



**DEBATES**

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**HANSARD**

4 May 1999

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**Tuesday, 4 May 1999**

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**MR SPEAKER** (Mr Cornwell) took the chair at 10.30 am and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND TEMPORARY ORDERS**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Community Safety and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (10.32): Mr Speaker, I move:

That so much of the standing and temporary orders be suspended as would prevent:

- (1) any business before the Assembly at 3.00 pm this day being interrupted to allow the Treasurer to be called on forthwith to present the Appropriation Bill 1999-2000;
- (2)(a) questions without notice concluding at the time of interruption; or,
  - (b) debate on any motion before the Assembly at the time of interruption being adjourned until the question - "That debate on the Appropriation Bill 1999-2000 be adjourned and the resumption of the debate be made an order of the day for the next sitting" is agreed;
- (3) at 3.00 pm on Thursday, 6 May 1999, the order of the day for resumption of debate on the question that the Appropriation Bill 1999-2000 be agreed to in principle, being called on notwithstanding any business before the Assembly and that the time limit on the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, Independent Members and The ACT Greens be equivalent to the time taken by the Treasurer in moving the motion - That the Bill be agreed to in principle; and,
  - (4)(a) questions without notice concluding at the time of interruption; or
    - (b) debate on any motion before the Assembly at that time being adjourned until a later hour that day.

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Mr Speaker, this is the same motion which has been moved every year for a number of years, and it facilitates the special arrangements to do with the presentation of the budget.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY – STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Scrutiny Report No. 5 of 1999 and Statement**

**MR OSBORNE:** Mr Speaker, I present Scrutiny Report No. 5 of 1999 of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety performing the duties of a scrutiny of Bills and subordinate legislation committee. I ask for leave to make a brief statement on the report.

Leave granted.

**MR OSBORNE:** Mr Speaker, Scrutiny Report No. 5 of 1999 contains the committee's comments on five Bills, 20 pieces of subordinate legislation and two government responses. I commend the report to the Assembly.

**TRUSTEE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1999**

Debate resumed from 25 March 1999, on motion by **Mr Humphries:**

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR STANHOPE** (Leader of the Opposition) (10.34): Mr Speaker, the Trustee (Amendment) Bill amends the Trustee Act 1925 of the State of New South Wales in its application to the ACT. The principal objectives of the amending Bill are to amend the powers of investment of trustees and to set criteria that trustees must use when exercising the powers. As members may be aware, the current Act limits trustee investments to a range of nominated securities issued, for instance, by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, to Commonwealth, State and Territory and local government owned corporations, to banks, building societies in relation to first mortgages, some bills of exchange, and solid security investments such as those.

This Bill that the Government has introduced will permit trustees to invest trust funds in any form of investment unless the instrument creating the trust prohibits certain types of investment in the terms of the trust instrument. The provision thereby creates a situation in which persons creating trusts, which includes, say, any person making a will, are to be well informed about how the trust fund may be invested. There has been a significant growth in the investment industry and the quality and quantity of advice have improved, and this Bill includes criteria that a prudent financial adviser should use when deciding on investments.

I have had the benefit of discussions with the Public Trustee and with officers of the Attorney's department. The view of the Public Trustee and of the Attorney and his department is that the amendments are important in allowing the trustee to be more competitive with private trustee companies and to offer better service to those clients that utilise the services of the Public Trustee. The Public Trustee is responsible for administering some \$47m in trust funds, including a number of individual trusts worth up to \$1m each.

I note that the scrutiny of Bills committee has not made any adverse comment on the Bill. I think it is important that we understand and acknowledge this particular amendment. It does broaden the range of investments that the Public Trustee may make in relation to trust moneys over which she has authority. It does not have any application in relation to trusts in respect of which the trust instrument delineates the range of investments that might be made. I have to say, just as an aside, that in relation to those other trusts and trusts that the Government might otherwise have created for its own purposes, such as the Bruce Property Trust, to the extent that those trusts determine the range of investments that may be entered into, this particular legislation has no impact at all.

The new provisions are designed to act in aid of existing investment powers, subject to any contrary intention, as I have just said, in the trust instrument. I accept the advice of the Public Trustee and the Attorney's officers that the amendments are designed in the main to assist in cases where a trust deed is defective or perhaps just old and out of date and does not reflect modern practices. On that basis the Labor Party, the Opposition, is quite prepared to support this Bill.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Community Safety and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (10.39), in reply: Mr Speaker, I thank the Opposition for its support for the legislation. I, too, see it as an important device to facilitate the effective investment of trust moneys by trustees and to ensure that trustees are free from constraints which are increasingly being discarded by jurisdictions around the country. With the exception, I think, of Queensland, the ACT remains the only jurisdiction with these limitations on what a trustee may do. Mr Speaker, I think it is quite appropriate to remove those restrictions.

There is an element of risk in investments of any kind, with very few exceptions perhaps. It is appropriate in an era of low interest rates for trustees to do their best to be flexible and perhaps a little adventurous about the way in which they invest trust moneys. In days of 10, 12 and 15 per cent interest rates it did not much matter if you simply put the money in the bank, but interest rates are much lower these days. It is obviously important, if the value of a trust is to be retained and enhanced, for trustees to have a wider range of options before them to improve on the position of the trust's corpus. That is why this Bill has come forward, Mr Speaker.

I understand that the Opposition has taken some time to carefully consider its position. I am pleased that the Bill has passed its scrutiny. I look forward to the flexibility which this Bill will provide to trustees, being a valuable device in assisting in the operation of those particular devices in the context of the ACT.

