



**DEBATES**

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**HANSARD**

2 May 1995

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**Tuesday, 2 May 1995**

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**MR SPEAKER** (Mr Cornwell) took the chair at 2.30 pm and read the prayer.

**AUTHORITY TO RECORD, BROADCAST AND PHOTOGRAPH PROCEEDINGS**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion regarding the recording of proceedings today, Tuesday, 2 May 1995.

Leave granted.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I thank members. I move:

That the Assembly authorises:

- (1) the recording on videotape without sound by television networks of proceedings until the end of questions without notice, today, 2 May 1995;
- (2) the use by any television station of any part of the recorded proceedings in subsequent news, current affairs and documentary programs and not for the purposes of satire or ridicule; and
- (3) the taking of still photographs during proceedings until the end of questions without notice, today, 2 May 1995, and the use of such photographs in the print media generally.

This motion is in line with previous motions moved on occasions such as this, and I commend it to the house.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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## PETITION

**The Clerk:** The following petition has been lodged for presentation:

By **Mr De Domenico**, from 31,000 residents, requesting that the Assembly act upon the petitioners' declared support for all local small businesses.

The terms of this petition will be recorded in *Hansard* and a copy referred to the appropriate Minister.

### Small Business

*The petition read as follows:*

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

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

We, the undersigned, declare our support for all local small businesses in the Canberra region, and we ask that the Canberra Plan be re-established to give greater focus to the preservation and growth of locally owned small businesses and less priority given to the uncontrolled expansion of the town centres.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to act upon and respect our declaration.

Petition received.

## PAPER

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General): I seek leave to present a petition which does not conform with standing orders, in that it does not contain a request.

Leave granted.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I present an out-of-order petition from 236 residents, indicating their concern over plans for the residential development on the corner of Wilkins and Heard Streets in Mawson.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Visiting Medical Officers - Contracts

**MS FOLLETT:** Mr Speaker, I have a question for Mrs Carnell as Minister for Health. Mrs Carnell, given your loud public boasts on at least two occasions that you have solved the VMO dispute, I ask you: As of today's date, how many of Canberra's visiting medical officers have signed contracts with the ACT Government?

**MRS CARNELL:** The VMO issue is a vexed one, as the previous Government is well aware and as Mr Connolly particularly is well aware. The issue has been on the agenda in the ACT for over two years now. I am pleased to say that, as of today, virtually all the contracts are out with VMOs and we believe that the remaining contracts will be returned within the next two weeks. We believe that just over 10 per cent have been signed and returned to the Government. The process that has been adopted - a process that has actually been very successful, unlike that of the previous Government and Mr Connolly - is that we have approached every single specialty individually and have spoken to their members about their particular needs, what they require, and also what they can do for the hospital system.

This has created a new approach to health - an approach that is cooperative, where the doctors, the VMOs and the Government are working together. It has also created a situation where more than \$2m will be saved by the Government, where we will end up with a more efficient use of things like theatres and where we will have better throughput in the system. We have done that without any withdrawal of service.

**Mr Berry:** But how much does it cost? How many millions?

**MRS CARNELL:** There has been no withdrawal of service, unlike what happened under you, Mr Berry. We have not had a withdrawal of service; we have not had to fly patients out of the ACT to Sydney for important surgery; and, I state again, we have saved over \$2m. Mr Connolly will be aware that under his approach he said constantly that the savings figures would be, at the upper end, \$4m and, at the lower end, \$0.5m.

**Mr Connolly:** That is outrageously untrue, and you know it to be so.

**MRS CARNELL:** We know that that is true, Mr Connolly, and that was the basis of the negotiations. What we have now is a situation where doctors are working with the system, with the Government, to provide services to the people of the ACT. We will end up with savings, and no patient has been flown to Sydney.

**MS FOLLETT:** I have a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. I note that Mrs Carnell's definition of solving a problem is solving 10 per cent of it. I think that is an interesting concept. I would like to ask Mrs Carnell: How many of the contracts represent a change from fee-for-service to sessional contracts?

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**MRS CARNELL:** Thank you very much. I am very pleased to answer that. The mix of sessional and fee-for-service contracts at this stage indicates that more than 60 per cent of VMOs at Woden Valley Hospital will be on sessional contracts. That is a substantial change from the previous situation, and I again state that that means that there will be a \$2m saving to the ACT while keeping doctors at work, treating patients, with real efficiencies in the system. I believe that that is a good result, and so do the doctors. By the way, so do the people of Canberra. They did not like flying to Sydney because you could not solve a problem in two years. We have been here for seven weeks, and we have achieved a situation where all of the contracts are out now and more than 10 per cent are back. In two weeks, the rest of them will be back and the system will go on. But it will not be the old system; it will be a system that is more cooperative, one where the doctors are working with us to overcome the absolute mess that you left.

### **Hospital Outpatient Waiting Lists**

**MR MOORE:** Mr Speaker, my question is to Mrs Carnell in her capacity as Minister for Health. Mrs Carnell, in the previous Assembly you made an artform of asking questions about hospital waiting lists. Just as important to some people are outpatient waiting lists. This is a critical issue particularly for people who have been diagnosed as suffering from cancer. What is the current waiting time for people who need to have radiotherapy treatment? How many people are currently waiting for radiotherapy? Do you have a record of people who refuse to wait and who choose to go to Sydney for treatment as an alternative? I point out, Mr Speaker, that I gave Mrs Carnell a couple of hours' notice that I would be asking this question.

**MRS CARNELL:** Thank you very much. The issue of waiting times for radiotherapy is indeed a very important issue. When people have been diagnosed as having cancer their general state of mind is that they want treatment absolutely immediately, and it is actually true that we are not providing that treatment immediately. Currently, the situation is that an initial consultation will occur within two weeks - unless the doctor perceives it to be an urgent case, in which event the patient will be seen immediately. Once a patient has been seen by a specialist, the waiting time occurs for actual treatment, and that will depend on the clinical urgency as determined by the specialist. Emergency patients are seen the same day. For urgent patients, it is three to four days. The standard waiting time for non-urgent patients is three to four weeks. Personally, I wonder what a non-urgent patient who has been diagnosed as having cancer is, and I am very interested in the question from that perspective.

I am advised that, between the initial consultation and when the first treatment is actually scheduled, a planning procedure is put in place. So, a patient is taken through a week of planning what the treatment will be, what they can expect from that treatment and basically what they can expect from the whole process from here. I think that is a very appropriate approach, because it is a very worrying time for people. The time during which patients wait for treatment is not considered medically to be detrimental to their treatment, but I state again that I am not confident that it is not detrimental to them psychologically. On average, waiting times at Woden Valley Hospital are understood to be as good as, if not better than, at New South Wales metropolitan public hospitals.

**Mr Connolly:** That is not what you used to say, Mrs Carnell. I am pleased to hear it.

**MRS CARNELL:** I do not think it is acceptable either, Mr Connolly. I know that a number of people have left the ACT to go to New South Wales. Somebody that I know very well was forced into that position not terribly long ago. It is something that I do not consider to be acceptable. By the way, when that person had to go to New South Wales, it was under the previous Government. We will be doing everything in our power to overcome that problem, because it is simply not acceptable.

**MR MOORE:** I have a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Chief Minister, you indicated that the average waiting time for non-urgent cases was three to four weeks. Can you indicate what is the longest waiting time that people are currently subjected to? My understanding is that it can be much longer than that. With regard to waiting lists in general, I note that the Premier of New South Wales has said that, if he cannot get his waiting lists down, he along with his Minister for Health will actually resign. Do you have the same courage?

**MRS CARNELL:** We have actually undertaken as part of our election commitment to reduce waiting lists by 20 per cent over the next three years. That is a reduction of 300 each year. It is absolutely essential that that occur. We currently have 4,557 people waiting for elective surgery in the ACT. That is an increase from, I think, 1,778 when the previous Government came to power. That is an enormous increase. Not only are there substantially more people on the waiting list, but people are actually waiting for longer. Three years ago, 34 per cent of people were waiting for longer than six months. In the last figures that were available, that had gone up to 51 per cent of people waiting for longer than six months. Obviously, waiting times are simply not acceptable. I will take the first part of your question on notice because I simply do not know what is the longest time anyone has ever waited for radiotherapy; but, as I said, I do not believe that three to four weeks is acceptable for somebody who has been diagnosed as needing radiotherapy.

### **Visiting Medical Officers - Contracts**

**MR CONNOLLY:** My question is to Mrs Carnell as Health Minister. Can the Minister provide the Assembly with a breakdown by specialty of fee-for-service versus sessional contracts under the pre-existing arrangements in the hospital system and under what is expected after her so-called settlement? In other words, how many doctors will actually change their arrangements from fee-for-service to sessional contracts?

**MRS CARNELL:** I will be very happy to provide that to Mr Connolly when the doctors have actually signed the contracts. We believe that that will be in the next two weeks. As Mr Connolly would know, the new contracts come into effect on 1 June this year. So, it is only three weeks before we need everyone to have signed. We believe that that will occur in the next two weeks. We believe that we will get them all back.

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There have been a couple of specialties that have taken a little bit longer than others to resolve, but we believe that they are on track now as well. So, I will be more than happy to provide that. Mr Connolly would, of course, be well aware that even in early 1994, when a submission was put to the arbitrator - I think it was put under Mr Berry - a mix of fee-for-service and sessional contracts was planned to be offered. This is fascinating. I am very happy to table the document from the previous Government's submission, which shows total savings of just over \$1m. So, it appears that we have doubled the savings, and this list actually shows a mixture of fee-for-service and sessional.

### **Acton-Kingston Land Swap**

**MS HORODNY:** Mr Speaker, I address my question without notice to the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning. Given budgetary constraints and the fact that no comprehensive assessment of contaminants has taken place, nor any costings, can the Minister assure the Assembly that the Acton-Kingston land swap is of net economic benefit to the people of the ACT?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I will direct that question to the Chief Minister, who is handling this matter.

**MRS CARNELL:** Thank you very much for that question. You are quite right that, at this stage, what it may or may not cost to clean up the Kingston site is not known. As I understand the information that was given to the Assembly committee looking at this last week, it indicated just what a complex issue this is, because whether you actually have to clear the site, whether sealing the site is appropriate and so on really depends on what you use the site for. So, when you look at the costing for cleaning up a site, the first thing you have to do is determine what you are going to use the site for. The area that is of concern is the area around the printing works on the Kingston foreshore. When we take over that site, we have no intention of closing the printing works overnight, so there will be a period of time when we will be able to look at those sorts of issues.

We believe, as we have said quite publicly, that the agreement that was reached with the Commonwealth was the best agreement that we could reach at the time. All you can ever do in these situations is do the best deal you can, but the fact of the matter is that we did a deal. We now have the situation where the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia can go ahead on Acton Peninsula - something that will be a real tourist attraction for the ACT, something that the Aboriginal people of Australia desperately want to go ahead. We are very hopeful also that the ACT-funded Aboriginal cultural centre will go ahead on Acton Peninsula, which is what the Aboriginal Advisory Council actually wants to happen. So, we will be able to go ahead with exciting developments on Acton, and, of course, the international and national competition for Kingston will finally go ahead. It will be wonderful for the ACT in terms of business, in terms of excitement and, of course, in terms of tourism. The issue of sealing the site and cleaning the site is an important one. Certainly, it will be conducted in consultation with everyone in the Assembly and in the ACT.



**MS HORODNY:** I ask a supplementary question. How can the Government defend this position in the light of budgetary constraints that it believes to be so severe?

**MRS CARNELL:** We believe that this will be budget-positive for the ACT. The ACT will do very nicely, thank you, out of the Kingston foreshore site. As we know perfectly well, the problem with the Acton site, if used for something like the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia, the museum or any other national or community purpose, was that it could not be sold. From that perspective, it was worth very little in dollar terms. It had an incredible usage potential, it had a very definite value to the ACT in a cultural sense; but it had no dollar value. The difference with Kingston is that we can now go ahead with an exciting cultural and arts precinct. We will be able to use the old powerhouse for all sorts of different things. The imagination is the only limit to the sorts of things. So, the issue is that we have exchanged a site that simply had no dollar value for a site that has a quite substantial dollar value.

### **Visiting Medical Officers - Contracts**

**MR WOOD:** Mr Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister as Minister for Health, and I ask her: What is the breakdown in dollars of any changes from fee-for-service to sessional contracts?

**MRS CARNELL:** I am not 100 per cent sure what Mr Wood actually means by a breakdown in dollars and whether he means this on a specialty by specialty basis. As I said to Mr Connolly, I will be very happy to make all of those figures available as soon as we get signatures on the dotted line. At this stage, as I have made quite clear, contracts are out with the VMOs, as they should be. We believe that the ones that have not already been signed will be signed in the next two weeks, at which stage I will, with pride, make all the documentation available to everyone in this Assembly.

**MR WOOD:** I have a supplementary question. I would have thought that Mrs Carnell would know what savings she is going to make or would claim to make. Can she add to that documentation she is promising further details that follow from the computer model which the Department of Health maintains, which sets out the dollar cost by specialty of existing contract arrangements? Will she table that information at the same time, please?

**MRS CARNELL:** I am extremely happy to, Mr Wood; but what we have done since those times of the previous Government when the whole problem just got worse and could not be solved has been to take a much more lateral approach and a much more successful approach. We have added to the negotiations substantial requirements for efficiencies, for savings in areas such as the sorts of hips that orthopaedic surgeons may or may not buy, and throughput through theatres. Those sorts of issues have now been added. The bottom line, though, Mr Wood - and I am very proud to say it - is that the ACT will save \$2m from these negotiations and not one patient has been flown to Sydney.

**Mr Berry:** Will you table it?

**MRS CARNELL:** I am very happy to table it. I assume that the Public Accounts Committee will look at this in depth. We have always assumed that it would.

### **Executive Staffing and Administration Budget**

**MR KAINE:** Mr Speaker, I direct a question to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, I understand that this year there is a projected overrun in the Executive staffing and administration budget of some quarter of a million dollars. Are you aware of the details of this projected overrun? Can you outline the reasons for it and the steps that you have taken to bring this overrun back under control?

**MRS CARNELL:** Thank you very much, Mr Kaine. I am advised - I know that this is very hard to believe - that under the previous Government there was a projected overrun of \$153,000 in salaries alone in the Executive staffing budget. To add to that, though, there was \$100,000 in administrative expenses in 1994-95 alone. When you add that to the \$135,000 overrun in staffing by the previous Chief Minister in 1993-94, you can see why, when the previous Government asked agencies to actually save money or try to do something about the mess in health or in other areas, they laughed, because the previous Government simply could not solve its own problems in the Executive. So, we have a \$153,000 overrun in staff and another \$100,000 in administration, at a time when the Government - that is, the previous Government - should have been leading by example. Since we took over government we have got rid of all SES positions in our staffing area. So, there are four SES positions gone already. The former Chief Minister had four SES positions in the Executive staffing. We have brought the administrative budget and the staffing budget back under control. There are no government cars. There are no exotic SES packages in any of our offices. Certainly, it is tough; but, if we do not lead by example - if we tell agencies, departments and others that they have to come in on budget and we cannot - we have no show, just as the previous Government had no show.

### **Acton-Kingston Land Swap**

**MS TUCKER:** Mr Speaker, I address my question without notice to the Chief Minister. Will the Minister assure the Assembly that no contracts will be signed, no tenders will be let and no more taxpayers' money will be spent in relation to the demolition of buildings or other works at Acton Peninsula before the Planning and Environment Committee hands down its report?

**MRS CARNELL:** Thank you very much. We will continue to keep the Assembly and the committee very well informed. We are very pleased that the Environment Committee is looking at this issue. We would be looking for a report - obviously, we would be very happy to have a report as soon as possible - and I understand that that is what will happen. The arrangement with the Federal Government is in place, as I know the committee is well aware. This is something for the ACT; it is not something for the Government. It is something that we will work on together. We will be very interested to see what the committee comes forward with as to how to do this most appropriately for the ACT.

**MS TUCKER:** Mr Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Was that a yes?

**MRS CARNELL:** There is no way that this Government is going to ride roughshod over the top of a committee hearing that is under way. That would be totally at odds with everything we have said about committees playing a really important part in this Assembly. The answer is that we will not put things in place until the committee has reported, because the committees are a very important part of this Assembly.

### **Industrial Unions - Discrimination**

**MR BERRY:** My question is directed to Mr De Domenico in his capacity as Minister for Industrial Relations. Mr Speaker, given that this Minister has for a long time had views on industrial unions, I ask him whether he will give a commitment that there will be no discrimination against organisations representing the industrial interests of people who provide services in the Territory?

**MR DE DOMENICO:** Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Berry for his question, and the answer is yes. There will be no discrimination.

**MR BERRY:** Mr Speaker, I have a supplementary question. How does this Minister justify the rejection of the public sector wage claim when the Government is prepared to cave in to the wealthy doctors union? How does he justify that when he gives that sort of commitment? That is discrimination, if ever I heard it.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to answer that supplementary question.

**Mr Berry:** Because they are the top end of town, you always fold.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** The answer to that question, Mr Speaker, is that this Government has offered the Public Sector Union the same package as the previous Government offered, because it was a very reasonable, sensible and responsible thing to do. If the union was also reasonable and responsible and did the same thing that the previous Government did, perhaps those people would not be standing out in the rain now.

**Mr Berry:** That is not the question that I asked. I asked: How do you justify caving in to the wealthy doctors union? You cannot justify that.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! As you well know, Mr Berry, the Minister may answer the question as he sees fit.

