**QUESTION NO 1379**  
**Ainslie Village - Barrack Blocks**

MR CORNWELL - Asked the Minister for Housing and Community Services In relation to accommodation at Ainslie Village

- (1) How old are the barrack blocks A, B, C, D and E.
- (2) How many people live in these blocks.
- (3) Have these blocks been condemned or criticised for several years as being unsuitable to house people.

What is, the Fire Brigade's assessment of these blocks.

Were these blocks criticised in the Burdekin Report on Homelessness.

- (6) Does the Government intend to replace these blocks with more suitable accommodation such as is found elsewhere in Ainslie Village; if so, (a) when; (b) what would be the cost of replacing each block and (c) if not, why not.

MR LAMONT - The answer to the Member's question

- (1) The buildings were constructed between 1945 and 1950.
- (2) The barrack blocks can accommodate 150 people, but at present they are at less than full capacity because of maintenance progressively being carried out.

The blocks have not been condemned. There has been criticism but recent maintenance and improvements are expected to address this. Work carried out on the blocks has included:

- . upgrading of ablutions blocks in D & E;
- . weatherboard resheeting of E;
- . refurbishment of 60 rooms in D & E;
- . upgrading and testing of emergency lighting and exit lighting in all blocks; and
- . overhaul and upgrade of alarm system in all blocks.

is as follows -

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- (4) The recent assessment of the ACT Fire Brigade was that the barrack blocks were fire safe to a degree consistent with buildings of this age, construction and occupancy classification.
- (5) There is no specific reference to the barrack blocks at Ainslie Village in either the Report of the National Inquiry into Homeless Children and Young People (1989), or the Report of the National Inquiry into the Human Rights of People with Mental Illness (1993).
- (6) No. The Government has no plans at present to replace the blocks.

**MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1380**

**Ainslie Village - Management Arrangements**

MR CORNWELL - Asked the Minister for Housing and Community Services -

- (1) What arrangement has been reached with Centacare for the management of Ainslie Village and can details be made available to interested parties, including myself.
- (2) Will all 16 recommendations and all parts thereof of the Kelly Report into Ainslie Village be implemented; and if so, in what time-frame.
- (3) If not all recommendations are to be implemented, why not and which ones will not be implemented.

MR LAMONT - The answer to the Member's question is as follows -

- (1) The Housing Trust has entered into arrangements with Centacare to provide management at Ainslie Village for an interim period of six months. A service agreement under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and a Deed of Sub Lease have been signed for the period from 17 August to 31 December 1994. Expressions of interest will be sought for a permanent change of auspice at Ainslie Village within this interim period.

An advisory committee has been formed with representation from Centacare, the ACT Trades and Labour Council, the Ainslie Village Independent Residents Association, the Friends of the Village, Ainslie Village staff, the Housing Trust and the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Regional Development. The committee will provide strategic direction and advice during the interim management period at Ainslie Village and will be provided with relevant documents. While general details of the arrangements can be made publicly available, copies of the above documents remain confidential.

- (2) The advisory committee's responsibilities include determining which recommendations of the Kelly Report are still appropriate to be implemented with the introduction of new management arrangements at Ainslie Village.
- (3) See answer (2) above.

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**MINSTER FOR HEALTH  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO. 1392  
Health Portfolio -  
Market or Political Research**

Mrs Carnell - asked the Minister for Health:

For each and every department or agency for which you have ministerial responsibility -

- (1) What market or political research has been conducted (a) in the year 1992-93; (b) in the year 1993-94; and (c) since 1 July 1994.
- (2) What was/is the purpose of that research.
- (3) What were the questions asked.
- (4) What was, is expected to be the cost of that research.
- (5) What were the results of that research. (Can copies of the results, including reports, of any research conducted during the specified periods be provided)

Mr Connolly - the answer to the Member's question is:

The Department of Health has not conducted any market or political research (a) in the year 1992-93; (b) in the year 1993-94; and (c) since 1 July 1994.

No Department or agency for which I have responsibility undertakes political research.

**MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO 1408**

**Housing Trust - Property Statistics**

MR CORNWELL - Asked the Minister for Housing and Community Services -In relation to the ACT Housing Trust -

(1) How many Trust properties were disposed of in 1993-94 by (a) sale; (b) demolition or (c) other means.

(2) How many Trust properties were acquired in 1993-94 by (a) purchase; (b) construction or (c) other means.

MR LAMONT - The answer to the Member's question is as follows -

(1) (a) 74 (b) 23 (c) 0

(2) (a) 30 (b) 115 (c) 0

**MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, LAND AND PLANNING  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION**

**QUESTION NO 1415**

**North Canberra - Population Statistics**

Mr Cornwell - asked the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning - In relation to the North Canberra region

- (1) What is the present population of each suburb.
- (2) What is the expected population of each suburb in 2003.
- (3) How many people in (2) will be contributed by the North Watson development.
- (4) How many properties will be built in North Watson.

Mr Wood - the answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) The following population estimates were provided by the Economic Development Division. The present population of each suburb is as follows:

Acton	1,750
Ainslie	4,700
Braddon	1,900
Campbell	3,200
City	300
Dickson	1,950
Downer	3,450
Duntroon	1,950
Hackett	3,100
Lyneham	4,200
O'Connor	4,850
Reid	1,600
Russell	0
Turner	2,150
Watson	3,600

(2) The expected population of each suburb in 2003 is as follows:

Acton	1,750
Ainslie	4,450
Braddon	2,100
Campbell	2,600
City	550
Dickson	1,700
Downer	2,800
Duntroon	1,950
Hackett	2,550
Lyneham	4,150
O'Connor	4,350
Reid	1,600
Russell	0
Turner	2,400
Watson	6,000

(3) The North Watson development will contribute 3,000 people to the population of North Canberra.

The maximum number of new dwellings in North Watson will not exceed 1,300.

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**MINISTER FOR HEALTH  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION  
QUESTION NO. 1422**

**Woden Valley Hospital - Epilepsy  
Treatment Drugs**

Ms Szuty - asked the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are the drugs, carbamazepine and primidone available from Woden Valley Hospital for the treatment of patients with epilepsy?
- (2) If available, do conditions exist as to their availability for particular patients eg (a) inpatients only or (b) patients admitted to the accident and emergency section.
- (3) If not available, (a) does Woden Valley Hospital have any plans to make the drugs available for potential patients and (b) can the Minister explain why both Calvary Hospital and Queanbeyan District Hospital have the drugs available for the treatment of potential patients and Woden Valley Hospital does not.

Mr Connolly - the answer to the Member's question is:

- (1) The drugs carbamazepine and primidone are available at Woden Valley Hospital for patients with epilepsy.
- (2) No conditions apply to the availability of carbamazepine and primidone for inpatients, patients in the Emergency Department, and for patients on discharge from Woden Valley Hospital.

During Pharmacy Department hours (8.30 am - 7.00 pm) the drugs are dispensed from the Pharmacy Department. At night, both drugs are available from the after hours drugs supply room or the on-call pharmacist can be contacted to arrange supply.

- (3) See the answer to (2)