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Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

### **FIREARMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1999**

Debate resumed from 25 March 1999, on motion by **Mr Humphries**:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR STANHOPE** (Leader of the Opposition) (10.41): Mr Speaker, the Opposition is also quite pleased to support this piece of legislation. The Firearms (Amendment) Bill deals specifically with arrangements that are necessary to allow competitors in the 2000 Olympics to bring firearms into the ACT for the purpose of shooting competitions that will be a part of the Olympic Games. The Bill obviously covers the possibility that people training for or participating in the shooting competitions that are part of the games will be allowed to enter the ACT with firearms for which they otherwise would not have authority.

To that end, the Bill allows the Registrar of Firearms to issue temporary permits to international visitors and to grant temporary recognition to licences and permits issued interstate principally for the purpose of those shooting competitions. Under the legislation, the temporary permits or the temporary recognition of interstate permits will be limited to a period of three months or less. It is notable, Mr Speaker, that the amendments give effect to a decision to that effect by the Australian Police Ministers Council.

The absolute period for which a permit may be granted is three months. That does give some latitude either side of the Olympic Games, which, as members would appreciate, in effect cover a two-week period; but it is quite reasonable, I think, in order to promote the ACT's interest in a role in the Olympics, that a three-month period be allowed for a temporary permit for firearms for these purposes.

I do not think the amendment derogates in any way from the very good position that the ACT has adopted in relation to the prohibition of firearms. I am conscious of the very significant and strong role played by the Attorney in relation to the banning of firearms. This temporary exemption for the purpose of the games is something that I think we would all support, without in any way suggesting that the strong attitude adopted on both sides of this place in the ACT in relation to firearms is maintained.

I might add a rider. I believe the Attorney has introduced an amendment which the Labor Party will also support, although we did raise with the Attorney's office some questions about whether or not the amendment was the cleanest and most clinical way to achieve the purpose that he seeks to achieve by it. I just place on the record that I am not sure

that it does not create an internal inconsistency in section 49A that might have been otherwise avoided with a different approach. I just wanted to put on the record that I do not think it is a particularly clean amendment, but the Labor Party will, nevertheless, support it.

**MS TUCKER** (10.45): The Greens will also be supporting this legislation. I was a little bit concerned at one point because I know that in the agreed national guidelines it was required that uniform gun laws would severely restrict the use of semiautomatic weapons except to bona fide members of the Australian Clay Target Shooters Association. We know that that has not occurred in Victoria where members of the field and game shooters body have been allowed to obtain permits for semiautomatic weapons for use in competitions. I did raise concerns about whether or not it would mean that such an organisation could be part of competition in the ACT, and Mr Humphries assured me that it would not.

It is clear to me now that the ACT legislation only allows clay target shooters who meet the ACT requirements, membership of the Australian Clay Target Shooters Association, to get a temporary licence to compete in the ACT target shooting competition, and these requirements are spelt out in the regulations very clearly. So it is obviously a useful piece of legislation at this point in time, but I think we do need to be aware that really in Victoria we are seeing the national firearms agreement being watered down, which should be of concern to all Australians. We do need to remain vigilant in the ACT about this matter.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Community Safety and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (10.46), in reply: Mr Speaker, I want to thank members of the Opposition and crossbenches for supporting this Bill. I think members have accurately described what it attempts to do. I also thank members for their cooperation in adapting to the position that the Government has ultimately taken with this Bill.

Members will recall that I wrote to all MLAs about the effect of discussions taking place on the modifications to the national gun laws. I indicated in my original correspondence that the Government believes that exemptions of this width are not appropriate, and when the Government came back to the Assembly with the amendments a wider set of exemptions was provided for. As a result of the discussion that took place at the Australian Police Ministers Council, Mr Speaker, the Government ultimately made a decision that we wanted to remain part of the process of implementing the national gun laws and being part of a national consensus on that.

We had the option of opting out of that and exercising more restrictive arrangements, but decided that was not appropriate and that we should remain part of the national gun scheme and reflect all provisions of that scheme in ACT law, and hence the difference. Mr Speaker, the vital factor in that decision was, of course, the desire by the ACT to ensure that the Olympic Games were successful and that pre-Olympic events being held in the ACT were not circumscribed or excluded altogether by virtue of the state of our gun laws.

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These provisions, I make no secret, are wider than I would ordinarily have thought it was appropriate to support, but, clearly, there will be a number of major national and international events in a whole range of sports leading up to the Olympics in the middle of 2000, and many of those events will be held across Australia, some in the ACT. It would be unfortunate, I think, if important pre-Olympic events where competitors, including Australian competitors, could have the chance to prepare appropriately were not able to take place in the ACT because of that. I thank members for their understanding on this issue and I hope it will extend to other issues and other legislation where we will need to consider how to accommodate the special requirements of the Olympic Games in the coming 12 or 15 months.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### Detail Stage

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Community Safety and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (10.49): Mr Speaker, I move:

Page 4, line 5, clause 7, proposed new subsection 49A(5), definition of “defined period”, omit the definition, substitute the following definition:

“ ‘defined period’ means the period of 3 months commencing on the day on which the person arrives in the Territory for the purpose of participating in the competition.”.

Mr Speaker, the amendment I have circulated removes a superfluous paragraph from the Bill. Permits enabling an international visitor to possess and use a firearm for competition purposes will remain in force for a maximum of three months.

Proposed section 49A of the Act provides that an international visitor will only be able to possess and use a firearm in the ACT for competition purposes in reliance on a permit issued interstate for what is called “the defined period”. Subsection 49A(5) says that the defined period is the period ending three months from the arrival in the Territory and at the expiry of the permit, whichever is the earlier.

This government amendment simply removes the reference to the expiry of the permit, bringing an end to the defined period. This is because once an interstate permit expires, none of the provisions of section 49A will apply to an international shooting competitor to authorise possession or use of a firearm in the ACT. Section 49A is expressed to apply to the holder of a temporary permit issued interstate which authorises the possession and use of a permit for competition shooting. If a permit has expired, the person to whom it was issued ceases to be the holder of a permit, and the permit is no longer in existence to authorise possession or use of a firearm. The government amendment simply removes the superfluous reference to “the expiry of the permit”.