### **Medical Evacuation and Rescue Helicopter**

**MR HIRD:** I would like to direct a question to Mr Humphries in his capacity as Minister for Emergency Services. Can the Minister tell the Assembly how Dick Smith's offer to donate a helicopter to Canberra will affect the Government's commitment to establish a regional medical and rescue helicopter based in Canberra?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I thank Mr Hird for his question. I am very delighted to confirm, as his question implies, that businessman and adventurer Dick Smith has indeed offered to donate a Sikorsky F76A mark 2 twin-engine helicopter to Canberra and our region for use as a medical and rescue aircraft. I have to say that my view is that this is a very exciting development for the people of this region, in that we have now a very real opportunity to develop in our region an emergency rescue and medical evacuation helicopter service. The helicopter itself is worth approximately \$2m and was previously owned by the King of Jordan. Mr Smith's offer is conditional on the appropriate level of support from the region's community. Mr Speaker, I might indicate that, if we had not had that condition imposed upon us, we would certainly have imposed it upon ourselves. It is very important that, before we take on any project as important and as costly as this, we ensure that we have the ability to provide the ongoing capacity for that service to remain in the air. Mr Speaker, when I say "we" in that context I mean not just the people of the ACT or the ACT Government; I mean the people of this region.

If it is operational under these terms, the service will place some 108,000 square kilometres, or an area 70 times the size of the ACT, within one hour's flying time of the base in Canberra. It will get intensive-care medical support to a patient faster than in any other way possible. Seven hundred thousand people in our region will thus be within 90 minutes' flying time of the aircraft. That is a very significant upgrade in the quality of care we can offer people in all sorts of situations where they need that assistance, from industrial accidents to boating mishaps to road accidents. Major roads pass through our region, and they account for a great many accidents each year, particularly some in our region. There are snowfields and bushwalking and rock climbing areas in this region. There are, unfortunately, many sources from which these sorts of accidents can arise. A service of this kind would provide an immense upgrade in the quality of that service. At the moment, Canberra is a minimum of 90 minutes' flying time from Sydney, which means that, particularly south of Canberra, people experience a very long wait for that service to arrive.

Mr Speaker, the Government is committed to evaluating Mr Smith's offer seriously. I repeat the condition that attaches to our receiving this gift from Mr Smith, which is that we have the ongoing capacity to keep it in the air. We are not intent on taking on a white elephant, as Mr Connolly has called it. I assure the house and the people of Canberra that, if we accept this gift, it will be on the basis that we believe that there is a reasonable capacity to continue to provide the service to the people of this region. I hope that that would be a goal worth working towards on the part not just of the Government but of all members of this place.

### Visiting Medical Officers - Contracts

**MS McRAE:** My question is to Mrs Carnell in her capacity as Health Minister. In the past few weeks, in the lead-up to the budget, we have heard Mrs Carnell say that she is concerned about growing staff numbers. She has talked about freezing the SES, getting value for money and all those matters of concern to her and her alone, I think. I also note the Chief Minister's claim that the ACT Government cannot provide wage outcomes for ACT public sector employees greater than the norm applying in the Commonwealth. So I ask: Why does this not then apply to public sector employees in the hospitals with white coats and stethoscopes, who currently cost the ACT 90 per cent above the national norm?

**Mr Humphries:** Divide and conquer: There are the good workers and the bad workers!

**MRS CARNELL:** That is exactly the reason why we have required savings in excess of - in fact, double - the ones that Mr Berry was requiring when the document that I tabled previously when he was Minister for Health - - -

**Ms McRae:** Mr Connolly was the Minister, not Mr Berry.

**MRS CARNELL:** Mr Berry was the Minister before that, and, of course, this has been going on for a very long time. We could go through, Minister after Minister. The fact is that the previous Government had absolutely no capacity to solve this dispute. As Mr Connolly often said, the upper - - -

**Mr Berry:** Mr Speaker, I would like to take a point of order. As Mrs Carnell rose to her feet, Mr Humphries interjected that there were good workers and bad workers. I would like Mr Humphries to withdraw his reflection upon the ACT Government Service.

**Mr Humphries:** On the point of order, Mr Speaker: I was referring to the attitude taken by those opposite, which is that agreeing to wage demands by doctors is a bad move but agreeing to wage demands by other workers is a good move. I think, Mr Speaker, that distinction is made by the Opposition, not by the Government.

**MR SPEAKER:** Mr Humphries, the Speaker did not hear either comment.

**MRS CARNELL:** The issue here is that we have managed to make savings that are double the ones that Mr Berry attempted to make nearly two years ago, when this dispute started. Since then, we have had an actual stoppage by the doctors involved. We have flown people to Sydney for essential surgery because the previous Government simply could not solve the problem. Waiting lists, according to the previous Government and according to Mr Connolly, blew out through the roof because of their inability to solve the VMOs dispute and to actually get signatures on dotted lines. What we have managed to do in seven weeks is reach a situation where we have \$2m worth of savings - double what Mr Berry even asked for. We have had not one patient flown to Sydney.

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I can guarantee that we will end up being able to address the waiting list problem - one that just blew out and blew out under the previous Government - because "the VMOs dispute is causing a blow-out in the waiting list", to quote everybody on the opposite side.

So, what we have ended up with in seven weeks is a situation where we will now be able to address the core problem in health; that is, a waiting list that is the worst, or amongst the worst, in Australia. The Australian Institute of Health recently found that the clearance time on the waiting list in the ACT was the second worst in Australia, after the Northern Territory. It was more than double that of New South Wales. If members of the previous Government actually believe that that was a good outcome for health, heaven help them! What we have is \$2m worth of savings, no stoppages whatsoever, and a cooperative approach to the future of health.

**MS McRAE:** I have a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Is the Chief Minister suggesting that, if other people create waiting lists, their wage demands will be taken seriously?

**MRS CARNELL:** I would be very happy for any group in the ACT to accept a wage package with a saving of \$2m.

#### **Visiting Medical Officers - Contracts**

**MR WHITECROSS:** Mr Speaker, my question is to Mrs Carnell in her capacity as Minister for Health. Mrs Carnell, the Andersen report, which you claimed during the election campaign you would implement, found that the ACT overspends nearly \$6m on VMO payments. In the light of your failure to deliver these savings, how many public sector jobs will have to go to pay for your deal with the doctors?

**MRS CARNELL:** As I have just said, the savings we have managed to achieve are double the ones that the previous Government was even hoping to achieve. They are more than the previous Government even looked like achieving in this area. What we have now is a situation where we have \$2m in savings in an area that has traditionally been very difficult, as the previous Government found in two years of stoppages and waiting list blow-outs - and the saga went on. Mr Connolly knows that the best he achieved was a waiting list that went from 1,179 to 4,557 and 30 VMOs lodging their resignations.

When we came to power, we had two weeks before our hospital system came to a halt. Orthopaedic surgeons had lodged their resignations, and other specialists had said that they were going to withdraw service. We had two weeks to solve the problem, and we did - with \$2m in savings; with a cooperative approach; but, most importantly, with an undertaking from the specialists in our system to work together to clear the waiting list, to overcome a problem with 51 per cent of people waiting for six months or longer for essential surgery. I am not talking about plastic surgery, as Mr Connolly used to bleat about, but things like hip replacements, important surgery in urology and ear, nose and throat areas and general surgery. Those are the sorts of people who were

waiting for more than six months for surgery. That is the cooperative approach we now have, which the previous Government could never even hope to achieve. The best that Mr Connolly and Mr Berry managed to achieve was a stoppage that caused a blow-out in the waiting list of very close to 1,000 people.

**MR WHITECROSS:** I have a supplementary question. Mr Speaker, Mrs Carnell has talked to us about waiting lists and about what the Labor Party might have achieved if it had been in government. But I refer Mrs Carnell back to the commitment she made to the people of Canberra in the election campaign, that she would implement the Andersen report, and I refer her to the savings that she claimed. I ask again: In the light of her failure to achieve the savings which she said in the election campaign she would achieve and which were part of her budget that she took to the people of Canberra, how many public sector jobs is she going to have to cut to make up the shortfall?

**MRS CARNELL:** I am absolutely confident that we did not make a commitment to implement the Andersen report in seven weeks. As I am sure you would be aware, the Andersen report actually suggested that we should implement casemix funding - something that the previous Government just refused to accept - and that the overspending in ACT Health was somewhere between \$26m and \$32m. A large amount of that, of course, is in administration, as you would be aware. Some of that is certainly in VMOs; but you would also be aware that VMOs' salaries make up only 11 per cent of the total hospital budget. So, you are actually talking about only a very small amount. That does not make it acceptable. We have said quite categorically that the VMOs are the first cab off the rank in savings right across the board in health. We have undertaken at the end of three years to have implemented Andersen, unlike Mr Connolly, who tabled it and then did absolutely nothing, which is the reason - - -

**Mr Connolly:** Nonsense! You know that to be untrue.

**MRS CARNELL:** No; I know that it is the truth, Mr Connolly, because now we are in a position of having to go out and find experts in the health arena to implement a report, which is a good report, that Mr Connolly did nothing with. So, what we have is an ongoing commitment to implement Andersen. At the end of three years, as we said in our election commitments, we believe that we will have implemented Andersen. That requires savings; it requires casemix funding being put in place; it means savings of between \$26m and \$32m; it means substantial changes in the way we structure our hospital system; it means substantial savings right across the board. The first cab off the rank, and not the only cab off the rank, is the VMOs. We have \$2m worth of savings up front there and ongoing savings in areas such as better utilisation of theatres, more efficient work practices, better bed management techniques and better discharge techniques. All of those things have been built into these VMO negotiations because that - - -

**Mr Connolly:** That is on top of the trimming, is it?

**MRS CARNELL:** Yes. That is the sensible approach to these sorts of negotiations. What we need is a situation in three years' time where we do not have 51.3 per cent of people waiting for longer than six months for essential surgery, where we do not have one of the worst waiting lists per capita in Australia, where we do not have the most expensive hospital system in Australia with the fewest beds.

### **Illegal Drugs - Control**

**MR OSBORNE:** Mr Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister for Police, Mr Humphries. Minister, how much support is the Government giving to the police in their battle with illegal drugs, particularly heroin, in the ACT, and what does the Government feel is the long-term solution?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I thank Mr Osborne for his question. Obviously, he is making reference to a series of news reports over the last few weeks concerning a number of heroin deaths in the ACT. The number of those deaths at the present time stands at about eight, and that is obviously eight too many. Members will be aware from comments about this in the media that those deaths were due to the very high degree of purity of the heroin that has been distributed in the ACT in recent weeks. Very often in the past, illness or death associated with the taking of these sorts of drugs has been associated with impurities. In this particular case, it has more to do with the very high level of purity of this particular supply of heroin.

As Mr Osborne would be aware, the AFP has a full-time team of investigators working on the distribution and supply of heroin, and they have arrested a number of people for drug-related offences in the last little while. The police will continue to target distributors in the illegal drug trade and will respond to information received from members of the public, particularly if it involves the distribution of these drugs. The Chief Police Officer of the ACT, Commissioner Palmer, and the Chief Magistrate, Mr Cahill, have been reported in the media as warning people about the continued use of heroin. That is a call which, of course, the Government strongly supports; but I suspect that it is a call which will not be heeded by a very large number of addicted users. I do not believe, Mr Speaker, that we can solve the problem of high levels of risk to intravenous drug users purely within the bounds of the ACT. We are dealing, after all, with an illegal trade, and our capacity to control quality or to regulate the way in which that trade occurs in that framework is very limited.

We can, of course, treat people for their addiction if they come forward. We can, of course, take preventive measures in the policing sense to avoid the consequences of people's need to get money to buy heroin. But, at the end of the day, the capacity to control the nature of that drug - that is, the quality of that drug - is very limited indeed. I certainly intend, as does my colleague the Minister for Health, to pursue the question of a national approach towards control or mitigation of the harmful effects of illegal drugs at a national level. I am confident that meetings of both Police Ministers and Health Ministers in the next little while will be addressing those questions, and we will continue to press for a national response to these matters. Commissioner Palmer has also spoken to me about what he believes, as the newly appointed Chief Police Officer, might be possible in the ACT. I believe, and I have indicated to him, that he should by all means attempt to stamp out distribution of these drugs in the ACT if he possibly can. I have indicated also, however, that historical precedents are not very favourable towards that goal being achieved, and, if that continues to be an elusive goal, we must consider other alternatives to reduce the harmful impact on our community.



### **Education - Curriculum Profiles**

**MR KAINE:** Mr Speaker, through you, I direct a question to the Minister for Education and Training, Mr Stefaniak. Minister, the New South Wales Government has apparently decided to stop its work on the implementation of nationally developed curriculum profiles. Do you believe that this is a decision that this Government should follow; and, if not, why not?

**MR STEFANIAK:** No, I do not. The statements in the press attributed to the New South Wales Labor Government suggest that it is playing politics with education. The work that had been done in New South Wales in collaboration with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories focused on better ways of assessing student progress and informing parents. The ACT has played an important part in that process, and this Government plans to build on the valuable work that has taken place already. The ACT has made a solid investment in exploring the usefulness of profiles to report student progress to parents, and discussions are continuing with relevant interest groups to devise a workable program. I expect reporting to parents to begin in 1996 with English literacy and mathematical numeracy - things that concern students and parents very much. The ACT has been at the forefront of developments in this area. We will continue to watch and monitor developments in other States and Territories. In particular, the ACT will continue to participate in the development of the national schools English literacy survey, which will be based on the profiles.

**Mrs Carnell:** I ask that any further questions be placed on the notice paper.

**Mr Wood:** Hang on! He had two.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Wood:** I want another go.

**MR SPEAKER:** You can wait until tomorrow.

**Mr Wood:** No. He set the precedent.

**MR SPEAKER:** The Chief Minister has asked that further questions be placed on the notice paper.

### **Hospital Outpatient Waiting Lists**

**MRS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I would like to give more information in respect of the question that Mr Moore asked in question time. Mr Moore, I have been advised that there are two machines in the radiation oncology unit. During the period from October 1994 until March 1995, the maximum wait on one machine was 2.9 weeks and on the other 4.1 weeks. If there are concerns about an individual case that was outside those limits, I would be very interested to know about it, and I would appreciate it if you would contact my office.

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### **Acton-Kingston Land Swap**

**MR BERRY:** Mr Speaker, during the course of question time, Mrs Carnell referred to consultation with Ministers in relation to the Kingston land swap. Would she please provide or table advice from Ministers in relation to that?

**Mrs Carnell:** Don't be silly.

**MR BERRY:** She replies, "Don't be silly. I will not table the advice from Ministers". That is outrageous.

**MR SPEAKER:** With the indulgence of the Assembly, we might pause to allow the cameras to be withdrawn.

**Ms McRae:** Do you not want a question? We had a question for you.

**MR SPEAKER:** They may be placed on the notice paper.

**Ms McRae:** No; for the cameras.

**MR SPEAKER:** I thank members for their indulgence.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MINISTERS Papers**

**MRS CARNELL** (Chief Minister) (3.19): Mr Speaker, for the information of members, I present the following papers:

Code of Conduct - Ministers, Australian Capital Territory, April 1995.

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act - Determination, dated  
2 May 1995.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the papers.

Throughout the election campaign and since we took government, I have declared our commitment to open and accessible government with full consultation and accountability to the people of the ACT. We have promised, and started to organise, monthly ministerial visits to the community to seek their views and ideas. We have stated that we will examine the ACT's defamation laws to ensure consistency with accountability principles. We believe that the FOI Act should be amended to guarantee more accessible, available and affordable information about the workings of government. We are developing a model for community councils to consult with local residents.

We believe that it can be all too easy for those in high office to avoid the moral responsibility that such office entails. This Government has therefore released a tough new code of conduct for Ministers. The code of conduct requires strict standards of behaviour and recognises the responsibility of Ministers to act honestly, diligently and with propriety in the performance of their duties. It is symbolic of our commitment to the people of the ACT to use the resources of government wisely and honestly and to fulfil our role with integrity and for the good of the Territory.

I have been criticised in the media and by those opposite for not including issues such as sexual harassment in this code. I want to take those criticisms head-on today. The code also does not mention murder, rape, vandalism or robbery, because - like sexual harassment - all of these issues are illegal and therefore unacceptable. Clearly, behaviour that is illegal for the general public is likewise illegal and unacceptable for Ministers. That is the starting point of this code, as outlined very clearly in the preamble.

The real purpose of the code of conduct is to address behaviour that is perfectly legal for members of the public - such as accepting gifts - but may be unacceptable for Ministers because of their special position of trust. It is about setting standards of behaviour in areas that are within the law but where a higher standard is expected from Ministers. I say again, to ensure that there is no confusion, that behaviour that parliaments like this one have determined should be illegal, including sexual harassment, is absolutely unacceptable for Ministers. Our aim in this code of conduct is to set standards well above what is legal or illegal. To that end the code is underpinned by the important principles of accountability, collective responsibility and financial responsibility.

As well, the code provides practical information about such matters as private gain and relationships with the bureaucracy, amongst other things. For example, the code is specific in addressing the circumstances where gifts and benefits to Ministers or members of their immediate families may be retained or must be displayed in a public place. In general, the code of conduct applies to Ministers; but it is also applicable to the immediate families or close relatives of Ministers and ministerial staff employed under the Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act of 1989 - or, as we call it, the LA(MS) Act. It requires Ministers and their immediate families and staff to recognise the special responsibilities of Ministers in the performance of their public functions and duties.

The code also specifically requires that Ministers inform the Chief Minister, or in my case the Cabinet, if they are subject to any sort of inquiry. Ministers' personal staff employed under the LA(MS) Act are covered by the provisions relating to the declaration of interests, as are the immediate families of Ministers. Today I am tabling a determination under the LA(MS) Act to make the code applicable to those staff. Mr Speaker, this code of conduct sets a high standard for this Government and, hopefully, for future governments. It is self-imposed - and, may I add, willingly self-imposed by this Government.