I understand that the reference to the expiry of the interstate permit was included in the Bill as a result of following closely the language of the relevant APMC motion. Members will appreciate that the resolutions of ministerial councils are not drafted on the basis that their wording will or should be used in legislative provisions. What is important is that the legislation drafted to implement such resolutions adequately gives effect to them. The amendment to the Bill in no way detracts from giving effect to the relevant APMC resolutions on the temporary international visitors' authorisation to possess and use firearms in shooting competitions.

I have circulated an explanatory memorandum, Mr Speaker. I do not comment on the elegance of the drafting. It has been prepared by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and I commend it to the house.

Amendment agreed to.

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

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

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

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Community Safety and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (10.52): Mr Speaker, pursuant to standing order 150, I move:

That order of the day No. 3, Executive business, relating to the Gaming and Racing Control Bill 1998 be postponed until the next day of sitting.

I understand that members do not wish to debate the Bill today.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BILL 1998**

Debate resumed from 10 December 1998, on motion by **Mr Humphries**:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR HARGREAVES** (10.53): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion to refer the Emergency Management Bill 1998 to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety for inquiry and report.

Leave granted.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I move:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of standing order 174:

- (1) the Emergency Management Bill 1998 be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety for inquiry and report; and
- (2) on the Committee presenting its report on the Bill to the Assembly the resumption of debate on the question "That this Bill be agreed to in principle" be set down as an order of the day for the next sitting.

I am proposing to have this referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety prior to the debate in the in-principle stage because I feel that there are such significant difficulties contained within the Bill that it would be of assistance to the Assembly to hear the recommendations from that standing committee. It is important that the consultation process be transparent and be as wide-ranging as we can make it. I recognise and congratulate the officers of the Minister's department on the extent to which consultation has gone on so far, but I think it could be extended a bit further.

I believe, Mr Speaker, that this is a significant piece of legislation. I think the philosophy of it will be supported by almost everybody but we need to get it right. There is no need, I believe, to rush into it. Indeed, it has not been rushed, and I congratulate the Minister for not doing that; but I still think its reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety will enable a number of differing views to be put forward, and the committee will be able to report to the Assembly and make recommendation for amendments if necessary. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Community Safety and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (10.55): Mr Speaker, the Government has not had any notice of this motion today. I understood, from conversations I had this morning in the corridor on the first floor, that it was proposed to refer the Bill to a standing committee. I assumed it was the Justice Committee, and I see now that it is. I was not clear from my discussion this morning as to whether the referral would be pursuant to standing order 174, which allows it to go after it has had in-principle debate, or in the form that has now been moved by Mr Hargreaves, which allows it to go forward without that in-principle debate.

Mr Speaker, I have an amendment which I am about to circulate which inserts after "report" in the first paragraph the words, "by the first sitting day in November 1999". Mr Speaker, the reason for that amendment, if I might speak to it, is that I am a little concerned that this process will go on for a great deal of time without the Bill being addressed in a timely manner.

This Bill was introduced into the Assembly in December of last year. I have to express concern that it has been on the notice paper for five months and has actually been listed on the daily program before members have seen fit to refer it to a standing committee of the Assembly. With the greatest respect, if members had that intention it would have been better to have referred it five months ago, or at some point earlier this year, than to have done so at this late stage. However, Mr Speaker, I accept that members wish to refer it to that committee and in the circumstances the Government will acquiesce to that, but I would ask members to at least put a deadline of some sort on this process so that it is possible to ensure that the matter is dealt with in a timely way. Mr Speaker, I formally move the amendment which has been circulated in my name. It reads:

Paragraph (1), after “report”, insert “by the first sitting day in November 1999”.

**MR HARGREAVES** (10.58): Mr Speaker, I rise to advise the Assembly and the Government that this period is acceptable to the Opposition. I have had discussions with the chairman and that will be acceptable.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

**Sitting suspended from 11.00 am to 2.30 pm**

## **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

### **Bruce Stadium**

**MR STANHOPE:** Mr Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you tell the Assembly how much the Government paid CRI Ltd to undertake the preliminary assessment of the redevelopment of Bruce Stadium and how much was paid, or will be paid, to CRI Project Management Pty Ltd to project manage the redevelopment? Can you confirm that CRI Project Management were involved in the preparation of the ACT bid for Olympic soccer?

**MS CARNELL:** I will take that on notice, Mr Speaker.

**MR STANHOPE:** I have a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Can the Chief Minister confirm to the Assembly that CRI is owned by Deutsche Bank?

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I do not know who owns CRI, but I am happy to take it on notice.

### **Fujitsu Business Deal**

**MR KAINE:** Mr Speaker, my question is also to the Chief Minister. It is not quite as global as that from the Leader of the Opposition. Chief Minister, about a year-and-a-half ago you announced a business deal with the giant Japanese owned multinational Fujitsu. Under that deal they were offered substantial incentives for locating a significant part of their operations in the ACT. I understand that the central feature of this deal was that Fujitsu would establish a computer support and telephone help centre for its customers, partly in the former Health Department headquarters in Moore Street, Civic. Chief Minister, can you tell the Assembly the total value of the taxpayer-funded incentives that went to Fujitsu, including both cash contributions and forgone revenue to the Territory?

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, the predominant amount of money for Fujitsu - I will get Mr Kaine the exact figures - was involved in a refit of some office space and payroll tax incentives. They were tied up with how many staff they actually put on. Fujitsu are continuing to operate, to put staff on, and I will find out for Mr Kaine exactly what incentives have been provided at this time to Fujitsu.

**MR KAINE:** I have a supplementary question, given that there were incentives paid and there has been revenue forgone to attract Fujitsu here. My recollection is that at the time it was said that Fujitsu would locate a work force of some 900 full-time employees in the ACT. Chief Minister, how many of those 900 full-time jobs have, in fact, materialised? It is now a year-and-a-half later. There must be a significant number of them in place, presumably.

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I will find out for Mr Kaine exactly how many are in place. Certainly, last time I checked, it was not nearly at the level of 900, I have to say; but I think I have made the comment before in the public arena that the jobs have not been coming so quickly. I do not know how many they are up to at the moment. Remember, with revenue forgone you do not forgo the revenue unless they put the staff on, so there is a chicken and egg scenario there, Mr Speaker. Fujitsu do have not insignificant staff here in the ACT. I will find out just how many they have put on at this stage at the Asia-Pacific help desk and other associated operations.

### **Bruce Stadium**

**MR QUINLAN:** Mr Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister and relates to Bruce Stadium. Today's *Canberra Times* included a letter to the editor reporting some quite extraordinary projections for attendances that purport to be drawn from the stadium business plan. Can the Chief Minister confirm that the figures included in the *Canberra Times* were indicative of the numbers used in the Bruce Stadium business plan? Let me remind you that we are talking about average crowds at major rugby league games of 18,000, with a 71 per cent attendance, at rugby union of 16,500, and at soccer of 10,000 per game on average.

**Mr Osborne:** I must be making a comeback.

**MR QUINLAN:** There has to be a crowd-puller there somewhere. As the Chief Minister is aware, I have asked on a number of occasions for a copy of the business plan and have been refused because, I think the answer is, the Chief Minister does not think that it is appropriate, so it looks like I am going to get it from the *Canberra Times*. Can you advise the Assembly if those figures are indicative of the figures incorporated into the business plan, based on a consultancy report? Of course, you can let us know whether that consultancy report was independent.

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I have actually offered Mr Quinlan a confidential briefing on the business plan. In fact, I have offered it to him on the same basis as the briefing we gave to Mr Whitecross when he was here. That confidential briefing was not based upon Mr Whitecross not continuing to ask questions of the Government and not continuing to do what certainly this Opposition does all the time, that is, oppose. But it was, Mr Speaker, a confidential briefing that Mr Whitecross took on board and he behaved, I have to say, very responsibly. The same offer has been given to Mr Quinlan. He, at this stage, has not taken it up. Mr Speaker, I cannot help it if Mr Quinlan does not take up the offer of a confidential briefing. What it shows - - -

**Mr Corbell:** Answer the question. It is a question in the parliament. What a cop-out!

**MR SPEAKER:** Mr Corbell, the Chief Minister is quite properly responding to an inference that was made by Mr Quinlan. I have no doubt that she will get to the rest of the question in due course.

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I am happy to continue when those opposite are quiet.

**MR SPEAKER:** Indeed, Chief Minister.

**MS CARNELL:** Thank you. Mr Speaker, I have no idea where the numbers came from in the *Canberra Times* this morning, but I can certainly guarantee that they did not come from the business plan that Mr Quinlan, if he took up the offer of a confidential briefing, would know about. Mr Speaker, the business plan was prepared by an independent organisation.

**MR SPEAKER:** Do you have a supplementary question, Mr Quinlan?

**MR QUINLAN:** Yes, Mr Speaker. Can the Chief Minister advise, if those figures were in any way indicative of the business plan, what the impact would be eventually on the ratepayer, taxpayer, of the ACT?

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, is it not sad that people opposite cannot change their supplementary questions? I just answered the question by saying that the figures are not indicative. I suppose it shows a lack of capacity to think on their feet. Mr Speaker, I have said but again that the figures are certainly not indicative of the business plan. Mr Quinlan could have a confidential briefing, as could any of those opposite, on the business plan at any time he likes.

### Belconnen Pool

**MR RUGENDYKE:** Mr Speaker, my question is to the sports Minister, Mr Stefaniak. Mr Stefaniak, earlier today you announced that the Government had decided to go ahead with the Belconnen pool project. The development will not be the \$15m facility promised to the community at last January's sod-turning ceremony, having been reduced to \$8m. Can the Minister please tell the Assembly how the new proposal would stand up against any further competitive neutrality complaints and whether any further competitive neutrality complaints would jeopardise the project?

**MR STEFANIAK:** I thank the member for the question. It is an interesting question. As the member is aware, there was a sod-turning ceremony. Back in 1997 the Government placed a certain amount of money in its capital works program, conducted a siting study and announced the result of that. Within days of that there were, in fact, two complaints, as I understand it, under the competitive neutrality principles. Of course, those complaints were investigated. The group investigating them, the Competitive Neutrality Complaints Unit, made its findings, as a result of which the Government commissioned the Allen Consulting Group report, which I hope you have a copy of now, Mr Rugendyke. If you have not, I have one here which I will give to you. The Government has looked at the recommendations and, indeed, accepted them.

As you are aware, the recommendations indicated that if the Government were to go ahead with the pool - and the Government has confirmed that with the \$8m set aside in the capital works program - it should confine its contribution to four items, basically a 50-metre indoor pool with a moveable bulkhead, seating for 800 spectators, timing equipment and a personal address system that would allow the staging of swimming events, and a large aquatic fun pool that incorporated water activities and a temporary three-lane, 25-metre warm-up area; in other words, things that are not currently supplied within the area. The report also indicates:

The Government should allow the tenderers to determine what additional facilities and services will be offered. Current industry practice suggests, however, that the centre would incorporate a gymnasium, aerobics class, creche, kiosk/coffee shop, medical consulting rooms, etc.

It goes on to say:

The Government should not subsidise any services provided in the new centre which are commercially available elsewhere in the greater Belconnen region (eg, gym facilities).