**MS FOLLETT** (Leader of the Opposition) (3.24): In speaking to this motion, Mr Speaker, I will just remind all members that the issue of members' behaviour has been on the Assembly's agenda since the very first days of self-government. I think that it is quite right that this should be so. Most members of this Assembly - and I say "most" advisedly - have been very concerned to ensure that what is the newest of Australian parliaments does actually conduct itself in a way that reflects well on the Territory and that all of the members of the Assembly uphold the dignity of this Assembly and reflect the kind of behaviour that the community is comfortable with. That is a debate that we have had on several occasions. All members will know that they were required to make a statement of their pecuniary and other interests, and that these interests are placed on a register that is a public record of members' interests, where those interests may conflict or may be seen to conflict with their public duty. In fact, that register of pecuniary interests came into being by a resolution of this Assembly on 24 May 1989 - only days after the Assembly sat for the very first time. I would like to remind members of what that resolution said, Mr Speaker. It said:

- (1) within 28 days of the making and subscribing of an oath or affirmation as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory each Member of the Legislative Assembly shall provide to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly a declaration of the private interests of themselves and their immediate family in the form as presented to the Assembly this day and shall notify any alteration of those interests to the Speaker within 28 days of that alteration occurring; and
- (2) such declarations be made available to any person on request, subject to the Member concerned being advised by the Speaker of the name of the person to whom the information is made available and the reasons why it has been requested, in each case.

Mr Speaker, it is my view that the code of conduct for Ministers which Mrs Carnell has now placed before us adds very little to that original requirement. When you take it together with the usual guidelines for Ministers, you will see that it in fact adds nothing. All Mrs Carnell's much vaunted code does is place similar scrutiny on the affairs of ministerial staff. In my view, that is of dubious value. Ministerial staff are not elected to public office, nor do they themselves hold a commission as Ministers. However, it is a matter for the Government to decide whether there could be a perception that staff exert influence over Ministers in the same way as family members might be perceived to do so; so Mrs Carnell has chosen to include those staff in her code. I would like to ask what consultation took place with the affected union on that matter. I am sure that I know what the answer would be - absolutely none. But the important thing, Mr Speaker, is that for Ministers this code adds absolutely nothing to the existing provisions for all Assembly members. It is quite untrue for Mrs Carnell to pretend that it does.

Mr Speaker, some members of the Assembly - those who have been around for a while - might recall that the Assembly had an inquiry into a proposed code of conduct for members some years ago. In fact, the inquiry report was presented in 1991, and I believe that consideration of it lapsed because of the 1992 election. But members who have read that report - and they quite clearly do not include Mrs Carnell, or her advisers - will know that the report makes a number of recommendations regarding a possible code of conduct for all MLAs. One of the recommendations reflects, I believe, a very significant omission from Mrs Carnell's code, and that is the personal behaviour of members. I would like to read out that section of the report. It is section 5, Mr Speaker. It states:

Personal Behaviour of Members:

5. (i) Members shall act in accordance with the requirements of this Code.
- (ii) Members shall be honest in official dealings with colleagues, staff and the general public.
- (iii) Members shall not take advantage of their position to improperly influence other Members or staff in the performance of their duties, in order to gain either directly or indirectly improper advantage for themselves or for any other person or body.
- (iv) Members shall observe the provisions of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986* which prohibit sexism, racism and sexual harassment.

Mr Speaker, it will come as a surprise to Mrs Carnell, but not to many of the rest of us, that that inquiry was actually chaired by a Liberal - surprise, surprise! - expressing somewhat different views from those we hear from the current Chief Minister. I regard that last section of the personal behaviour of members as a very significant omission and one which needs to be rectified. Mr Speaker, I have said previously that it is my intention to introduce a code of ethics for all MLAs, not just for Ministers, which does address this very important area of personal behaviour of members. If Mrs Carnell and her colleagues think that is irrelevant, then I would invite them to vote accordingly; but I do not think they will have the guts.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General) (3.30): Mr Speaker, I must say that I think the very churlish response from those opposite to this matter really reflects very badly on their bona fides in this matter. I note that there seemed to be no concern whatever about a code of conduct in the previous six years of their party's existence in this place, until very recently when - - -

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**Ms Follett:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Mr Humphries is making a totally untrue statement, and I believe that his own code of conduct would rule that out. He knows full well that it was my Government that introduced that statement of pecuniary interests and addressed itself to the code of ethics for members.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** The Assembly did, not your Government.

**Ms Follett:** He is misleading the Assembly.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I might continue, Mr Speaker. The fact is that Ms Follett and her party have shown no interest in matters to do with the personal conduct of members of this Assembly.

**Ms Follett:** Do not tell lies.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Speaker, Ms Follett asked me not to - - -

**Ms Follett:** I withdraw that, Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Thank you. Mr Speaker, the fact of life is that this Opposition has had no interest whatever in this matter, until very recently when they saw the opportunity to jump on a band wagon to take advantage of a particular matter facing a member of this Assembly, to their own limited political advantage. For them to rise in this place as the champions of good conduct and high standards of ministerial propriety, frankly, sits very poorly with the facts in this matter.

The fact of the matter is that Mrs Carnell has tabled in this place a significant extension of the responsibilities which people who hold office in this place must adhere to as Ministers. The great advantage of this particular code, incidentally, is that you can actually see it - unlike the so-called code which Mr Berry referred to on the radio this morning, which he said Ministers in his Government were bound by but which, of course, none of the rest of us have ever actually seen. I challenge Mr Berry - who said that he was keen for things to be tabled, for open government and so on - to actually table this mysterious, un-referred to, anonymous code of conduct which he says governed Ministers in the previous Government. I look forward to his taking up that challenge.

**Mr Berry:** If you put the mascot on the field, you expect him to get done over. Do not send Harold again.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Is that a yes, Mr Berry? I think it is not. Mr Speaker, there are significant advantages in this particular code. First of all, as Ms Follett notes, staff of Ministers are being added to the code. Why is this significant? It needs only a small amount of imagination to conjure up a situation where a very serious conflict of interest could be seen to arise by virtue of a member of a Minister's staff, for example, accepting a gift in an area where the person giving that gift might be seen to exercise some influence over a Minister. I am astonished that Ms Follett cannot see the reason that you would extend a code of conduct to cover such people.

People in those circumstances certainly hold some responsibilities. Those responsibilities are to behave in an appropriate fashion pertaining to their office but also to behave in a fashion which will not give rise to the perception of a conflict of interest in respect of their own Minister. I think it is for that reason that there is every reason why Ministers' staff should be added to the scope that is covered by this code of conduct. Indeed, I understand, Mr Speaker, that members of the staff of Ministers of this Government are more than willing to place themselves under the terms of this code of conduct. Ms Follett made reference to the fact that no consultation with affected unions concerning ministerial staff was made. Indeed, that is true. The reason is very simple. None of the staff affected belong to any affected union. That seems a fairly good reason not to apply the code to them.

Mr Speaker, it is true that this code does not add anything to the conduct of non-Executive members. Ms Follett, if she wishes to, may seek to move something in this place to extend the parameters of this code to those people. I welcome her late-found and recently discovered interest in extending it to other members of the Assembly. Since they very largely fall within her bailiwick as Leader of the Opposition, she might very well like to impose some code on members of her Opposition team. I am sure that when she does so we will all be interested to see what kind of code is applied and how it affects everybody else and would be, I am sure, keen to match the terms of our code with the terms of her code if she wants to table one.

As to what other members of the Assembly might wish to do, it is really a matter for members of the Assembly themselves or for the Assembly as a whole to impose. We should talk at some stage about how - if we wish to - we extend the terms of this code. But the point is, Mr Speaker, that there is a code now in place. It goes considerably further than the mere declaration of members' interests, and that is why we have taken this step to do this. It is a significant step which I hope members, rather than denigrating, will be supporting as a higher benchmark than, as far as I am aware, other parliaments in Australia are able to attain and a higher benchmark which I hope we can attempt to suggest that other parliaments might like to follow and emulate.

**Mr Berry:** Perhaps you need it. Do you have a guilty conscience or something?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Berry interjects that he hopes that we can meet this high standard. Mr Berry's interest obviously is generated by recent events. He and his colleagues have made reference to suppression orders.

**Ms McRae:** Which we are not talking about.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** You have talked about it. You have spoken about interjections in the course of this Assembly, and *Hansard* will show such interjections before this point. I only want to remind members of the Assembly very briefly at this juncture, Mr Speaker, that the legislation whereby such orders are made is legislation that was introduced into this place by the Labor Party. It is legislation that was supported effusively at the time by members of the Assembly. Presumably, when the legislation was tabled, it was intended that everybody affected by it - everybody either making or subject to complaints to the Discrimination Commissioner - might be able to take advantage of its provisions.

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It seems to me a matter of enormous hypocrisy to table and introduce into the law legislation protecting people in those positions and then, at almost the first available opportunity, to want to claw it back because it does not suit the political ends of the party that introduced it when it finds that somebody else was not in that position. I will quote only briefly from an article in the *Canberra Times* last Saturday - I think it is a very good article - referring to this incident:

The ALP is also annoyed the matter is not making headlines and is applying pressure to have the Minister ousted.

These people should stop insulting everyone's intelligence by pretending they serve some noble purpose or are the least bit interested in seeing justice done.

What they want is a media show trial.

That, Mr Speaker, is what everybody in this Territory knows.

**MR MOORE** (3.38): Mr Speaker, I would like to come back to a point raised by Mrs Carnell. She said that she did not need to deal with an issue of sexual harassment because we already know that that is against the law. Mr Speaker, everything that is in this code of conduct for Ministers is an expansion of what is in the law. In fact, the laws are identified within the code of conduct itself. On page 2 it refers to sections 14, 15 and 20 of the Crimes (Offences against the Government) Act 1989. On page 5 it refers to the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act. In fact, the vast majority of what is held in this code of conduct comes back to the self-government Act and paragraph 14(1)(c), which states:

A member vacates office if the member takes or agrees to take, directly or indirectly, any remuneration, allowance, honorarium or reward for services rendered in the Assembly, otherwise than under section 73.

Mr Speaker, all members who have been here any time at all are very conscious of that part of the Act, and I am sure that new members will rapidly become very conscious of it. Obviously, Ministers are more vulnerable under that section of the Act because there are probably more opportunities for them than for other members. Mr Speaker, the point I am trying to make is that the law already covers much of what is in here. This expands upon the law and provides details. Just as one could argue that an expansion on the law mentioned is appropriate, one could also argue that it is appropriate to expand upon the law covering acts of discrimination or harassment, or issues of that kind.

Rather than refer to the accusations that are outstanding before the Human Rights Commission with reference to one of our Ministers, I think it is appropriate for us to move back to a Minister in New South Wales who did break the law in this area - Mr Griffiths, who resigned his position as Minister. If I remember correctly, he also resigned from the parliament, although I am not sure whether that was the case.



**Mr Humphries:** Much later.

**MR MOORE:** Much later. The conduct that he had participated in certainly was illegal. Nevertheless, there was an expansion there. It seems to me that, with this issue hanging over the head of the Chief Minister and Ministers, it would have been appropriate to look at what had happened in New South Wales and expand upon the law in a code of conduct. We could look at a series of other occurrences - for example, what happened with Mr Greiner in New South Wales - and expand upon the law with reference to the conduct involved there. Mr Speaker, I think this is a positive step forward. I think the point that the Leader of the Opposition was trying to make was that there are still some holes in it, and it may well be worth expanding on in order to resolve those specific problems. I welcome the code of conduct for Ministers being open and public but suggest that it ought to be a living document; that it could cover some of those other areas which could well be subject to the sort of situation that we have seen in New South Wales. Mr Speaker, yes, we have legislation in place. We expect members, who of course make laws, to abide by those laws, and more so Ministers. It is appropriate that the code of conduct apply.

However, in my brief reading of the code of conduct, I wonder whether it has gone too far in one respect. According to the definitions, "immediate family" means the Minister's spouse and children. As members become older - and we have older members - their children live an entirely different life from them. On my reading of this, if an obligation on an immediate family member has some impact on the way the Minister carries out their duty, then clearly it is appropriate for immediate family members to be included. But there are, of course, situations where declarations of interests of a member's offspring may be inappropriate. I think that is something that needs to be looked at very carefully to make sure that we are not interfering with the privacy of children. It may well be the case that members' children are opposed to a parent being involved in the political process and may find such a thing invasive. There is a situation there that I think will require some very careful monitoring. But in general terms, Mr Speaker, I must say that I welcome the code of conduct.

**MR KAINÉ (3.43):** It seems to me that the kind of debate that has developed today is indicative of the fact that such a document would generate great interest in the community and elsewhere; and that in itself, to my mind, is a good thing. I think it is important, not only to us who sit in this chamber and those who work for us but to everybody in the community, for the kind of behaviour that the community can expect from those of us who are elected here to be set down somewhere.

Short of criticising this document, I think it is a good document. Perhaps it could go further. Perhaps the code of conduct should apply to every member of this Assembly. In fact, in some of the matters that are mentioned in it I cannot see why the behaviour of a non-Executive member could be any different to the behaviour of an Executive member without coming under some form of criticism. We are all involved in some fashion in the development of legislation and, if any of us have an interest of a very personal kind in the outcomes of that legislation, then we have an obligation to declare it. It does not matter whether you are a member of the Executive or not. It is a question of how far you go.

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Mr Moore makes the point that much of this is already covered by the law. Yes, it is. Much of it is also covered by longstanding convention - for example, the early sections that talk about Cabinet responsibility. These are not matters that are set down in the law anywhere, but they are clearly understood. As a matter of longstanding British Westminster convention, there are standards of behaviour expected of members of an Executive. They have not been set down in a code before. I think it is interesting that this Government has chosen to pull all that together and put it into a document so that there is no doubt in the minds of the members of this Assembly and our staffers or anybody out there who cares to read it that there are some standards of behaviour that this Government believes in and intends to put into practice. How could anybody say that that is a bad thing? The document itself is informative, and it sets down reasonable standards of behaviour.

I accept that it could perhaps go further. If members of the Assembly believe that it should, if they believe that there are other aspects of human behaviour that should be in it but have been omitted, it is up to them to put forward to the Government a proposal that new information be included in it. People may believe that it should be extended to people other than those to whom it specifically relates now. It is the responsibility of every one of us to say to the Government, "We think that the document should go further. It should be revised and it should be added to". I, for one, could be quite happy to consider this document carefully. If I believe that it is lacking in any respect, believe me, I will be putting it to the Chief Minister that additional information, additional provisions, should go in there. I would expect that every member sitting in this Assembly would do the same. Mr Speaker, I believe that it is a worthy document. I believe that it is a worthwhile document. Rather than criticise it, I think that we should be looking at it constructively.

**MRS CARNELL** (Chief Minister) (3.48), in reply: Mr Speaker, just to conclude the debate and to respond to Mr Moore: Yes, this is a living document. Yes, it is a document that was put together in a fairly brief period of time after we took office because we believed that there needed to be a first step in this area. We are in no way suggesting that this document is set in stone forever. But in five weeks we put in writing something that was certainly a step ahead of what we had in the past, put on paper something that this Assembly could work with and add to. We would be very happy to have input to this document from any member of this Assembly. We would also be very interested if it were felt, as the previous Chief Minister has said, that this document could be expanded or could be used for every member of this Assembly. If Ms Follett is going to bring forward a code of conduct for all members of the Assembly, we would be very supportive of that - unlike, it seems, their approach to this document.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**TOBACCO ACT**  
**Papers and Ministerial Statement**

**MRS CARNELL** (Chief Minister and Minister for Health and Community Care): Mr Speaker, I present, pursuant to section 6 of the Subordinate Laws Act 1989, determination No. 29 of 1995, including the explanatory statement, which is an exemption made under the Tobacco Act and gazetted in *Gazette* No. S79, dated 10 April 1995. I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

**MRS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I wish to make a brief statement regarding the exemption under the Tobacco Act 1927 which I have tabled in the Assembly today. The exemption concerns tobacco sponsorship and advertising in relation to the Canberra Raiders matches played at Bruce Stadium in the Winfield Cup competition during 1995.

The exemption is a disallowable instrument. Due to the timing of the receipt of the application, it has not been possible to allow 15 sitting days before the commencement of the event to which the exemption refers. The application was received on 7 April 1995, and the granting of the exemption was notified in the *Gazette* on 10 April 1995. I understand that the lateness of the application was due to its not having been directed to the appropriate office prior to the recent ACT Government election. I have agreed to provide the exemption in view of the conditions which relate to the continuation of the previously agreed non-smoking signage and the limiting of brand name tobacco advertising during matches.

Mr Speaker, the encouragement of a healthy, smoke-free lifestyle for the young people of this community is of prime importance to everyone in this Assembly, and I think that has been proven. In this regard, the phasing out of tobacco sponsorship of sport under Commonwealth legislation should be seen as a very positive step. I bring this matter to the Assembly's attention in the hope that full cooperation and support will be given to allow Raiders matches to proceed subject to the stated conditions for this year.

**MR CONNOLLY:** Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

**MR CONNOLLY:** The Opposition's understanding is that this is an exemption in similar or indeed identical terms to the exemptions that have been granted in the past, and on that basis we would support it. I will not be making the sort of political capital that was made by the then Leader of the Opposition when we granted an exemption to a cricket match, when we were accused of all sorts of hypocrisy for granting an exemption.

**Mrs Carnell:** No, I did not. I did not ever say one word.

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**MR CONNOLLY:** At one point you said, "If you are serious about anti-smoking, go ahead and ban the cricket". We will not be playing those political games, but I would sound a note of caution to Mrs Carnell. She having quite properly granted an exemption in identical terms to the forms of exemption that we granted, I am sure that there will be a try-on for an extension. When we granted that exemption for the Prime Minister's XI game last year, for which we were criticised and about which some cheap political capital was made, there was also an attempt to get an exemption for the England versus ACT game to allow B and H advertising at that game.