That is recommendation 6, which has a bit more to it that I will not read out. Basically the Government has accepted that, Mr Rugendyke. However, I cannot say what might happen here in terms of whether one or both of the complainants or anyone else who might feel aggrieved will have recourse to further action. That is indeed their right. I understand that there are additional avenues under the national competition policy mechanisms. There are also, as there is with any decision of government, various other tribunals or courts which could be appealed to. The Government has very carefully

looked at this decision and very carefully looked at this comprehensive report and made its decision on the basis of that. Of course, a lot of this report was in relation to, specifically, the issues of competition policy. Accordingly, the Government has been very careful in terms of assessing the report and making its decision.

**MR RUGENDYKE:** Mr Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Minister, if the new proposal were to be overturned by any further competitive neutrality complaints, would the Government still spend the \$8m on another project in Belconnen or would the electorate of Ginninderra miss out totally on the \$15m promised at the last election?

**MR SPEAKER:** That is very close to seeking an expression of opinion, Mr Stefaniak.

**MR STEFANIAK:** Yes, it is hypothetical, Mr Speaker. However, this project will take a few years. I note that you mentioned the sum of \$15m, Mr Rugendyke. If you look at what the Government has spent over the last three years in Belconnen, I think that you will find that it is a lot more than \$15m on capital works. As a member for Ginninderra, I would certainly hope that over the next three years we will spend a lot more than \$15m.

### **Bruce Stadium**

**MR CORBELL:** Mr Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister. Will the Chief Minister explain to the Assembly why the Under Treasurer's specific performance criteria 1998-2000, contained within the Under Treasurer's executive contract, does not include reference to his directorship of Bruce Operations, whilst it does make specific mention of ACTEW and ACTTAB? Has this been deliberately omitted from the contract to avoid scrutiny by the Assembly, as the contracts are public documents?

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, we have been so open about this matter that everybody knows who are the two shareholders of Bruce Operations Pty Ltd, or BOPL as we call it. I assume that that is the case because the performance contract was written prior to BOPL coming into existence. Mr Speaker, if those opposite did not realise that the Under Treasurer was one of the shareholders of BOPL, then they were the only ones who did not.

**MR SPEAKER:** Do you have a supplementary question, Mr Corbell?

**MR CORBELL:** Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker. It has been reported that the Under Treasurer "remains confident that the refurbished stadium will ultimately return the \$30m to \$40m investment within the next 30 years". That is a quote from the Under Treasurer in the *Chronicle* of 13 April. Will the Chief Minister explain to the Assembly how the Under Treasurer's performance can be assessed, based on projects that are not reflected within his performance-based contract, where the possibility of a return to the Territory is based merely on supposition?

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I am happy to tell you how I would assess the performance of the Under Treasurer - on the basis that there is \$57.5m of new Commonwealth money in the budget that I will be bringing down this afternoon. Mr Speaker, the work that OFM did - and it was OFM that did it - in terms of the

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Commonwealth Grants Commission applications or submissions was absolutely stunning. I would be more than happy to assess the performance of the Under Treasurer on the basis of the budget that I will bring down this afternoon.

**Mr Corbell:** I take a point of order, Mr Speaker. My question was about the performance of the Under Treasurer in relation to Bruce Stadium. The Chief Minister should confine her answer to that question.

**MR SPEAKER:** I am not sure that she can actually comment on the performance of the Under Treasurer in relation to anything. She can make comments in relation to her views.

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Corbell clearly asked me how I would assess the performance of the Under Treasurer and I am more than happy to tell him - at length, if he would like.

**Mr Corbell:** In relation to Bruce Stadium. She has to answer in relation to Bruce Stadium. That was the question.

**MR SPEAKER:** No, she does not have to answer in relation to anything. The Chief Minister and any other Minister can answer as they see fit. You know that, Mr Corbell. You have been here long enough.

**Mr Corbell:** Oh, to anything. Why are we here, Mr Speaker?

**MS CARNELL:** Many people might ask, Mr Corbell. Mr Speaker, I think that it is very important to realise that the two directors of BOPL are not shareholders. The shareholders of BOPL are obviously the community, via members of the Executive. They are directors, not shareholders. Mr Speaker, the performance contract obviously includes major issues such as performance in areas like financial management generally. Today we are going to bring down a budget that, as many people will now know, will show that this Territory can be financially sustainable. We will be able to move into the black in 2000-01. Mr Speaker, I think that that shows serious performance.

### **Children's Court Magistrate**

**MR OSBORNE:** My question is to the Attorney-General, Mr Humphries, and is in regard to the announced appointment yesterday of the Children's Court Magistrate. The Chief Magistrate, Mr Cahill, yesterday designated himself as the Children's Court Magistrate for a minimum period of three years, as is required under the law. You may recall, Minister, that the conditions of this appointment were rigorously scrutinised by both the Justice and Community Safety Committee, a previous committee of this Assembly, the Social Policy Committee, and a wide cross-section of the Canberra community and that Mr Cahill's concerns were taken into account in the committee's report and subsequent legislation. I think it would be fair to say that all members of that committee would agree that Mr Cahill was given a fair hearing. Does it not concern you, then, that the Chief Magistrate has so reluctantly complied with the law in appointing a Children's Court Magistrate and is now actively seeking legal advice on how he can wiggle out of some of these responsibilities?