We were told that all sorts of dire consequences would flow if we did not allow the tobacco sponsorship, and I was prevailed upon by all sorts of people from the sporting world saying, "We want the cricket to go ahead. You must allow tobacco to be advertised". The Government stood firm. We wrote back and said, "We want the cricket to go ahead too. We want the ACT team to get a chance to play England. If you as the Australian Cricket Board really want to see our young players play a visiting team, you should allow the game to go ahead without tobacco advertising". Indeed, the Cricket Board, in what we believe was an unprecedented action, backed down.

I would urge Mrs Carnell, having done something that we would accept was the right thing in this case, to take a tough line if she is pressed, as I am sure she will be pressed, to grant further and greater exemptions. The Chief Minister can rest assured that the Opposition will support the status quo, but if there is any attempt to weaken that we will be onto you very rapidly.

**Ms McRae:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I wonder whether we might have the exemption as well as the tabling speech from Mrs Carnell. Is it normal for that to be given with the tabling speech?

**Mrs Carnell:** I thought there was a gazette with it.

**Ms McRae:** It is in the gazette? Is it not normally passed around? That is what I am asking, as a point of clarification.

**Ms Follett:** If I may speak to the point of order, Mr Speaker, it certainly has been the practice in the past, even where matters were gazetted - for instance, the quarterly financial report - for those matters to be tabled in the Assembly. It might be helpful, particularly as we have so many new members, if that were to be the case with these sorts of exemptions.

**Mr Humphries:** Mr Speaker, it is certainly the intention of the Government to table the determination as well. If there are not copies available for circulation, I apologise for that oversight; but certainly it would be our intention that it be available. If it is not available now, we will make sure that it is supplied to members at the first available opportunity.

**SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION AND COMMENCEMENT PROVISIONS**  
**Papers and Ministerial Statement**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, pursuant to section 6 of the Subordinate Laws Act 1989, I present subordinate legislation in accordance with the schedule of gazettal notices for determinations, Supreme Court Rules and regulations. I also present a note of commencement for the listed sections of the Magistrates Court (Enforcement of Judgments) Act.

*The schedule read as follows:*

Health Act - Determination of Fees and Charges - No. 28 of 1995 (S78, dated 10 April 1995).

Liquor Act - Liquor Regulations (Amendment) - No. 10 of 1995 (S61, dated 17 March 1995).

Magistrates Court (Enforcement of Judgments) Act - Notice of commencement (10 April 1995) of sections 3 to 97 (inclusive) (S75, dated 5 April 1995).

Magistrates Court (Enforcement of Judgments) Act and Magistrates Court (Civil Jurisdiction) Act - Approval of Forms relating to the enforcement of judgments - Determination No. 27 of 1995 (S76, dated 5 April 1995).

Public Place Names Act - Determination No. 26 of 1995 (S64, dated 21 March 1995).

Supreme Court Act -

Supreme Court Rules (Amendment) - No. 11 of 1995 (S73, dated 29 March 1995).

Supreme Court Rules (Amendment) - No. 12 of 1995 (S74, dated 29 March 1995).

Supreme Court Rules (Amendment) - No. 13 of 1995 (S72, dated 5 April 1995).

I seek leave to make a short statement in connection with the Liquor Regulations (Amendment).

Leave granted.

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**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Speaker, this relates to a regulation amended under the Liquor Act in relation to the event that occurred on 19 March - the Food, Wine and All That Jazz event at the Canberra Festival. I should say that this being tabled today, with the capacity for disallowance, is of no meaning, given that the event has already been held. It would normally not be the wish of the Government to do this in such a way that the Assembly has no power to override those sorts of regulations. This occurred because there was no capacity for an incoming government to sit before that exemption had to be granted. In future, we hope to be able to give the Assembly more notice, so that there is not the need for this to be done ex post facto, if at all.

## **GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITIES AND AUTUMN LEGISLATION PROGRAM Ministerial Statement and Papers**

**MRS CARNELL** (Chief Minister): I ask for leave of the Assembly to make a ministerial statement on the Government's priorities for Canberra and the legislative program for the autumn sittings.

Leave granted.

**MRS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, the dust has finally settled on the ACT election and it is time for the new Government to outline its direction. The next three years, more than any other period since self-government, are crucial to the future of Canberra. There are fundamental problems that must be faced now and opportunities that must be grasped today if we are to retain the enviable quality of life that others outside the ACT often decry. The inertia of the past is gone. We must go forward or be left behind by the rest of Australia.

On 18 February, Canberrans set the direction they believed their city and their government should take on the basis of the policies that were put before them. The message was as simple as it was unequivocal: What was wanted was a government that put the management of Canberra ahead of ideology. We will deliver that government, but it will not be easy and it will require openness and decisiveness.

**Mr Berry:** Council style?

**MRS CARNELL:** Yes. Hard decisions that should have been taken over the last six years will have to be taken now. I do not apologise for the tough talking that characterises my remarks today. The Government went to this election with a commitment to addressing fundamental problems in areas such as health and public transport. This approach has translated into a mandate to reform the management of our city and to ensure that those who need help the most actually receive it. This Government, unlike those before it, will be characterised by energy and by a will to get the job done. In just seven weeks we have acted decisively in negotiations with VMOs, in resolving the future use of Acton Peninsula and the Kingston foreshore, and in taking emergency steps to bring expenditure and staffing levels under control.

I say again: We intend to put the management of Canberra before party politics and foster a less adversarial and more cooperative approach to the task ahead. Our commitment is most evident in our proposal to reform the style of government, our administrative arrangements and the operation of this Assembly. We are currently moving to establish an apolitical task force to examine and recommend possible changes and improvements to our system of government. This task force will comprise prominent Canberrans and Australians, whose charter will be to consult widely about how our mix of State and local government functions can be better managed.

This commitment to reform will be complemented by the development of a sound economic management strategy. It is simply a fact of life that we cannot continue to provide services at a cost that is higher than the standard assessed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. For the first time, an ACT government will take a strategic approach to managing the Territory's transition to State-like funding. We will bring down not a 12-month but a three-year budget strategy in September. The reforms that are required are significant and there will need to be a major restructuring, but this cannot realistically be achieved in just one year. A three-year strategy gives greater certainty to managers to be able to plan the production of their goods and services and to introduce wide-ranging efficiencies.

As members will be aware, I have decided to delay the budget from June until September this year. The decision was not taken lightly, but it has been made as a result of the difficult financial position we have inherited. Advice from Treasury is that, if current policies were continued, an accumulated budget deficit of \$275m would occur over the next four years. The problem is compounded by the ACT's budget performance in 1994-95. Revenue is down by as much as \$15m; additional expenditure requests by agencies amount to \$31m. There is only \$12m, as Ms Follett knows, in the Treasurer's Advance. General purpose funding to the ACT has been reduced by 12.3 per cent from 1994-95. Put simply, that is a reduction in Commonwealth funding for every ACT resident - that is, for each person - of \$133 in just one year.

Mr Speaker, the ad hoc approach to budgeting of the last three years must stop, as must the salami-slice technique, the across-the-board cuts that Ms Follett used. To have continued with a June budget would have been short-sighted and, indeed, it would not have reflected our commitments for responsible financial management and for appropriate consultation. The additional three months will be a very short period but will allow us to develop a strong budget strategy which sets real and achievable targets. In just seven weeks we have already begun to put in place steps that will need to be taken to alter fundamentally the way the ACT manages its business and its finances, and this is just the beginning.

There will be a rigorous examination of administrative expenditure in the lead-up to the September budget. The freeze on numbers of SES and senior officer positions is the first plank in a comprehensive staffing management policy. A key element to reform will be our commitment to manage on a full accrual basis by 1 July 1996, so that agencies and line managers will know the cost of goods and services they are producing - something that, stunningly, they do not know. We will examine a range of options, including contracting out and contestability in the marketplace for some services, the message being that taxpayers' dollars must be spent wisely. We will move to corporatise

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ACTEW, ACTION and ACTTAB to ensure that they remain efficient and competitive with similar entities in other States. Mr Speaker, I make this commitment today: Corporatisation is not - I stress not - the first step to privatisation. Equally, it will encourage those enterprises to focus more clearly on meeting the needs of their customers who, after all, are the real shareholders of these enterprises.

Good government is founded on good and strong partnerships - partnerships between the public sector, the business sector and, of course, the community. This Government will face up to the challenges of improving efficiency and effectiveness in a rapidly changing management environment by increasing the flexibility of employment and management frameworks in the public sector; and by taking the opportunity, through the new round of enterprise bargaining arrangements due at the end of 1995, to negotiate agreements that will achieve real productivity improvements in return for pay increases - something the previous Government failed to do. We will also keep pace with changes the information superhighway will bring to the way we live and the way we go about our business. This is essential to the way the ACT works.

This Government will not resile from its responsibility to set directions for the ACT economy. We intend to provide a climate of support and expansion, one which allows sustained economic development. The formation of the Business, Employment and Tourism Bureau was the first step that had to be taken if the ACT was to look to the future of economic reform. In the September budget I will be announcing further initiatives in this area to make government business enterprises even more competitive. Through cooperative marketing with the business sector we will promote Canberra region businesses and investment opportunities in national and international markets.

This Government strongly supports the recently released 10-year tourism strategy - something that was initiated by the previous Government. This strategy provides the framework from which the public and private sectors can base their investment decisions and plan for the future growth of tourism in the Canberra region. It is wonderful to see a 10-year strategy at least in draft form. Sports-related tourism is predicted to increase faster than any other sector over the next three years as a result of the activities leading up to the 2000 Games and, in particular, the staging of the 1997 Masters Games in Canberra - an initiative of Mr Lamont's.

The 2000 Games provides Canberra with an unprecedented opportunity to develop its sports and related industries. As the national capital and centre of elite sport, Canberra is in an ideal position to market itself both nationally and internationally in conjunction with the 2000 Games to take advantage of the interest in Australian sport in the lead-up to the Games. Our approach to this will be aggressive. You simply cannot sit back and hope for it to happen. Because of our proximity to Sydney, we will clearly be far better placed than any other State capital to obtain significant spin-offs from the Sydney Games, and, to allow sporting organisations to better plan for the future, three-year grant funding will be introduced by 1996.

A climate that encourages business expansion will also promote the employment opportunities Canberra so badly needs. Incidentally, it was interesting to see in recent Treasury documents that there has been a downgrading - in fact, a halving - of the projected employment opportunities for the ACT in future years under past policies.



In keeping with this approach, we have acted decisively to unlock land on Acton Peninsula and on the Kingston foreshore. We have already taken the first steps towards what will be the biggest project undertaken in Canberra since the construction of the new Parliament House. We are fast-tracking a new Kingston Foreshore Authority comprising representatives from the ACT Government, the NCPA, unions and the private sector. This will be a real shot in the arm for Canberra's economy and will give our city an exciting venue of which we will all be proud. But this is something that belongs to Canberra; it is not something just of this Government.

Our partnership with the wider Canberra community will be central to our success in this project, but also to our success as an open government. We have already embarked on strategies to ensure that we have a meaningful dialogue with the community. Each Minister, not just me, will be involved in a regular program of visits to community facilities. This kind of informal consultation can sometimes provide a much better forum for people to make their ideas and concerns known. The role of community councils will also be formalised and expanded to enable them to consult widely with their local residents and to act as a community resource and information centre.

Nowhere is the need for reform more clearly identified than in our health system. In my first statement to this Assembly I said that one of our first priorities will be to address the problems of our public hospital system. Today there is a new structure and a plan of attack, and I stress the words "plan of attack". It is simply not good enough to sit back and hope that something will happen, because it will not. We have established the new Department of Health and Community Care with responsibility for health, ageing and disability services. This will ensure that service delivery is more focused and that we can develop a greater emphasis on continuity of care, particularly in community health.

It is no secret that over the last six years we have spent more and more of our health resources and services without the necessary gains. We have spent more money and we have got less. Health expenditure in total and hospital services in particular are well above the level assessed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The Andersen report concluded that Woden Valley Hospital's total operating costs exceed a representative group of New South Wales and Victorian teaching hospitals by \$26.5m per year for equivalent services. I believe that if people in the ACT were getting a better service they might be willing to pay, but the Andersen report indicates that that simply is not the case. In part, this is a consequence of past Commonwealth and ACT government policies, but we simply cannot continue to operate our health system at above average levels of cost.

If we are to get on top of health costs in the ACT we will have to make some tough decisions. This process has already begun with negotiations aimed at resolving the visiting medical officers dispute. The new agreements, once signed, are expected to save more than \$2m and will achieve significant efficiencies. These efficiencies will also have to be found right across the hospital system if we are to open more surgical beds, reduce waiting lists for surgery and reduce the time people have to wait in our emergency departments. We simply cannot sit back and hope that something happens.

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To meet this challenge we will be innovative in developing and implementing strategies to increase efficiency. Two such measures are under way at Calvary Hospital. Calvary Private Hospital, in conjunction with a group of local general practitioners, will establish an after-hours clinic within the hospital precinct within the next few months - a good cooperative approach and something that I understand Mr Connolly supported.

**Mr Connolly:** Yes, we were working on it.

**MRS CARNELL:** And I totally accept that. The hospital will also be looking to establish a specialist centre. These two services will significantly enhance the services to residents of North Canberra. Prior to coming to office, I promised to aim for a reduction in waiting lists for elective surgery in ACT public hospitals of 20 per cent or 900 people by the end of our first term. That is 300 people a year. Already I have asked the department to develop a program that will provide for at least 1,000 additional admissions in 1995-96. These admissions will be targeted towards people who have been waiting for surgery for unacceptably long periods. The program will involve the better management of existing public hospital beds but also the opening of additional beds. This will be outlined in more detail in the budget.

We can also say that an adolescent ward at Woden Valley Hospital will become a reality - something that, again, I know Mr Connolly supports. The adolescent ward will link with community-based support services for young people and, in doing so, bring a new dimension to the provision of health care for adolescents in the ACT. The Government will also establish a cardio-thoracic unit at Woden Valley Hospital. The new unit will serve both the ACT community and surrounding regions of New South Wales. It is anticipated that the unit will become operational by late next year. We will also concentrate on the forgotten areas of mental health and services for people with disabilities. Improving outcomes for patients and their carers will probably be one of the hardest tasks to be faced, and we will be very keen to involve all Assembly members in this very important area. I think it is an area in which the Social Policy Committee, particularly, can become very much involved.

Mr Speaker, the Government will honour its commitment to maintain education spending in real terms for the next three years. As well, we have established the Children's and Youth Services Bureau, which will improve the coordination of service delivery to children, young people and their families. Mr Stefaniak will be addressing the Assembly later on this initiative.

Crime prevention and safety is another important issue that affects many Canberrans and certainly will be addressed under this Government. People in our community must be able to live in expectation of enjoying a relatively safe and crime-free environment. For the Government, the challenge is to ensure that our laws are adequate, that our policing services respond adequately to crime and safety issues, and that our corrective services ensure that the community is protected. An important first step, following discussions and agreement with the Attorney-General, has been the decision of

the Australian Federal Police Commissioner to take on direct responsibility as the ACT Chief Police Officer, as an interim measure. Also, police and licensing authorities have been asked to develop a coordinated strategy for tackling alcohol and community safety problems, which have caused so much concern in our community of recent days.

As I noted at the outset, reform of our public transport system will be achieved over the term of this Government, because it simply must be. We will deliver a public transport reform package that brings a competitive public transport industry to the ACT, in line with recommendations of the Hilmer report and agreements forged at COAG. In 1995-96 we will set in place a structure to enable ACTION to be corporatised from 1 July 1996. As a first step, the policy and regulatory role in relation to public transport will be separately established within the Department of Urban Services and a purchaser-provider relationship established with ACTION. A further substantial reduction will be made to the government subsidy to ACTION in 1995-96. The aim is to put ACTION at the leading edge of public transport authorities and place it in a competitive position with the private sector. We want ACTION to win tenders when finally tenders are put out to the private sector and, of course, to ACTION. We can give this guarantee: There will be no reduction in the level of services to Canberra's commuters.

We do not intend that transport initiatives will stop there. We will be working to improve the Canberra region's local and international transport links. We will do this in the short term by encouraging regular international charter flights into Canberra. Down the track, we will examine the feasibility of entering into a joint venture or consortium with the private sector to upgrade the Canberra Airport to international standards. Of course, we remain 100 per cent committed to the very fast train link between Canberra and Sydney - something that would make all the difference to Canberra and the region, particularly with regard to the Olympic Games.

Urban management is an area where this Government has already acted decisively. One of our first actions was to integrate City Parks into the City Services administration. This will provide a framework to improve the effectiveness of our urban services in a more integrated and efficient manner, particularly when considering priorities and service standards at the local area level. We will build on the precinct management approach to ensure direct community participation in all of these decisions. We will examine all our urban services to ensure that our service standards and costs can be compared in a competitive fashion with the best in the country. We do not want to be just as good as anyone else; we believe that we can be the best.

Waste management is already delivered through the tender system, and it is now time to meet the national agreement to halve the amount of waste going to landfill by the year 2000. We will expedite the ACT waste management strategy. More cost-effective services will be introduced in areas such as registration, licensing, and traffic regulation, while the introduction of accrual accounting will put the spotlight on the long-term structural problems associated with the maintenance of our urban infrastructure.

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We will be looking at a long-term plan for the maintenance and expansion of our \$3.4 billion road asset and must, for the first time, register \$1.2 billion of stormwater assets. We will ensure that the community not only has an improved library system but also has access to a full range of community information services. I believe that this is one of the exciting opportunities for this Government and for this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, this Government also has an exciting cultural vision for Canberra. The recent agreement with the Commonwealth allows us to move to develop a world-class arts and cultural precinct for the Kingston foreshore. It is also worth noting that in 1996 the Canberra Institute of Technology will establish courses to serve the contemporary music and arts and craft industries.