**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Speaker, I think members are well aware of the circumstances of the announcement by the Chief Magistrate yesterday about the appointment of the Children's Court magistrates. The legislation that was passed by the Assembly a few weeks ago requires the designation, to use the language of the Act itself, of a Children's Court Magistrate and a Deputy Children's Court Magistrate, those two magistrates being the people who exclusively, as I understand the legislation, deal with Children's Court matters in the ACT. The assumption, I suppose, when the Assembly passed the legislation was that there would be the designation or appointment of two magistrates already on the bench to fulfil those roles for a period of three years as required by the legislation. I have seen the correspondence - I think members of this place also would have seen it - between the Chief Magistrate and his colleagues. Those full-time magistrates have all declined to accept the designation as either the Children's Court Magistrate or the Deputy Children's Court Magistrate. In the circumstances, the Chief Magistrate appointed himself as the Children's Court Magistrate and a special magistrate, Elizabeth Symons, as the Deputy Children's Court Magistrate.

The Chief Magistrate has complied with the law by doing so. Whether he had some other option or not is a matter that I cannot comment upon. Obviously, the other magistrates believed that they had the option of refusing to be designated in that role. Whether the Chief Magistrate had that right or not I do not know, but he did not seek my advice on that subject. In any case, in due course he chose to appoint himself to that role. I have to say that I think that the arrangement is not ideal. I do not think that it is what even the architects of the legislation would have envisaged as ideal to have the Chief Magistrate, who is, I would suggest, the busiest of the magistrates already, taking on the role of Chief Magistrate of the Children's Court as well, in effect, and indeed one of only two magistrates in that jurisdiction who can hear Children's Court matters. Mr Speaker, he was obviously reluctant about that, so were his colleagues. He expressed those views in a statement which he made to the court when it sat yesterday after he had made that decision.

Mr Speaker, it obviously concerns me that there is this conflict between the legislature and the judiciary, which is what it is. It is not the first time that there has been such conflict and it probably will not be the last time; but, as Attorney-General, I believe that my job is to attempt to find ways of solving the problem without the issue becoming a serious impediment to the delivery of justice by the Children's Court of the ACT. I intend to attempt to do that by discussing the matter further with both members of this place and the court.

**MR SPEAKER:** Do you have a supplementary question, Mr Osborne?

**MR OSBORNE:** Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker. Minister, are you aware that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child requires, in part, that in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by courts of law or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration? Do you agree with this statement? If so, does the provision of a specialist magistrate to the Children's Court for a reasonable period where consistency and the quality of care can become a priority not fulfil this requirement?

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**MR HUMPHRIES:** That was certainly a very weighty question, Mr Osborne, and I thank you for it. I do not know what those provisions of the international covenant say. I will have to go and refresh my memory about what they say. I have not brought a copy of it down with me, unfortunately. I left it up in my room. Mr Osborne's question does raise a revisitation of the issues that were canvassed in the Bill itself. Whether the Act which has now been passed facilitates those goals or not I could not say. I will say that there is clearly a problem with the legislation as it now stands. That is something that I believe we have to go back and address, Mr Speaker. I hope that the members of this place will see the need to do so as a requirement that falls on all of our shoulders and that we will discuss this matter from the position of attempting to resolve what is obviously a vexing problem from the point of view of at least the court.

### **Bruce Stadium**

**MR BERRY:** My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you tell the Assembly whether the former chief executive of your department, Mr John Walker - the one who described himself as the vice-president, now an employee of Bankers Trust - had any involvement with the Bruce Stadium redevelopment project during his time with the ACT Government? Has Mr Walker had any involvement in the financing arrangements for the stadium since leaving the employ of the ACT Government? In particular, has Mr Walker been involved in any way in bringing Deutsche Bank into the view of the Government as a possible brokerage agent for arranging private sector finance for the Bruce Stadium redevelopment? What payments has the Government made to Mr Walker or to any organisation with which he has been associated since he left the employ of the ACT government service?

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I think that Mr Berry should have read a correction in the *Canberra Times* this morning before he asked that question. Deutsche Bank do not own Bankers Trust in Australia and anyone who reads the financial media would know that that is the case. In fact, Bankers Trust Australia is currently out to be sold. Mr Walker has had no involvement in financing since he left the ACT Government. Obviously, he would have been involved in Bruce Stadium and probably lots of other things when he was here, but he has not had any involvement in the Bruce Stadium issue since he left.

### **Energy Efficiency Ratings**

**MS TUCKER:** My question is directed to the Minister for Urban Services. Minister, it is now nearly five weeks since the Energy Efficiency Ratings (Sale of Premises) Act came into effect, but it appears that many real estate agents and private house sellers are not complying with the law. My office analysed the real estate advertisements for ACT properties in last Saturday's *Canberra Times*. It showed that only 73 per cent of advertisements included an energy rating, 21 per cent had a rating pending and 6 per cent had no mention of a rating. This is a little better than the numbers in advertisements in previous weeks. Of particular concern is that nearly half of the private house

advertisements had no rating, but there are also real estate agents that are particularly poor about including ratings. Could you therefore tell us what you are doing to make sure that real estate advertisements comply with this legislation?

**MR SMYTH:** Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is a very important question as to compliance with laws passed by this place. We also have been analysing the number of advertisements that have not had the efficiency rating attached and have found, like Ms Tucker, that a large number of the private sales have not taken the opportunity yet to get the efficiency rating done. We have contacted those people and alerted them to their responsibility to get it done. At PALM we are still continuing to process applications for plans. We are doing that as speedily as we can and we will continue to monitor the situation.

**MS TUCKER:** I have a supplementary question. We have also some reports that energy rating assessors are being quite sloppy in how they prepare their energy ratings. Are you aware of this problem? What are you doing to ensure that the energy raters do their job properly?

**MR SMYTH:** Mr Speaker, I am not aware of any claims that assessors are not doing their job properly. We do have an audit process that will look at the assessors and the assessments they issue to make sure that they are being done properly. If the member has any examples that she would like to bring to my attention, we would certainly investigate them.