**Mr Wood:** Yes, good stuff. Who organised that?

**MRS CARNELL:** You did, and we totally agree with that. Regional cultural planning will be a priority and we will look to develop, in partnership with the private sector, our cultural precincts across the city. In particular, the area of Civic that incorporates Civic Square, Ainslie Avenue and the City Walk down to Garema Place, offers an enormous opportunity to create a much more vibrant city centre - something that Mr Wood also supported. Let us make it happen in this Assembly, Mr Wood.

Another significant feature of our agenda will be effective environment protection. The ACT will continue to be an active and vocal participant in cooperative efforts with other governments in areas such as ozone protection, the adoption of national standards, and the management of natural resources.

**Mr Moore:** What about noise pollution?

**MRS CARNELL:** Yes, there is some; most of it comes from over there. As an example of this commitment, plans are now being drawn up to offer compost bins at cost price to those Canberra households that request them. This is one component of a whole-of-government approach to waste management which will be introduced over the next three years.

Mr Speaker, there will be significant reforms in the next three years in the management of ACT planning. The Government has taken on board the major findings of the Lansdown report - again, something that was instituted by Mr Wood. We will ensure that dual occupancies are not permitted in new areas for five years; that multi-unit developments in established areas are designed to reflect the existing street character and be consistent with surrounding developments; and that planning is carried out in full consultation with local communities. We will soon be moving to conduct an inquiry into the ACT's rating and land valuation system once the terms of reference can be finalised, and that is very close. The inquiry will establish once and for all the basis of a system that is fair and predictable.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I table a copy of the legislative program for this sitting. It is a credible and achievable legislative program. Members will be aware that the 1995 autumn sitting period is relatively short due to the effect of the ACT election. Nevertheless, in coming months the Government will be bringing forward a series of important legislative initiatives that are part of the strategies I have outlined today. Members will note that further Bills are likely to be added to the program in the course of this sitting period. I would like to point out that this Government intends to be remembered not for the amount of legislation it introduces but for the amount of legislation we can get rid of over the life of this Government. We do not believe that this Assembly's time should be taken up by legislation or regulations that are simply unnecessary. We have already put in place mechanisms by which this can be achieved. Mr Speaker, over the next three years, my colleagues and I will do everything we can to bring a new style of city government to the ACT - a style that reflects what Canberrans want and what they should have from their Assembly. I table a copy of this statement, and I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the papers.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Follett**) adjourned.

## **GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT POLICIES** **Ministerial Statement**

**MR DE DOMENICO** (Minister for Urban Services and Minister for Business, Employment and Tourism): Mr Speaker, I ask for leave of the Assembly to make a ministerial statement on the Government's business development policies.

Leave granted.

**MR DE DOMENICO:** Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to present a ministerial statement to you today for the first time as Minister for Business, Employment and Tourism. I am particularly pleased because this portfolio is a very important one for the future wellbeing of the ACT community. Today I wish to set out the ACT Government's vision for business and industry and the new administrative structure that we have created to help achieve this vision.

The Liberal Government recognises that Australia's economic environment is changing. The ACT must now compete aggressively with other States for new business markets and create new jobs for Canberrans, particularly for young people. We must create a competitive business environment within Canberra. Our job is made the more difficult by the fact that we need to compensate for the steadily reducing role that the public sector will play in the ACT's future growth. This means that we have to stimulate growth and diversification in export earning activities. Mr Speaker, the initiatives that I will outline today are part of a comprehensive and coherent program that the Liberal Government will be putting into place over the coming months. It is squarely aimed at actively fostering a strong and vibrant economy in the Canberra region, and generating employment, investment and income through developing and marketing our industry potential.

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A central element that underlies the Government's strategy is our determination to build a partnership between the public sector, business and the community that is fundamental to sustained economic development, while at the same time maintaining Canberra's high-quality environment. There are, of course, reciprocal obligations on both the business community and the Government. To grow, businesses must have innovative leadership that is able to respond to changes in the marketplace and continually seek new opportunities. They must be willing to work with government to cooperatively develop our industry base. Governments have a role in setting the broad economic direction and providing a competitive environment. Governments must aid, not hinder, business growth.

As part of our aim to improve the relationship with the private sector, we moved quickly to implement one of our important election promises and established the Business, Employment and Tourism Bureau. What we promise, we deliver. The bureau incorporates the previous Economic Development Division, including Canberra Tourism. The bureau has prime responsibility for working with the private sector to better promote and encourage business and tourism development. It has responsibility for a number of the Government's key business activities, such as ACTTAB, EPIC, Totalcare and the Milk Authority. It is also responsible for the Government's involvement in joint venture land development. These new arrangements enable a more effective and efficient implementation of government policies without increasing the number of senior executives. Like functions have been grouped and duplication has been eliminated. There will be a changed focus within the bureau, with a proactive approach to working in partnership with business.

In addition to the new structure, Mr Speaker, we also recognise that the forms of assistance to business need to be expanded. We have already started to implement key initiatives from our election policy to establish a climate that encourages business expansion. You have already heard the Chief Minister outline the actions we have taken to establish a systematic review by agencies of all legislation and regulations. Today I will outline a comprehensive three-pronged approach to reviewing business regulation.

Under the national competition policy agreement that the ACT recently became a signatory to, we have an obligation to undertake a comprehensive review of all legislation and regulations in order to eliminate any that unjustifiably hinder competition. The ACT Liberal Government not only welcomes this approach but has extended it to a systematic examination of all legislation and regulations that might impose unnecessary burdens on business. The Government will require agencies to develop a timetable to review all legislation and regulations impacting on business. This review will be undertaken progressively, but well ahead of the year 2000 deadline agreed by COAG. We will ensure that those regulations which are of greatest concern to business get reviewed at an early stage.

Another one of our election commitments that we have moved to introduce immediately, Mr Speaker, is the requirement that all new regulatory proposals affecting business and industry be subject to a business impact statement. The business impact statement will also be used in the systematic review of existing legislation and regulations so that a uniform approach is adopted. We will be putting the heat on government agencies to justify all existing and future regulations.

Mr Speaker, I am also happy to announce the establishment today of a Task Force on Red Tape and Excessive Regulation, to be headed by Ms Elizabeth Whitelaw. Ms Whitelaw is the partner in charge of the commercial and property division of the law firm Sly and Weigall. She will bring to the task force considerable experience, gained not only from her legal practice but also from her participation in Canberra's professional business and government advisory bodies. I have asked the task force to make recommendations to the Government on the areas requiring review which appear to impose significant unnecessary burdens, cost or disadvantage to business. The task force will be asked to report by October this year so that it can provide advice on the priority areas that will need to be examined by agencies as part of their systematic reviews. There will, of course, be an obligation on the business community to present a solid case and demonstrate how and why they are being unnecessarily restricted by government processes and excessive regulations. In return, government agencies will be obliged to review and streamline their procedures.

Mr Speaker, we will also be examining, in conjunction with a review of the business licence information system, BLIS, the feasibility of introducing a master licence for particular businesses and industry groups. We are also moving to make the burden of changes less onerous on industry. For some time now the Construction Industry Long Service Leave Board has been running a considerable surplus accumulated from the long service leave levy that employers pay. I have instructed that the levy be reduced from 1.5 per cent to one per cent as from 1 July this year. This will be of considerable benefit to the building and construction industry and is a tangible example of the positive steps that we are going to be making to reduce unnecessary burdens on industry.

Turning to industrial relations, you are aware that recent changes to the Commonwealth industrial relations law have created a system of enterprise bargaining. The intent is to enable individual enterprises to come to agreements which reflect their own local circumstances. The present arrangements are certainly not user friendly and bargains struck have generally been add-ons to awards instead of creative new approaches to work arrangements. While these are Federal laws that the ACT Government does not control, I can nevertheless assure you that I will take every opportunity to raise these issues with my Federal counterpart, the Hon. Laurie Brereton. I will impress upon him the need for more reforms of the Commonwealth's legal framework, including the removal of union monopoly rights to be bargaining agents for workers. Employers and their workers must be given the opportunity to come to mutually acceptable workplace arrangements. Mr Speaker, the Liberal Government believes that a facilitative industrial environment is integral to business growth, and we will pursue such an environment vigorously. I will be using the Instant Office Furniture success story as an example for other businesses in the Canberra region who wish to move down the enterprise bargaining track.

Mr Speaker, the Government is committed to bringing workers compensation arrangements into line with those in New South Wales because we believe that ACT businesses should not be competitively disadvantaged in comparison to those operating across the border. Officers of the Business, Employment and Tourism Bureau have begun preliminary discussions with officers of New South Wales Workcover to explore the possibilities of harmonising workers compensation arrangements between the

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two jurisdictions. We will, of course, be mindful of the review under way at a national level which aims to promote greater uniformity between workers compensation systems. The Government will not be finalising its position on changes to the Workers Compensation Act without a wide-ranging consultation process.

Mr Speaker, as you have already heard the Chief Minister say, we are committed to an injection of significant funds this year into developing and marketing the Territory's tourism and business potential. We will use part of this money to develop an expanded assistance package which is designed both to help local firms expand and to attract new business. We will also provide targeted assistance to those industries that have a great potential in terms of expanding our export base. One of these is the advanced technology sector. By way of example, I recently announced a grant to CAMBIA. CAMBIA is a small research organisation which has the potential to make the ACT a world leader in agricultural molecular biology and to create employment and specialist skills. I have also provided support to local companies, Willing Partners and Hydysys, to move into the Asian market in environmental and water resources management.

In the same vein, Mr Speaker, last month I announced that a consortium has been formed to prepare an application for Commonwealth funding to establish a Cooperative Multimedia Centre in the ACT. The ACT multimedia industry is characterised by independent but highly innovative companies and pockets of significant expertise within academic and national institutions. As a demonstration of this, a number of the local multimedia title producers have won national awards for the excellence of their products in direct competition with other Australian producers. The ACT Government will support such leadership and innovation and lift the profile of Canberra's many benefits for business in national and international markets. Part of the funds we are committing will be used to further assist the marketing efforts of strategic Canberra businesses and aggressively market Canberra as an attractive business destination. Mr Speaker, as an example I can announce today that the Business, Employment and Tourism Bureau will be jointly sponsoring, with the Capital Property Group and Lend Lease, a major feature in the Building Owners and Managers Association magazine in August. The feature will promote Canberra as a business and investment destination, with particular focus on the strengths of the Canberra property market.

Turning now to other industries, the Liberal Government believes that the development of tourism is one of the cornerstones of the ACT's future and is one of the most important elements in achieving the continued growth of the national capital. As you have heard, plans for the redevelopment of the Kingston foreshore are already under way. It will create a significant increase in employment, provide opportunities for businesses in the region, and put dollars into the regional economy. It has the undoubted potential to attract an increased number of visitors to Canberra. We will also be looking to develop and implement a strategic plan to revitalise our city centre, including enhancing its tourism potential. The funds will also be used to ensure that highly targeted marketing and promotion of the ACT as a tourist destination, as well as a major conference and convention destination, is increased. There will also be an increased focus to maximise the benefits to Canberra of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Our attributes as a sporting capital will need to be heavily promoted. We will use such opportunities to strengthen and assist the industry to achieve a greater share of Australia's tourism growth.



Mr Speaker, last week I released the draft ACT tourism development strategy prepared after extensive consultation with the local and regional tourism industry. I must say that it is a strategy that was commenced by the previous Labor Government, and we applaud them for that. The strategy envisages that, by implementing policies which directly target potential growth markets and facilitate local product development, tourism has the potential to support 20,000 jobs and inject \$1 billion into the economy by the year 2004. I am now seeking further industry and community input into the finalisation of the strategy, and I welcome any injection into that that the Opposition might have.

Mr Speaker, today I have only touched upon some of the plans that the Liberal Government has for stimulating economic growth. I am sure that members of the Assembly will agree that we have a promising future in Canberra. We need to capture the expertise and the opportunities which are presented to us to grow Canberra business. This has to be a joint effort by business and government. We will provide the right climate and support, but it is business which must actually deliver the jobs and investment. I can now say that, under the Liberal Government, Canberra is open for business. I intend to keep the Assembly informed of our successful achievements. Mr Speaker, might I finish my statement by saying that in seven weeks, since the Carnell Government took office, I think we have given more positive signs to the business community than anybody else has over the past six years. As I said before, the summary is that Canberra is open for business; it is open for good business, clean and environmentally friendly business. Mr Speaker, I table a copy of this statement, and I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

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

## **POLICING ARRANGEMENTS** **Ministerial Statement**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General and Minister for Police): Mr Speaker, I ask for leave of the Assembly to make a ministerial statement on policing arrangements in the Australian Capital Territory.

Leave granted.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I thank members. Mr Speaker, members will be aware that new interim arrangements have come into effect for the management of police services in the ACT. These arrangements are a consequence of the recent retirement of the Chief Police Officer, Assistant Commissioner Peter Dawson. AFP Commissioner Mick Palmer has now assumed the responsibilities of this office of Chief Police Officer and he is being assisted in the day-to-day management of the ACT police region by Deputy Commissioner Jim Allen. These arrangements were put in place by Commissioner Palmer after consultation with me and the Commonwealth Minister for Justice, the Hon. Duncan Kerr, MP. The arrangements will apply on an interim basis so that the ACT and Commonwealth governments are able to consider the findings and recommendations of stage 2 of the review of ACT police services before any permanent management arrangements are put in place.

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Members will also be aware that the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs is conducting an inquiry into future policing arrangements for the ACT. I assume that we will hear about that later this afternoon. The outcome of that inquiry, and in particular its focus on accountability arrangements, including the possible creation of a statutory office of Commissioner of Police for the ACT, will be important in determining future senior staffing arrangements in the AFP ACT region.

The new arrangements will enable Commissioner Palmer to have a more direct personal involvement in both of these reviews and ensure that the focus on the ACT's priorities for community policing is consistent with the AFP's overall goals and objectives. It is also important, as we move towards the end of the decade, that policing arrangements recognise the increasing number of interstate and international visitors to the ACT. There is a need to ensure that the interests of the ACT community and of the Commonwealth and the national capital are protected. ACT policing is at an important crossroads and the interim arrangements will ensure that much of the work which is being done to enhance police services in the ACT will continue. The arrangements will also provide for a high level of policy input into deliberations on the future of ACT policing.

As Police Minister, I welcome Commissioner Palmer's direct involvement in ACT policing. I know from discussions I have had with him that he shares the Government's belief that there is a need to increase police presence on our streets and to foster a close relationship with the community. We are all committed to a high standard of police service in the ACT. These interim arrangements will provide us with the best possible advice in achieving that standard and will assist us to properly consider the long-term arrangements for ACT policing.

In making these remarks, Mr Speaker, I should commend the work of the retiring Chief Police Officer, Assistant Commissioner Peter Dawson - work which has stretched over a period of years; only recently as Chief Police Officer, but for many years before that as a police officer serving in the ACT region. I am sure that his good work will be picked up by Commissioner Palmer. I commend these new arrangements to the Assembly. I present a copy of this statement, and I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

**MR CONNOLLY (4.42):** The Opposition welcomes this statement and is committed to working, as far as possible, in a bipartisan or, indeed, non-partisan manner in relation to the policing arrangements. They are very important. The Assembly's Standing Committee on Legal Affairs, which includes Mr Osborne and Mr Kaine, is looking at long-term future arrangements.

This statement provides an opportunity, which I cannot let pass, for expressing in this forum a tribute to the work that Peter Dawson provided to the people of the ACT over many years. The period of his service as Chief Police Officer was most of the period that I had the privilege to be the Minister responsible for police in the ACT. For that reason I think it is appropriate that I place on record my appreciation of Peter Dawson's service.

He was first and foremost a Canberra copper. He started his service with the then ACT Police. He was a beat police officer in the then small city of Canberra. He advanced through the ranks of the ACT Police and then there was the merger with the then Commonwealth Police to create the Australian Federal Police. He continued up the ranks, serving in a number of senior positions in the national structure. I know that he was delighted to accept the challenge and the responsibilities of being Chief Police Officer for the ACT and saw that very much as a culmination of his career, which, as I say, was very much that of a Canberra copper. He really had a great commitment to this town, and he still has.

I found Peter Dawson, for the entire period that I was working closely with him, to be a man of the greatest integrity and commitment to the best ideals of policing. He provided true leadership to the ACT region of the Australian Federal Police. Two initiatives, in particular, will, I am sure, always be associated with Peter Dawson. I believe that they are initiatives that will well and truly outlast the period for which he was Chief Police Officer or for which I was involved, or will be involved, in issues of policing. They were, first and foremost, the diversionary conferencing concept, and, secondly, but just as importantly, the country town policing concept. Diversionary conferencing is an idea that Peter Dawson really developed, having picked it up from some innovative work done in New Zealand. He got it to the point where what is happening here in Canberra is seen to be a model for police forces around Australia and, indeed, around the world. I was delighted to learn that Peter, in his retirement, will be doing some travelling and some lecturing, and will be taking part in instructing police forces around the world on what has been developed here in Canberra as a local initiative in dealing with the difficult problem of juvenile crime. Diversionary conferencing really offers the one new opportunity of dealing with juvenile crime and getting kids back onto a straight path. It may not be the cure-all for every problem, but it is a very significant initiative and one for which Peter Dawson deserves enormous credit.

Country town policing was another initiative of Peter Dawson's. We are all delighted to see Dave Rugendyke here. He received, very deservedly, a community service award just recently for his community service and also because of the profile he has developed as one of the first two country town police officers. We have this concept operating in Ainslie and Kaleen. Again it was an initiative of Peter Dawson's that was exciting. It is a model for the rest of Australia and one that I am confident will well and truly outlast the time that Peter was leader of the force here.

I thought it was appropriate to place on record my enormous respect and admiration for Peter Dawson. He announced his retirement shortly after the change of government, so Mr Humphries had the privilege of working with him for a shorter time than I did. I know that members of the Opposition and Independents who were in the last Assembly also shared an enormous degree of respect for Peter Dawson. I am sure that we all wish him, his wife and his family the best in a long, fruitful and enjoyable retirement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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## RESPONSIBLE AND STABLE GOVERNMENT

**MR HIRD** (4.47): Mr Speaker, I ask for leave to move a motion regarding the principles of government in the Australian Capital Territory.

Leave granted.

**MR HIRD:** Mr Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly endorses the principles of responsible and stable government in the Australian Capital Territory.

**MR SPEAKER:** Members, this debate obviously will involve the inaugural speeches of, I trust, all five new members of this Assembly. It has been a tradition that these speeches are heard in silence. I would therefore ask the Assembly, nay, I would expect the Assembly, to so honour that tradition in relation to these five members.

**MR HIRD:** Mr Speaker, I left the Assembly on 30 June in 1986 as the then Speaker of the House of Assembly after serving my community for 12 years as the then Independent member for the electorate of Fraser. During those years I was, and I still am, a firm believer that I was elected to serve the people of my electorate and this Territory to the best of my ability. My door always has been, and will continue to be, open to the concerned citizens of my electorate and the needs of the people of the Territory.

We, as the elected representatives of the people of the Territory, however, should not forget our history. When the Territory gained representation in the form of the Advisory Council, later to become the Legislative Assembly, in 1974, the then Minister for Territories, the Hon. Gordon Bryant, said, "This is the first step towards a self-governing body of elected representatives for the ACT". The Territory was, as we all know, built to provide the seat of government for the Federal Parliament and the government departments that are vital to the running of this nation.

When the architect, Walter Burley Griffin, designed this city he envisaged that it would have a population of approximately 26,000 people by the turn of this century. This is now wrong, as we have a population of over 300,000 and we are still growing at a steady rate. We, as the elected representatives of this Territory, need to be conscious of this important factor if we are to make the right decisions in relation to the needs and wants of the people of the ACT and the surrounding communities of the south-east region of New South Wales. Yes, that is right. We have to be conscious not only of the welfare of the Territory but of the region as a whole because the facilities of the Territory are most definitely patronised by people across the border in such places as Queanbeyan and other communities further away. I just hope that when the helicopter that was generously and, I must add, unexpectedly donated by Mr Dick Smith arrives it is given the full support of all members of this parliament. I also hope that Canberra businesses and surrounding councils will not renege on their pledge of financial support for this essential regional service.

The Territory, as I have just explained, is, I believe, part of a region. This opens up many opportunities for a growing tourist market. Tourism is one of the biggest growth industries in the Territory at the moment, and all members should be aware of the great potential for attracting both local and overseas tourist dollars. The coming of winter will bring people through our region travelling to the snow. This is only one of the many opportunities that the Government needs to tap into to provide not only employment but also the opportunity to promote Canberra as a tourist destination. Events such as the Canberra Festival, Floriade and Autumnfest are definitely a step in the right direction.

Mr Speaker, as we move towards the year 2000 and beyond, we, as the elected representatives of the people, need to be more environmentally responsible. The introduction of the recycling bins should not stop us from addressing other environmentally sensitive issues within our community. As an example, there is a growing concern by the people of this Territory about energy efficiency and water conservation in private and public businesses as well as within the homes of the community. Therefore, any suggestions that might assist in producing cleaner energy from sources, including fossil fuels, must be seriously looked at being implemented so as to increase energy efficiency.

There is another issue that is very topical. The Federal Government should be made to pay for the municipal and other services provided to them by this Government. One example is the AFP ACT Police presence at the recent protest of loggers on Capital Hill. The Federal Government indicated that they would pay for that policing; but, to the best of my knowledge, they have made no attempt to do so. This is a slap in the face, not only for the ACT Government but also for the people of the Territory. This obviously is a reflection of the Federal Government's feelings towards the Canberra community as a whole.

As I have already stated, the members of the Assembly need to be more aware of the needs and wants of the Canberra community and the region of which it is part, not only when elections are imminent but for their entire term of office. In relation to my electorate of Ginninderra, as a member of the Liberal Government there are several matters that I will be pursuing. For improved community health facilities, I will be urging the Chief Minister, as Minister for Health, to implement as soon as possible the northern health precinct to be based around existing facilities at Calvary Hospital at Bruce. This will, I hope, include a long-stay convalescent unit; a paediatrics ward for non-acute cases; a rehabilitation centre to service North Canberra, Belconnen and Hall; and a medical clinic and specialist centre. As well, construction of a new 80-bed nursing home in Belconnen, which will incorporate a special self-contained residence for young people with disabilities, will also be, I hope, a priority.

With regard to community safety, I will be moving to revitalise and strengthen the Neighbourhood Watch program. This has been a very worthy project, with citizens helping other citizens to keep their homes safe. The more we support these volunteer organisations, the more we limit crime in our neighbourhoods, saving the

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community thousands and thousands of dollars. Policing our community has been greatly aided by the success of the country cop program pioneered in Kaleen by Constable Dave Rugendyke under former police chief Peter Dawson. Known throughout Kaleen and Belconnen as Uncle Dave, Constable Rugendyke has brought a new dimension to community policing, working with juveniles and young offenders, the elderly, the underprivileged and the socially disadvantaged, and lowering the incidence of petty crime and vandalism in our area. Therefore, I will be pressing for the expansion of the country cop success throughout the Belconnen area as budget requirements allow.

Rotary's trash and treasure market at Jamison, now in its twenty-first year, has raised in excess of \$2.4m. Having been involved from its inception, I will continue to support this very commendable community fundraising effort. Under our Government, their future is secure. Community facilities such as the Kippax and Melba health centres and the Kippax library will also continue to receive my full support. In fact, I was involved in establishing the library at Kippax, so I fully understand its importance to our local community. Mr Speaker, the Belconnen bus interchange has long been an eyesore. This concrete jungle should be more accessible to the public. I believe that serious consideration should be given to relocating bus facilities nearer to the Belconnen Mall, with footpath-style access similar in design to the Civic interchange. I shall be pressing for a feasibility study into a more effective, user-friendly bus interchange for the citizens of Belconnen.

Mr Speaker, better facilities for the aged are, I believe, a priority for our Government. With an ageing population, we need to address their growing needs. As an example, I have been discussing with the Minister arrangements for an illuminated pedestrian crossing for the residents of the Kalparrin Aged Hostel at Kippax. On more than one occasion residents have taken their lives in their hands while crossing busy Hardwick Crescent on their way to the Kippax shops and other facilities such as the medical centre. This is a much needed facility to improve their safety and peace of mind.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank the people of my Ginninderra electorate and, in particular, the dedicated team of campaign volunteers who worked tirelessly over the 12 months before the election to help me and my colleague Mr Bill Stefaniak to be here with you today. My door will always be open to all the people of this community to express their concerns about any issue, particularly from my Ginninderra electorate. I cannot finish without expressing my sincere thanks to my family, who gave me their total support and understanding throughout the many years since I left the former House of Assembly in 1986.

**Sitting suspended from 4.59 to 8.00 pm**

**MR SPEAKER:** I remind members that these inaugural speeches are to be heard in silence.

**MR WHITECROSS (8.01):** Mr Speaker, let me begin by adding my congratulations to you on your election to the important office of Speaker of this parliament. It is impossible to contemplate the position of member for Brindabella in the ACT Legislative Assembly, which I have undertaken and with which the voters of Brindabella have entrusted me, without a sense of awe and humility and without a sense of the weight of the responsibility of the task that lies ahead. Let me assure those who voted for me and those who must now look to me as one of the members of this important ACT institution that I will give my all to the task of representing them and working for the best interests and the common good of the people of this Territory.

I am a Labor member of this parliament and I am very proud of it. The last few months have not been great for the Labor Party. We have had to relook at ourselves and to learn lessons, and we are still learning them; but I have great confidence in my party. The Labor people I know - both my parliamentary colleagues and others in sub-branches, in unions, and out in the suburbs - believe passionately in the importance of the principles of equality and justice for which Labor stands. Spurred on by these convictions, reflecting on the lessons of recent times, we will together build a strong Labor team equipped to lead the ACT once more.

When I first put myself forward for election, I identified three things that summed up what I thought was important for voters in my electorate of Brindabella and that I committed myself to work for: Jobs closer to where people live; improved infrastructure and community facilities and services; and an active approach to protecting the environment. These are the things I will work for over the next three years.

Mr Speaker, it is widely recognised that a job is an important ingredient of self-esteem. We all benefit from the dignity of being able to support ourselves and our families, of contributing to something useful, of working with other people, and of using our abilities, our creativity and our initiative. We enjoy the structure that work brings to our lives. An essential element of work is that it is integrated with the other aspects of a person's life. When a person can work close to where they live, it adds to their quality of life, bringing them more time to spend with family and friends and bringing vibrancy to the local community, including thriving local shopping and entertainment and better patronised, and therefore more accessible, public transport. There are only 9,000 jobs in the Tuggeranong Valley - not nearly enough for a community of nearly 90,000 people. This is not so much a matter of money but of planning and priorities and creative thinking.

Urban infrastructure and community facilities and services are part of the fibre that binds a community together. They bring people out of the isolation that can so easily be life in the suburbs. They help people with needs as diverse as health, housing, education, child care, recreation, and support with the difficult task of bringing up families. We must be vigilant to ensure that our city's infrastructure and this community's facilities and services are maintained and are improved.

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The environment is of special concern to me, as it is to most young people and, indeed, to responsible citizens of all ages. I am acutely aware of the need to come up with practical solutions to environmental problems which make it easier for individuals to be good custodians of the environment. Whether we are talking of waste minimisation or water conservation or energy saving, the need for practical solutions is vitally important for us, living as we do in Australia's largest inland city, a city which, like all cities, is so complex that it can seem impossible for individuals to make a difference.

A particular environmental passion of mine is the need to develop pride in our indigenous plants and wildlife. We call Canberra the bush capital, yet our landscaping policies continue to favour exotic trees over native ones and our ACT tourist promotion focuses on the celebration not of our native environment but of the exotic environment we have established here. While I too enjoy the beauty that exotic trees and plants bring to our city in spring and autumn, we must develop greater pride in the beauty we can create with Australian plants as well. With this beauty, we will also discover landscaping that is better adapted to our dry climate and more sympathetic to native birds and other fauna.

Mr Speaker, self-government continues to arouse hostility in the ACT. This hostility is reflected in open opposition and cynicism about the ACT Legislative Assembly and the ACT Government and in other expressions of dissatisfaction. The ACT community has been understandably cautious about embracing this gift of self-government from the Federal Government. Their caution about Federal governments bearing gifts is perhaps justified, given the experience of dramatic and reduced Federal funding over the last six years. The resentment of some that self-government was imposed without a vote of the community is also understandable, but we cannot dwell in the past. The ACT's funding is now close to State levels. There can be no return to the funding levels of the past. The responsibility for managing our own affairs, which the Federal Parliament has given to us, will not be taken away again.

As a community we have grown up. In the last six years we have taken our first steps of freedom and autonomy. The apron strings have been cut. There is no way back. Instead, we must embrace the possibilities of the future. I know that members of this Assembly have grappled with these possibilities. But this is not just a matter for politicians; it is a matter for all citizens of Canberra. There must be a partnership, a genuine one, not one in which we join with our friends while ignoring those who question us or offer alternatives. It is not good enough for us in this Assembly to disappear into this building and work away. We must be in touch with the people we represent. Nor is it good enough for the community to sit in judgment on this Assembly from afar. We must work together in partnership to create a better Canberra for all of us.

This does not mean that we will always agree. As a Labor member not a part of the current Government, I will criticise where it is necessary. I was elected to represent Labor voters and they must be my priority - their aspirations, their concerns. But my courage and my compassion cannot be contained or restricted by narrowly defined partisan politics. We must all in this community have the grace and the generosity to step



outside the boundaries of what is in our own best interests and those of others like us and consider the interests of others, always remembering to give first priority to those with the fewest advantages. This is a responsibility we all share in this Assembly, in the media, in the community at large. If we are to build a better Canberra, it is a responsibility we must all embrace.

**MS HORODNY (8.11):** I have come to this Assembly as a lifetime resident of this wonderful region, where I was born and where members of my family were born and have died. This is a place full of memories for me. I remember Canberra as a much smaller city, a place before McDonalds, before invasion by feral mynah birds, when the newly built suburb of Curtin was considered to be so far away that people said no-one would want to live there. I want to work to retain those fabulous qualities that are unique to Canberra while addressing the problems that threaten our quality of life - problems like crime, violence, social disaffection, polluted air and polluted water.

At the recent World Climate Conference in Berlin, our smaller island neighbours in the Pacific voiced real concern about their future due to rising ocean levels from the greenhouse effect. As we sit here in the comfort of this Assembly, more than 600 metres above sea level, the problems faced by the people of those remote island nations seem very remote indeed; but as part of the human community we do have a responsibility towards them as well as to the people of Canberra. The global green movement has grown from local community groups concerned about social justice, peace and the environment. There is growing awareness that it is impossible to tackle these important issues in isolation. The natural and urban environment has a direct effect on people's health and wellbeing, and the way we in turn conduct our daily lives affects our immediate as well as our more distant environment. It is therefore unfortunate that our current economic thinking is based on continued consumption with no thought to the real cost of that consumption to the environment and to social justice.

Mr Speaker, the ACT Greens believe that solutions can be found by combining global awareness with local experience. Finding solutions requires foresight, intelligence, openness, creativity and a good sense of humour. The original plans for Canberra were designed for a city of around 25,000 people. The planning concepts of Marion Mahoney Griffin and Walter Burley Griffin were visionary. Today we are blessed with a city that has a close relationship with the natural environment. However, we have grown to become a city of great distances and low population densities. This low urban density, which was appropriate for a smaller town, poses significant planning challenges. People are often a long way from their local shops, services and families. While suburban businesses struggle to attract sufficient customers, those in our community who are least mobile - the young, the elderly and the frail - have the greatest difficulty getting access to services such as public transport and community health care.

Through sensible urban planning, I believe that we can find the solutions to many of these problems. A healthy city must have a full range of services, must have well planned infrastructure, and must have open space. The Greens support a strengthening of the neighbourhood structure of Canberra. We support the encouragement of greater urban density in areas immediately surrounding existing commercial centres, while protecting the amenity of residents and our bush capital heritage. This would strengthen our neighbourhood shops and make other services more accessible and hence more viable.

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Parks and open spaces in and around our urban environment not only provide recreational facilities for the community but also are important as plant and animal habitat. As humans, our needs are continually encroaching on natural ecosystems. The regent honeyeater and the rare superb parrot, for example, are suffering from continued harvesting of their nesting trees for our firewood. Namadgi National Park, with its granite boulders, has large protected areas of beautiful and diverse alpine and forest wilderness as well as a rich heritage of human history. Evidence of Ngunnawal people's existence goes back at least 20,000 years. Like the Ngunnawal, who still live across a large area of southern New South Wales and the ACT, we must recognise our role in this larger cultural and ecological region.

There is no doubt that what we do in Canberra impacts across the border and activities across the border affect us. We must work with local governments in New South Wales to address problems such as the smoke from so-called control burning and the downstream impact of pollution in our waterways. We have a unique opportunity in the ACT to set a precedent for environmental sustainability. This can be done through the encouragement of self-sufficiency in foods and industries appropriate to the region.

Mr Speaker, during my years as a volunteer and paid worker with the Wilderness Society, I, along with thousands of other Canberrans, lobbied the Federal and New South Wales governments to protect our remaining wilderness forests and place the timber industry securely into plantations. People often ask me, "Why is the timber industry allowed to degrade a finite resource when alternatives are already available?". To that question there is a simple answer: "Lack of political will and lack of vision". In Canberra we are fortunate to have a viable timber industry based entirely on plantations. This industry is sustainable and returns around \$75m to the ACT economy.

To address the problems in Canberra we must recognise that, as elected members, we do not have all the answers. However, we do have an enormous resource in the people of Canberra. This community wants to be involved in the continued evolution of the ACT. Since being elected, I have had many visits from people offering positive and creative ideas. Ensuring that people are listened to and that their ideas are considered in a serious and conscientious manner is important. Active debate in the community does not necessarily make our lives easier. Indeed, decisions may become more difficult, and the loudest voices do not always have the right answers. However, it is important to have open debate to empower the community and to engender greater trust in the political system and the elected representatives.

Mr Speaker, I have always been an optimist and believe strongly in working to create change to provide a solid and positive foundation for our future. If we as a community set ourselves clear long-term goals, we can achieve them. As Greens we represent a range of views and ideas specific to our local community while maintaining a belief in certain philosophies of ecology, justice and peace. These ideas are not new or radical; but they are ultimately sensible, practical and, indeed, pragmatic. We have all had parents or grandparents who lived through the Depression and who knew how to reuse things, how to store things and how to keep things for a rainy day. Yet we do not call

them greenies or radicals. It is recent generations that have learnt the vulgar habit of squandering precious resources and treating the planet, sadly, with disdain. We must improve our habits. We cannot afford to think only about tomorrow or the next three years. We must start thinking about and planning for a future that does not deny us a good quality of life and yet respects the finite resources of the planet.

I would like to thank my supporters in Ginninderra for electing me, and I welcome the opportunity to work with the other members of this Assembly as well as with the many caring, knowledgeable and constructive individuals in the community who are quietly working for a safer, happier and healthier Canberra.

**MR OSBORNE (8.20):** While still flushed with the excitement of becoming a member for Brindabella in this place and while still basking in the congratulations - and, I might add, still full of a lot of self-importance - I received a letter from a friend with a message that made me ponder the wisdom of choosing this new profession. "May the future", the message said, "bring all the best to you, your family and friends, and may your mother never find out where you work".