#### **Australian Federal Police - Timor**

**MR HARGREAVES:** Mr Speaker, my question is to the Attorney-General and relates to the possibility of Australian Federal Police officers being made available for policing duties in Timor. Has the Attorney-General had discussions with the AFP regarding the replacement of trained and skilled officers to ensure a continuity of expertise available to the people of the ACT?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Speaker, I have not had any discussions with the AFP about the matter, although I have spoken to a number of officers who have expressed an interest in applying for those positions. I would expect - this issue has not been raised with us - the position to be the same for this contingent as it has been for other overseas contingents, that is, that any deployment of officers from the AFP would come at the expense of national operations or regional operations other than the ACT. I would certainly expect that, if an officer were taken from the ACT, he or she would be theoretically replaced, given the requirement for a certain number of police to be provided to the ACT, by somebody else from the AFP, such that the ACT was not, in effect, bearing the burden of sending this contingent overseas.

Mr Speaker, it may be that in due course the Government will be asked to shoulder part of the burden of some of these international exercises. I do not rule out the possibility of our agreeing to do so. But we have not been asked to do so yet. I do not think that we

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should have that happen in this case, unless it is put very squarely before us. Mr Speaker, if it is raised, I hope that it will be a properly ventilated issue throughout the whole political process, including in the Assembly.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! It being 3.00 pm, in accordance with the resolution agreed to earlier this day, I call upon the Treasurer, Ms Carnell.

### **APPROPRIATION BILL 1999-2000**

**MS CARNELL** (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (3.00): Mr Speaker, I present the Appropriation Bill 1999-2000, together with its explanatory memorandum, the following supplementary budget papers in accordance with section 13 of the Financial Management Act 1996 and associated budget papers:

Budget speech 1999-2000 (Budget Paper No. 1)

The 1999-2000 budget at a glance (Budget Paper No. 2)

Overview 1999-2000 (Budget Paper No. 3)

Budget Estimates 1999-2000 (Budget Paper No. 4)

Australian Capital Territory – A clever caring community

Media releases

Later this afternoon I will be presenting the ownership agreements and the purchase agreements relating to my portfolio. Other Ministers will be presenting the purchase agreements relating to their portfolios.

Title read by Clerk.

**MS CARNELL:** I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Mr Speaker, next week the ACT marks the tenth anniversary of self-government. There can be no better way to celebrate this milestone than to announce that we have successfully made the transition from financial dependence to financial sustainability. The budget I present today does just that. It more than halves the budget operating loss and lays the groundwork for the budget to move into surplus in 2000-01, four years ahead of schedule. It commits \$300m towards our greatest financial millstone, the unfunded superannuation liability, and it provides additional resources for critical services, including health, education and justice.

Mr Speaker, it is a responsible budget, it is a fair budget and, importantly, it is a sustainable budget. It is a budget that allows us to look forward with confidence to the next 10 years because we have put the Territory's finances in order. As we enter the next

century, Canberra will continue to be Australia's best place to live, work and raise a family. Last year we mapped out a four-year budget strategy centred on the theme of creating a clever and caring community. Our goals have not changed. Indeed, strong financial management makes those goals achievable. This budget also marks a further step in the standards of transparency in the information that is provided to Canberrans. The papers that I present today spell out clearly where savings will need to be made, where taxes have been increased, and where reductions in staffing will occur. Mr Speaker, we certainly have gone the full monty, probably without the hat.

I am very proud to announce today that this Government's budget strategy will result in the elimination of the ACT's operating loss within two years. The 1999-2000 budget provides for a further dramatic reduction in the general government sector operating loss to \$63m. This represents an \$86m, or 58 per cent, improvement on the \$149m operating loss forecast for the current financial year. Less than 12 months ago, we promised to eliminate the operating loss by 2005. Today we are on course to deliver on that promise, four years ahead of schedule. Indeed, by 2003-04 our strategy will see the Territory recording a forecast general government sector surplus of \$67m. Our aim is to achieve a sustainable operating surplus that is sufficient to fully fund public sector capital works without the need for borrowings. Under this Government, we are on track to do just that and we will do so while continuing to fund important areas like health and education at levels that are above the national average, to ensure that these high-quality services remain accessible to all Canberrans.

Mr Speaker, when we first came to office four years ago, we were confronted with the legacy of a \$344m operating loss left by Labor. Most observers felt that it was an impossible task to even think of trying to turn that into a surplus, given the realities confronting minority government in the ACT. We have done the impossible and better, turning a \$344m operating loss into a surplus within six years without slashing and burning. Mr Speaker, this Government does not view a surplus as an end in itself. Rather, it is the means by which we can ensure not only that adequate resources are directed to where they are most needed, but also that future generations of Canberrans are not disadvantaged because we could not live within our means.

A stronger ACT economy is one of the factors underpinning the improved budget position. The ACT has now enjoyed nine consecutive quarters of economic growth, producing a steady fall in the unemployment rate to levels not seen since the start of the decade. The focus on business and employment in the last three ACT budgets has paid off, helping to diversify and strengthen our local economy. Business conditions are positive, with low inflation, low interest rates and increased opportunities flowing from Commonwealth government outsourcing all contributing to high levels of confidence. The Government expects 1999-2000 to be a period of consolidation, with economic growth forecast to moderate before accelerating again in the following financial year. Population growth is predicted to increase gradually, but remain below the national rate for several years. The Government has continued to be conservative in its forecasts of both economic growth and revenue growth, in line with our commitment to responsible financial management.

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Mr Speaker, a much fairer deal from the Commonwealth is the second factor behind our improved budget position. In our financial relations with the Commonwealth we have achieved what no other ACT government has been able to do since 1989 when we achieved self-government. Following 10 years of reductions in Federal payments which had amounted to almost 50 per cent in real terms, this Government has successfully reversed that trend. In 1999-2000 total Commonwealth funding to the Territory, including specific purpose payments, is forecast to increase by \$85m, or a record 14 per cent. General purpose funding increases by 18 per cent, or \$57.5m. It is unquestionably the best outcome since self-government and vindicates this Government's decision to go all out in putting its case to the Commonwealth Grants Commission for a greater share of Commonwealth payments. As these budget papers show, we have responsibly directed this additional funding to reducing the operating loss and providing additional resources in areas of critical need.