Many true words, I realised, Mr Speaker, are said in jest, for the sad truth about the governors of the Australian Capital Territory is that they have not earned the respect of the community. This is still a community which, if given the choice, would choose to return to the days of a benign public service dictatorship. The past two terms of this Assembly have not resulted in a ground swell of support for self-government, and my own election, along with that of my Independent and Green colleagues, is testimony to the dissatisfaction the people of Canberra have with both the Liberal and Labor parties, which have shared the major role of government between them over the last six years.

I see it as my duty to do all that I can to ensure that in this, the third time around, the people of Canberra are luckier. They deserve nothing less than a system of government they can respect, a government that is responsive to their needs, a Legislative Assembly that is aware of their wishes, and members of parliament who are prepared to risk temporary unpopularity to do what is right. In short, I will be doing my best to give this city a system of government that I will be proud to tell my mother I am part of.

As a newcomer to public life, I am aware of my limitations when it comes to some of the complexities that will confront us in the chamber during the years ahead. I do not claim to be the well of all wisdom, nor to know all the answers; but my experience has made me aware of one thing: It has made me aware of the importance of team play. I can but pledge to the people of Brindabella who elected me that I will listen and read and use what commonsense I am blessed with to help make our Government a government that works. I will not be burdened in this endeavour to bring commonsense to decision-making by a commitment to the ideology of any particular political party. I was elected as an Independent and an Independent I will be. My commitment to support as the government the party that received the greatest number of votes does not mean that over the next three years I will be blindly voting every time for what the Liberal Party proposes. Conscious as I am that stability is needed to produce good government, there can be no blank cheque from me for the Chief Minister and her colleagues to fill in as they will. I will not be taken for granted. My support will have to be earned.

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It can be earned, for example, by a government that turns out to be as committed as I am to ensuring that Canberra is not turned by this Assembly into some laboratory for radical social change. I make no apology for holding what some people here might regard as conservative views - views that I prefer to describe as traditional Christian values. I am proud of my Catholicism and my Christianity and I am guided by their teachings. I believe in the importance of stable family life. I am committed to the sanctity of human life, whether it be unborn or elderly. I will have nothing whatsoever to do with legalisation of abortion and euthanasia. Sorry, Michael.

I can be fairly tolerant of people's weirdness; but, like most of the people I am here to represent, I am less so when it comes to the protection of my family and my neighbourhood. Thus I am deeply troubled by the message that is sent to the young by the advocacy of some in this place for the Government itself to provide illegal drugs to those addicted to them. I am fearful of the consequences that would flow from such an unwise policy, fearful of the example provided to children by a government prepared to replace the pusher with a prescription. I will do everything in my power to stop the national capital becoming a magnet for the nation's heroin addicted and would feel obliged to withdraw my support from a government that supported such an experiment. I will fully support a government with the courage to tackle the real problems - trying to break the cycles of behaviour that lead to the dysfunctional families from which so many of the social problems like addiction flow. The government I will respect is the government that recognises the need to devote the time, effort and necessary resources if prevention is to become the best solution to all kinds of drug use in our society.

For myself, Mr Speaker, I can see no point in being a member of parliament should remaining one require the sacrifice of my Christian principles and convictions. I do not intend to make any such sacrifice. I am confident that the people of Brindabella, even those with different values from mine, will have enough wisdom in three years' time to reward my honesty and decide that one good term deserves another. I am conscious of the responsibility that has been entrusted to me. I am conscious, too, of the difficulty of the task of government. I know that not all decisions made here in the Assembly will turn out to be the right ones. As the Mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, once said:

Look at my Lord's disciples. One denied him, one doubted him and one betrayed him. If our Lord couldn't have perfection, how are you going to have it in city government?

Mr Speaker, I, like you, can but promise to strive to get as close to perfection as a humble disciple can.

**MS TUCKER (8.27):** Mr Speaker, it is an honour to be standing here today as a newly elected ACT Greens member for Molonglo, representing the diversity of voices that make up the green movement. My involvement in politics is a result of my paid and voluntary community work over many years. Most recently, I was employed by the Canberra and South-East Region Environment Centre to work in the library and edit the *Bogong* magazine. In that job, I was confronted every day with the magnitude of the problems that face us. It became increasingly obvious to me that the many individuals and non-government organisations working for change needed to have better representation

within the political system. As a parent, I also feel a real sense of responsibility to work to ensure a good quality of life for all our children now and in the future. I was one of the founding members of the ACT Greens and ran as a Senate candidate in the 1992 Federal election. For such a young party, we have had remarkable success. There are now 11 Green parliamentarians around Australia. While we may be inexperienced in some areas, we do bring to politics a long-term vision and an optimistic and informed approach.

The increasing desire of the community to be consulted about the decisions that affect their lives reflects the growing disillusionment with the direction on which our society is heading. At a time when the pace of change has increased exponentially, we have chosen to take our hands off the steering wheel and leave the determination of our direction to market forces. In prosperous nations around the world, where apparently many good economic decisions have been made, why is it that we feel such a deep sense of sadness at what has been lost - dead lakes, deforested landscapes, polluted rivers and marine habitats, degraded soils, toxic contamination? Why is it that the gap between the rich and poor has widened, that alienation is more common than a sense of belonging? Something about those so-called good economic decisions was and is wrong. Clearly, measurable economic activity is not the only thing that matters. A good environment, a sense of community and fairness, and social cohesion are of equal importance.

Mr Speaker, it is up to the elected representatives to provide real open and participatory processes so that we can all decide what direction our society will take. One of the democratic processes we are lucky to have in Canberra is the Hare-Clark system, which allows a greater diversity of opinions and values to be represented in the Assembly. However, electoral systems are only one aspect of allowing community input. In the ACT there is great potential to have more effective participation at the grassroots level, but this will require a shift in political and bureaucratic attitudes.

Open and participatory government, care for people and the environment, and a peaceful society are the basic principles of Green philosophy. These basic principles are all linked. While social justice, or caring for people, is a claimed principle of all political parties, what the Greens bring to this concept is the interrelatedness of all issues. For example, policy decisions about matters that affect health are made by many people and institutions outside the health field as it is now defined. These include environmental managers, urban planners, transport planners, educational institutions, artists, media, financial organisations, agricultural workers, international and defence policy makers, industrial planners and so on. Intersectoral planning is obviously essential, not just for the social benefits but for reasons of economic efficiency as well.

The Green view of social justice also involves a recognition that there is an underlying responsibility to intergenerational equity and global equity. There are obvious connections between social justice and peace - another Green principle. Peace is not only about preventing war at a regional or global level. It is about tackling issues such as domestic violence and child abuse, and promoting skills to deal with conflict in our lives.

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It is looking at causes of violence in our society and resourcing preventative measures, not just focusing on punishment. Relevant to this issue is breaking down the adversarial approach in politics. This may, indeed, be quite a challenge, Mr Speaker. As you have advised me and reminded members several times tonight, I have to make the most of this 10 minutes as it may be the only chance to speak uninterrupted in the chamber over the next three years.

Environmental sustainability, perhaps better expressed as responsibility, is the most well known of our principles and it has become a greatly used phrase in Australia and throughout the world. Unfortunately, however, environmental concerns are often an added afterthought and therefore seen as a complication or a cost rather than as a basic component of decisions. They must be central to policy-making because at stake are the natural systems upon which all life depends. It is impossible to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society with an economic system that attempts to be value free.

The Greens are on common ground with a growing number of economists who are arguing for a new approach to economics that encompasses social and environmental values. I was interested to read recently about the work of suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst as an advocate for health and social justice in the workplace in the early twentieth century. Her concern about workers' exposure to lead and other toxic chemicals in the workplace, particularly the ceramics industry, was seen to be unrealistic and economically unviable by employers, government and media of the time. The only company that did remove lead was the well known and highly regarded Wedgwood. This was probably one of the first consumer campaigns to try to affect policy by consumer power.

Mr Speaker, we are still hearing the same old and misleading arguments that jobs and profits will be lost if we protect the environment. The mismanagement Sylvia Pankhurst challenged continues all around the world. Our accounting systems do not tell us about the full environmental and social costs and benefits of production or consumption. Our economic models are based on so many assumptions that they are greatly distorted from the real world. The market tells us that our food is inexpensive; yet the method of its production damages water and soil, and the full costs of transportation are not included. We are told that it is cheap to drive cars but very expensive to support a high-quality public transport system. But we are not told about the environmental and social costs of car-dependent cities and the hidden subsidies provided by government. We are told that there is no economic value in all the unpaid work done in our society, such as caring for children or the elderly and working for non-profit organisations.

Mr Speaker, our challenge in the ACT is to bring a new understanding of economics into our lives. If we integrate environmental and social considerations into our decisions, it is logical to promote green industries and community businesses. There are already hundreds of examples from around the world of successful industries that have grown out of environmental responsibility. Germany has developed multimillion dollar industries from the toughest packaging standards in the world. What is needed in the ACT is a comprehensive strategy for promoting industries that reduce resource use, minimise waste and pollution, and recycle products and components. The ACT is well placed to be at the centre of a thriving, sustainable regional economy.

I am standing in this place because an ever-growing number of people, including some of our most respected scientists, are becoming increasingly concerned about the future. To achieve change, we do need a long-term perspective, courage and optimism. Over the next three years I hope to work with my constituents, my friend and colleague Lucy Horodny and our staff to create real and lasting changes. Those changes will occur only if we work from our principles with the community, listening to their concerns, encouraging their activism, and promoting solutions that will help create a clean, green and fair Canberra. I would like to thank the ACT Greens for all their support and help and the constituents of Molonglo for electing me. I look forward to learning many new skills as well as offering a positive contribution to the work of the Assembly.

**MR SPEAKER:** Members, I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr Hird, Mr Whitecross, Ms Horodny, Mr Osborne and Ms Tucker for their inaugural speeches. I am sure that you would join with me in that. I think they have made both thoughtful and committed contributions in these first speeches. I cannot guarantee, Ms Tucker, that you will be heard with the same attention, and particularly the same silence, as you have this evening, though I do remind my eleven colleagues that they can do it if they try. Nevertheless, thank you for your contributions. I look forward to a continuation of this positive and cooperative input from you all in the next three years in the governance of the ACT.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### **DAYS OF MEETING**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General) (8.38): Mr Speaker, I ask for leave to move a motion regarding the days of meeting of the Assembly for 1995.

Leave granted.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I move:

That, unless the Speaker fixes an alternative date or hour of meeting on receipt of a request in writing from an absolute majority of Members, or the Assembly otherwise orders, the Assembly shall meet as follows for 1995:

May		3	4
	9	10	11
	30	31	
June			1
	20	21	22

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August	22	23	24
September	19	20	21
October	17 24	18 25	19 26
November	21	22	23
December	5 12	6 13	7 14

Mr Speaker, the sitting pattern is approximately comparable with that of previous years, taking into account that, due to the election and the arrival of a new government, a number of sitting weeks have been lost in the first part of the year. From this point on, I think it is true to say, the intensity of the sitting pattern is the same as in previous years. I emphasise as well, in commending it to the house, that we should not regard the number of sitting days as a measure of the effectiveness of the Assembly, since the question is not so much the quantity as the quality. In this Government's view, it is important to justify the sitting days before they are put onto the notice paper, rather than to have a number of days set down and then try to find business to fill them. It is this Government's intention, certainly, that, if the amount of business on the paper warrants an extension, for example, of the number of sitting days the Assembly has set down through this motion, then that extension should occur. It is, on my experience, much more difficult to try to condense the number of days when the business is not present. I think, therefore, this is the appropriate way of handling the sitting pattern for the rest of this year.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## MEETING TIMES AND PRECEDENCE OF BUSINESS

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General) (8.40): Mr Speaker, I ask for leave to move a motion regarding temporary orders to set the meeting times and precedence of business for this sitting week.

Leave granted.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I move:

That unless otherwise ordered:

- (1) Standing order 16 relating to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure be amended until 5 May 1995 by adding "and Assembly Business" to the end of subparagraph (l)(c).



- (2) Standing order 27 be suspended until 5 May 1995 and the following temporary order operate:

*“Days and hour of meeting*

**Days and hour of meeting**

27. Unless otherwise ordered, the Assembly shall meet for the despatch of business on Wednesday and Thursday at 10.30 am.”.

- (3) Standing order 34 be suspended until 5 May 1995 and the following temporary order operate:

*“Adjournment and next meeting*

34. At 4.30 pm on Wednesday and Thursday, the Speaker shall propose the question - That the Assembly do now adjourn - which question shall be open to debate. No amendment may be moved to this question:

Provided that:

- (a) if a vote is in progress at the time for interruption, that vote, and any vote consequent upon that vote, shall be completed and the result announced;
- (b) if, on the question - That the Assembly do now adjourn - being proposed, a Minister requires the question to be put forthwith without debate, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question;
- (c) a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly may be moved by a Minister at an earlier hour;
- (d) any business under discussion and not disposed of at the time of the adjournment shall be set down on the Notice Paper for the next sitting; and
- (e) if the question - That the Assembly do now adjourn - is negatived, the Assembly shall resume the proceedings at the point at which they had been interrupted:

Provided further that, if at 5 pm on Wednesday and Thursday, the question before the Assembly is - That the Assembly do now adjourn - the Speaker shall interrupt the debate, at which time:

Minister may extend debate:

- (f) a Minister may require that the debate be extended until 5.10 pm to enable the Ministers to speak in reply to matters raised in the preceding adjournment debate; at 5.10 pm or upon the earlier cessation of the debate, the Speaker shall forthwith adjourn the Assembly until the time of its next meeting; or
- (g) if no action is taken by a Minister under paragraph (f), the Speaker shall forthwith adjourn the Assembly until the time of its next meeting.”.

(4) Standing order 74 be amended by adding the following words:

“Provided that at 2.30 pm on Wednesday and Thursday the Speaker shall interrupt the business before the Assembly in order that questions without notice shall be called on; and

- (a) if a vote is in progress at the time fixed for interruption, that vote, and any vote consequent upon that vote, shall be completed and the result announced; and
- (b) the Speaker shall fix the time for the resumption of the debate on any business under discussion and not disposed of at the time of interruption:

Provided further that on Wednesday and Thursday, Presentation of papers; Ministerial statements, by leave; and Matters of public importance follow questions without notice in the ordinary routine of business.”.

(5) Standing order 77 be suspended until 5 May 1995 and the following temporary order operate:

**“Executive and private Members’ business - precedence of**

77. Executive business shall, on each day of sitting, have precedence of all private Members’ business, except that:

- (a) On sitting Wednesdays Private Members’ Business shall have precedence of Executive Business until two hours after the time fixed for the meeting of the Assembly;

- (b) On sitting Thursdays, Assembly Business shall have precedence of Executive Business in the ordinary routine of business for 45 minutes from the conclusion of consideration of any Executive notices of intention to present bills;

Provided further that:

- (c) if a vote is in progress at the time precedence expires, that vote or any vote consequent upon that vote shall be completed and the result announced;
- (d) at any time during the consideration of Assembly Business any Member may move that Executive Business be called on and such motion shall be put forthwith without amendment or debate;
- (e) at the time precedence to Assembly Business expires any Member may move that the time allotted to Assembly Business be extended by 30 minutes and such motion shall be put forthwith without amendment or debate; and
- (f) the Speaker shall fix the next sitting Wednesday for the resumption of the debate on any business under discussion and not disposed of at the expiration of the time allotted to Private Members' Business and the next sitting Thursday for the resumption of the debate on any business under discussion and not disposed of at the expiration of the time allotted to Assembly Business or at the time Assembly Business is interrupted.

For the purpose of this temporary order and standing order 16, Assembly Business is:

- (g) any notice of a motion or order of the day relating to the establishment or membership of a committee or the referral of a matter to a committee;
- (h) any order of the day for the consideration of a motion moved upon the presentation of a committee report or the Government response to a committee report; and

- (j) any notice of motion to amend, disallow, disapprove or declare void and of no effect any instrument made under any Act of the Assembly which provides for the instrument to be subject to amendment, disallowance or disapproval of the Assembly or subject to a resolution of the Assembly declaring the instrument to be amended or void and of no effect or any other order of the day to consider such a motion.”.
- (6) Standing order 79 (Matter of Public Importance) be amended until 5 May 1995 by omitting “4 hours” and substituting “2 hours”.

Essentially, these temporary orders set the sitting times and the precedence of business for Wednesday and Thursday of this week as the same as those which operated during the first and second Assemblies. I see on the daily program that there is a report of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure on the standing orders of the Assembly, and we will be dealing with that shortly. The effect of this motion is that we will put in place temporary orders for this week which acknowledge the practice of the past and allow, therefore, the Assembly to debate, presumably later this week, the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure report, and thus have a debate unfettered by the need to make changes or set in place procedures for the rest of this week.

**MR BERRY** (8.41): The Opposition will agree with the motion that has been put to the Assembly by Mr Humphries. He does acknowledge that in our first two Assemblies we have been able to provide to the people of the Australian Capital Territory a means of access that had not hitherto been the case. Some of the inaugural speeches mentioned the odour of this Assembly, and I think that that is unfortunate. Nevertheless, we are obliged to continue with the struggle to ensure that we earn the respect of the community.

I think the open, consultative, council-style government Mrs Carnell has promised, which, in effect, has been in existence for six years, will be welcomed out in the community; but many of them will be puzzled by the move by the Liberals, at least, to cut out part of that council style of government, that is, the night sittings that go with council styles of government.

**Mrs Carnell:** They sit only at night. We could cut out day sittings and then we could really be a council.

**MR BERRY:** No, no; just settle. It is all right. You will get used to criticism with your policies.

**MR SPEAKER:** But we will not pre-empt debate, will we, Mr Berry?

**MR BERRY:** Neither will we take sides, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I would merely say, furthermore, that we have an obligation to ensure that that access by the community to our chamber is continued. I think the night sittings, though onerous in some respects and difficult for all of us because of the long hours, are nevertheless important for the community. Some of them have even taken the time to come and see it tonight, even with the awful burst of welcome weather, strange as it may seem, out there this evening. It is a debate, as you rightly say, that will occur later on this week, but one that needs to be mentioned, given that there is a level of interest despite the weather. I have great pleasure in informing the Government that we will be supporting this motion as we always will support, and always have supported, that open consultative council-style government we have had for years.

**MR MOORE (8.44):** I rise to support the motion, Mr Speaker. It is interesting that Mr Berry of all people should draw attention to what I think he called the odour of the first couple of Assemblies pointed out in the inaugural speeches of our parliamentary colleagues, and then go on to take issue about sitting on Tuesday night and access. I draw Mr Berry's attention to standing order 27, which was suspended effectively by a temporary standing order. Standing order 27, as it was originally put to the initial Assembly, was that the business would start on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 2.30 pm. It may be just as rational to say that the odour Mr Berry speaks of in so far as it would be caused by the removal of the Tuesday night sittings would have been caused by departing from the original standing orders. I think there is not much basis to the argument he puts. I am sure that we will have a good opportunity to discuss this matter at a later time this evening and again on Thursday. By supporting these temporary orders, we will be able to proceed in the appropriate manner with which we are familiar.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **COMMITTEES**

### **Membership**

**MR SPEAKER:** I am required to make a statement in relation to committee membership. In accordance with the resolution passed by the Assembly on 9 March 1995 relating to committee membership, I wish to inform members that the following members were declared by me to be appointed to the respective committees after I was notified in writing of their nominations: Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure - Mr Berry, Mr Hird and Ms Tucker; Standing Committee on Legal Affairs - Mr Connolly and Mr Kaine; Standing Committee on Planning and Environment - Mr Berry, Ms Horodny and Mr Kaine; Standing Committee on Public Accounts - Ms Follett, Ms Horodny and Mr Kaine; Standing Committee on the Scrutiny of Bills and Subordinate Legislation - Mr Hird and Mr Whitecross; Standing Committee on Social Policy - Mr Hird, Ms McRae and Ms Tucker; Standing Committee on Tourism and ACT Promotion - Mr Hird and Mr Wood.

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**Mr Humphries:** Could I ask you first, Mr Speaker, to clarify the membership of the Legal Affairs Committee that you just announced?

**MR SPEAKER:** Yes. These were the people appointed. Legal Affairs, Mr Connolly and Mr Kaine.

**Ms McRae:** What about Mr Osborne? It is the same for the Scrutiny of Bills. It is wrong.

**Mr Connolly:** Mr Osborne has the shortest career in history. He has just given his inaugural speech and now he has been knocked off.

**MR SPEAKER:** You must realise that the chairmen were already provided for. This is simply the committee membership. The committee chair in each case, you will note, has not been mentioned by me.

**Ms McRae:** That is not right. Ms Tucker was mentioned for the Social Policy Committee.

**Ms Follett:** So was I.

**Mr Moore:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. Perhaps I could clarify it. As I recall, Mr Speaker, Independent members were named in the original motion, and I believe that the other groups had to nominate. I think that is the distinction between what we have done now and what was in the motion.

**MR SPEAKER:** Rather than the chairmen, Mr Moore. I take your point. Thank you.

**Ms Follett:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. Would you circulate to us a complete list of committee membership, including the chairs, because, with all respect, the explanation that you have given seems to me not quite to fit the circumstances as I recall them.

**MR SPEAKER:** Certainly; no problem.

**Mr Humphries:** It is on the notice paper, is it not? Is it on the notice paper?

**Ms McRae:** Not the statement, nor the original thing, and the two do not tally.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! I have stated that I am happy to circulate the paper.

**TOURISM AND A.C.T. PROMOTION - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Membership**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General) (8.48): Pursuant to standing order 223, I move:

That Mr Hird be discharged from the Standing Committee on Tourism and ACT Promotion and that Mr Kaine be appointed in his place.

Mr Speaker, this arose out of some confusion about what committee chairmanships would be sought by members of different parties. Mr Kaine at one stage expected, on the basis of an agreement made between the parties, to be appointed to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and to chair that committee. Subsequently, I understand, Ms Follett expressed an interest in chairing that committee. As a result the Liberal Party would choose to place Mr Kaine on the Tourism and ACT Promotion Committee in Mr Hird's place.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Government Schools Voluntary Parent Contribution Scheme Inquiry**

**MS FOLLETT** (Leader of the Opposition): Mr Speaker, I ask for leave to make a statement regarding a new inquiry by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Leave granted.

**MS FOLLETT:** I wish to inform the Assembly, Mr Speaker, that on 3 April the Standing Committee on Public Accounts resolved to inquire into and report on the voluntary parent contribution scheme in the ACT government schools system, with particular reference to:

- (1) the necessity for voluntary fees, including the extent to which such fees fund school-wide resources used by all students, and materials for hands-on tuition in elective subjects for individual students;
- (2) mechanisms for setting, and procedures for the collection of, fees;
- (3) banking and accounting arrangements for fees;
- (4) public accountability for receipt and expenditure of fees;
- (5) equity and outcomes between schools;
- (6) reasons for any variations in fee levels between schools;

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- (7) whether students whose parents are unable to, or choose not to, pay fees are disadvantaged compared with students whose parents do pay fees;
- (8) whether fee paying parents subsidise the school-wide and elective subject costs of students whose parents are unable to, or choose not to, pay fees; and
- (9) any related matters.

**LEGAL AFFAIRS - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Policing Arrangements Inquiry**

**MR CONNOLLY:** I seek leave to make a statement regarding a new inquiry by the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs.

Leave granted.

**MR CONNOLLY:** I wish to inform the Assembly that on 5 April 1995 the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs resolved to inquire into and report on the future policing arrangements for the Australian Capital Territory and, in particular, to examine accountability arrangements, including the possible creation of a statutory office of Commissioner of Police for the Australian Capital Territory.

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Contaminated Sites and Acton Peninsula and the Kingston Sites Land Swap Inquiries**

**MR MOORE:** I ask for leave to make a statement regarding two new inquiries by the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment.

Leave granted.

**MR MOORE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, members. I wish to inform the Assembly that on 7 April 1995 the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment resolved to inquire into and report on the adequacy of processes relating to identifying and managing contaminated sites in the ACT and any other related matters.

I further wish to inform the Assembly that on 21 April 1995 the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment resolved to inquire into and report on the Acton Peninsula and the Kingston sites which are subject to the land swap announced between the ACT and Federal governments, with particular reference to:



- (a) planning controls over both sites;
- (b) the value of the land swap to the ACT;
- (c) environmental and heritage issues;
- (d) current and future usage of sites; and
- (e) any other related matters.

**SCRUTINY OF BILLS AND SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION -  
STANDING COMMITTEE  
Reports and Statement**

**MR OSBORNE:** I present Reports Nos 1 and 2 of 1995 of the Standing Committee on Scrutiny of Bills and Subordinate Legislation. I ask for leave to make a brief statement on the reports.

Leave granted.

**MR OSBORNE:** Report No. 1 of 1995, which I have just presented, was circulated when the Assembly was not sitting on 23 March 1995, pursuant to the resolution of appointment of 9 March 1995. Report No. 2 of 1995 contains the committee's comments on eight pieces of subordinate legislation. I commend the reports to the Assembly.

**ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURE - STANDING COMMITTEE  
Report on Standing Orders and Citizen's Right of Reply**

**MR SPEAKER:** I present a report of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure entitled "Standing Orders and Citizen's Right of Reply".

**MR MOORE (8.53):** I move:

That the report be noted.

This is a particularly important report, Mr Speaker, in that it goes to the heart of the way the Assembly operates. Over the last six years, Mr Speaker, as you would be aware, the Assembly has operated on the basis of a combination of standing and temporary orders. That combination of standing and temporary orders has served us quite well. However, it was obvious to some members of the Assembly, probably to most members of the Assembly, that there were a series of inadequacies in the standing orders. Mr Speaker, you chair the Administration and Procedure Committee. I am a member and there are Labor, Liberal and Greens members. It was quite obvious to us that a number of changes needed to be made to improve our standing orders.

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Some of those changes are straightforward, Mr Speaker, in that they were temporary orders for the last six years. We have said, "Yes, they are working very well; they need to become standing orders". For those members who are not aware of the difference, at the end of an Assembly a temporary order wanes, whereas a standing order continues. We believe that it is appropriate that we put these into standing orders and that they become part of the normal working document for the Assembly as we go through this transition period that we are currently going through. If we get these standing orders right, Mr Speaker, as I hope we will, there will be no necessity, for example, for the motion that Mr Humphries put to us and that we discussed a little earlier. Generally, Mr Speaker, I think that these standing orders, with two exceptions, will be uncontroversial. The two exceptions that I would like to mention, Mr Speaker, are to do with Tuesday night sittings and the prayer.

Before I move on to those I would like to foreshadow that next Thursday, as part of Assembly business, I will be moving a motion to implement the report. That motion effectively will cover paragraph 11 of this report, which you will find on page 13. It is headed "Conclusion and Final Recommendations". I think that the most controversial part of that motion will be to do with the Tuesday night sittings. When I look around here this evening, Mr Speaker, I see that there are probably more people in the chamber this evening than usual. That may well be due not only to the interest of new staff members but also to interest in the inaugural speeches of our new colleagues, who have done so well. You, Mr Speaker, would be aware that it is a fairly unusual occurrence to have so many people. Normally on a Tuesday night, particularly in winter, if there was one person present apart from staff members we would probably all go over and say hello to find out why that person happened to be here. Perhaps I exaggerate somewhat, but not much.

Mr Speaker, I did draw members' attention earlier to standing order 27. Originally it stated that our sittings started at 2.30 pm each day. We varied that somewhat. I think it is appropriate to go with the majority recommendation of the committee. What will happen is that we will start sitting at 10.30 am on each day and have question time, as we always do, at 2.30 pm. Mr Speaker, in agreeing to this recommendation by the committee, I believe that it is appropriate to give that a trial period. I am very happy to reassess that after a three-month trial. If there appears to be considerable community distress by then, I would be prepared to reconsider the issue.

The other issue that may be controversial to a certain extent - dissent is recorded in our report - is the issue of the prayer. I draw members' attention to the fact that the issue of the prayer will not be dealt with in the motion next Thursday but rather, as indicated in the report, the debate will not be scheduled until 1 June 1995. It is really worth while reading that section of the report so that people understand the intention of the majority of the members of the committee. The committee considered the inclusion of the prayer as part of the routine of business, which is dealt with in standing order 74. The report states:

Some Members of the Committee were concerned that the wording of the Prayer in its current form did not reflect all the spiritual groups of the community which they represented.

In other words, the current prayer that we use is exclusive; it excludes some people. The report continues:

The majority of the Committee (with Mr Cornwell and Mr Hird opposing) considered that standing orders 74 and 30 could be amended to mirror this spiritual diversity. The amendment to standing order 74 would be the addition of the words "or reflection" after "Prayer".

Standing order 74 sets out the order of business and the first thing it lists is prayer. It would now read "Prayer or reflection", which would allow people in that diverse spiritual range to take that time to reflect. The report goes on to say:

This amendment would then be included in the form of the Prayer read by the Speaker at the commencement of each sitting and included in standing order 30.

Today the Speaker read from standing order 30 the prayer that is currently used, which is as follows:

Almighty God, we humbly ask You to grant Your blessing upon this Assembly. Direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Your glory, and the true welfare of the people of the Australian Capital Territory. Amen.

Of course, we would expect that some people would continue silently to say that prayer. Instead of those words, the Speaker would say:

Members, at the beginning of this sitting of the Assembly, I would ask you to stand in silence and reflect on our responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Mr Speaker, I think that the two controversial items that we have to deal with are Tuesday night sittings and the prayer. My perception of the proposed amendment to the prayer is that it reflects the much more tolerant society that we have now - a society that is growing and growing in tolerance. I remember my own upbringing, Mr Speaker, in Catholic schools. We were, indeed, intolerant of the public school kids, and they were intolerant of us. I think that is something that is rapidly changing in our society. There is a growing tolerance. It is not just a growing tolerance of people of one religion to another; there is a growing tolerance and recognition of the spiritual diversity of people in our society, and the fact that some people simply think in a slightly different way. One way of dealing with that, Mr Speaker, is to allow everybody in this Assembly to pray or reflect in their own way. The purpose here is to have a much more inclusive notion rather than the prayer that we have, which excludes some people's spirituality, some people's understanding.

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I would encourage members not to feel that we are taking away a prayer. Rather, we are allowing the inclusion of people who are not included. To my way of thinking, Mr Speaker, that would be a more Christian approach, one that is inclusive rather than exclusive. Let me re-emphasise, Mr Speaker, that, in order to allow appropriate community discourse and discussion, the debate on the prayer will not occur until early June. The debate on the standing orders which are largely uncontroversial, or have already been canvassed in the community, will take place in accordance with this motion during Assembly business next Thursday.

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

### ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

### May Day

**MR BERRY** (9.04): Mr Speaker, although it is 2 May, I would like to talk about May Day.

**Mr Moore:** Surprise, surprise! Every year.

**Mr Humphries:** Always out of date.

**Mr Moore:** Are you recycling the same speech?

**MR BERRY:** No, no. There seems to be a little bit of agitation on the other side every time you mention something around which workers organise. May Day has been an important day for the working community throughout the world for many a year. It is also a day which is celebrated one way or another in Australia. There was a celebration here in the ACT in relation to it. I was able to hear the trade union choir in full voice. The choir was developed by the local Trades and Labour Council and is a worthwhile endeavour.

I would like to talk about a few other significant events as well, and some of my early contacts with May Day. Some members may recall that the Marcos regime was coming to an end in 1986 and Corazon Aquino was about to take the reins in the Philippines. At about that time my wife and I were on a trade union delegation in the Philippines and we attended a May Day celebration in Manila. About 500,000 people attended that rally because they were welcoming a change. There had been a struggle throughout the Philippines about the oppressive regime there and there was a great anticipation in the community about change. The community had developed this understanding.

That change came because there had been this struggle throughout the community, and people power had won. It was warming to be involved in the marches with the people and to see them gathered around something which was going to change their lives. Even though it might not have changed to the full extent that they would have wished, it did change. That was a very significant thing to see.

Other significant matters have occurred here in the ACT on May Day. I was reminded today that Mr Connolly made his inaugural speech on May Day in 1990. He mentioned in it the long traditions of the Labor Party in our 100 years, going back to 1891 and the great struggle in Queensland, which was pretty much the same sort of thing which had occurred in the Philippines. People were struggling around an issue and they wanted change. Working people in Queensland had a couple of options. One was the option of violence and the other was the parliamentary option. They took the parliamentary option. Since then the Australian Labor Party has been developing itself as the representative of working people in this country. We have that long and proud tradition and we continue to fight for it.

I must say, looking back to May 1990, how much things have changed and how much they have not. Mr Moore, in a debate on the same day, was talking about the Liberal Party, I think, and he went on to say:

The community can see only one area that you have decided needs to be improved, and that is the wallet of those who are already well off.

Mr Moore said that about the Liberal Party on 1 May 1990. Is it not interesting, Mr Speaker, that today, in question time, we were questioning the Government about their ability to help the well-off but not look after the workers? Nothing changes.

### **Mr Brendan Smyth**

**MR DE DOMENICO** (Minister for Urban Services) (9.09): Mr Speaker, listening to Mr Berry made me reflect for a while that there have been some people power things. Some people have been warming to things, not in Manila, but very close to us here in the ACT of recent times. I think it would be remiss of this Assembly on the first night of a real sitting not to mention one of those times when people power really did take over and Mr Brendan Smyth won the seat of Canberra. It is warming to many of the people in the ACT. Hordes of people decided to change their minds and vote for Mr Smyth. It was a true reflection of people power. It was a reflection of the fact that people were discontented with the calibre of representation that they had had from another member over a number of years, and from another party over a number of years. The people of the seat of Canberra, mainly from the Tuggeranong Valley, I am pleased to say, saw through the veneer that was there for many years. To me, that was a true reflection of people power, a true reflection of people warming to a fresh approach and a new face. I think it behoves this Assembly to say congratulations to Mr Smyth on his victory.

### **New Members' Inaugural Speeches**

**MR MOORE** (9.11): Rather than reflect on May Day or reflect on political victories, I would like to reflect on the range of inaugural speeches we heard today. Mr Speaker, it seemed to me, as I listened to those inaugural speeches, that coming through them was an awareness of the distaste with which this Assembly has been held by many of the people in Canberra. I think, actually, that it is more a distaste for self-government per se, but it has come through in many ways. I must say, for those of us who have been members of this Assembly since its inception, that the community attitude is improving constantly. This evening, Mr Speaker, I heard from a range of enthusiastic people who stood for election for the same reason that all of us stand for election; that is, because we believe that we can have some impact on changing our city and our Territory for the better. That enthusiasm, and what people are prepared to go without and are prepared to do in order to achieve that, is something for which I would like to express my admiration.

Mr Speaker, it is true to say that I did not agree with everything I heard this evening, but I would also like to say that that is what makes the chamber work so much the better. If we get to a situation where we agree on all issues it seems a bit pointless for us to go on with this process. There will be times over the next three years, Mr Speaker, no doubt, when there will be some antagonism felt. We know that from experience. I think it is a good time to reflect and to realise that people are here to change Canberra for the best, or to return, as Ms Horodny says, to some of the great values that she remembers while growing up in Canberra. I would like to offer my congratulations, as you did, Mr Speaker, to each of the members who made their inaugural speeches this evening. I feel proud to be in the Assembly with those members who are starting off with that enthusiasm. I hope that they can retain that enthusiasm and continue working to see Canberra at its best.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**Assembly adjourned at 9.14 pm**