Finally, the ACT, like other States and the Northern Territory, is on the verge of entering into a new financial arrangement with the Commonwealth that will give each jurisdiction access to a growing financial pool. Subject to the passage of legislation currently before the Federal Parliament, the ACT will have access to revenue from a goods and services tax to be introduced from 1 July next year. In return, the Territory will progressively abolish nine of its own taxes. Thanks to this historic reform of Commonwealth-State financial relations, the ACT's future budget position has been dramatically strengthened, although GST revenue has not been factored into the forward estimates as yet.

Mr Speaker, spending restraint is the third critical element shaping the improved budget outlook. Total expenses are forecast to increase by just 3 per cent, or less than one per cent in real terms, during 1999-2000. More importantly, this budget represents the next stage of realising our vision for Canberra as a clever, caring community. It targets additional resources and support for Canberra's school and college students, for Canberrans needing medical treatment, for Canberrans with disabilities and for increased protection of Canberra children who may be at risk.

This budget also recognises the need for greater effort by the Government to improve our corrective services, our public housing and our city's general appearance. It will enable us to modernise our information technology systems so that we can deliver services to Canberrans quickly, conveniently, accurately and more efficiently. At the same time we are laying the foundations for a genuine budget surplus to do what no other ACT government has done - put our finances into the black using the most transparent of all public sector accounting measures. While it is true that the elimination of the ACT's operating loss has been high on our agenda, the need for improved social and community outcomes has not been overlooked. Good financial management has delivered the social capital that Canberrans want. The responsible approach that we have taken is the only way that these outcomes have been and can continue to be achieved.

Let me turn now to the major initiatives contained in this budget. Over the last four years this Government has invested heavily in the provision of new and expanded services and facilities for health and community care. This budget reinforces this commitment by providing additional funds to help people needing elective surgery, people with

disabilities and older Canberrans. It will also enable essential reforms and improvements to both hospital and community services as the focus of health care in the ACT increasingly shifts from acute care to primary intervention and support.

To ensure that waiting times for Canberrans needing urgent elective surgery are improved, the Government has decided to allocate an additional \$3m to purchase many more surgical procedures. To be in place for the next two years, this initiative represents a doubling of funding to \$6m per annum for the waiting list reduction program that was first established by this Government. Day surgery facilities at the Canberra Hospital will also be expanded from eight to 12 beds to enable greater throughput for these procedures. As part of the plan by the hospital's management to improve its efficiency and contain costs, this budget also provides funding for targeted voluntary redundancies. In total, the hospital is expected to realise savings of approximately \$12m in 1999-2000 through this measure and other efficiency measures.

Mr Speaker, funding for the home and community care program will be increased by a further \$1m, which will allow many more services to be provided to older Canberrans, people with disabilities and carers. In 1999-2000 a record \$12m will be spent under this joint Commonwealth-ACT program. If there is one area of community care which receives less public attention than it deserves it is surely disability services. Despite this fact, over the past four years this Government has boosted funding for disability services by 30 per cent. I am pleased to advise that in this budget we will provide a further \$1m for disability support services in recognition of the level of unmet need. That is an increase of 5.8 per cent in ACT funding, more than double the CPI.

The Government has also made good on its promise to establish a hepatitis C financial assistance scheme at a cost of \$4.5m. As well, funding of \$300,000 has been made available to establish a new integrated diabetes management service in the ACT. Finally, the Government has decided to transfer allied health services from the control of the Canberra Hospital to ACT Community Care, in line with our aim of strengthening the primary health care sector.

The Government will release a new, integrated ACT drug strategy later this year that will outline the direction we intend to take in combating the problems caused by illicit drug use in our community. The strategy will be based upon three distinct but interrelated approaches - law enforcement, education and treatment. In advance of this strategy, this budget includes new funding initiatives totalling more than \$500,000 which are aimed at boosting our response to these problems. The Government will contribute \$250,000 a year for each of the next four years to help establish the ACT's first residential drug treatment program for teenagers. Extra funds totalling \$100,000 will be made available to provide up to 100 additional places in the methadone treatment program. Another \$115,000 will be directed towards strengthening drug education programs in government schools.

Mr Speaker, just as this Government's provision of increased community and health services underpins our notion of a caring society, our efforts to maintain the best education system in Australia must be seen as integral to our goal of a clever community. In this budget, like the four that have preceded it, funding for government schooling has been maintained in real terms at an additional cost of \$5.2m in 1999-2000. A total

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of \$1m has been set aside over the next three years to establish the high schools in the new millennium program. A teacher renewal program will also be introduced, with the aim of creating increased employment opportunities for graduate teachers. It will provide incentives for teachers who are approaching retirement to consider leaving early and help schools and colleges to better meet their changing skills needs in areas such as vocational education and information technology. Mr Speaker, for non-government schooling we have honoured every one of our election commitments, with an extra \$2.7m in total to be made available in 1999-2000.

Mr Speaker, protection of children at risk of abuse is to be enhanced as a result of this budget. Funding of \$370,000 has been allocated for the introduction of a child protection case management system, while a further \$200,000 has been set aside for the introduction of family group conferences as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. As well, \$100,000 will be made available to help provide more support and information for Canberra parents and families.

Mr Speaker, this Government places a high priority on helping to make Canberra a safer community. During the past four years we have significantly increased our police, ambulance and firefighting resources. In 1999-2000 the Government will provide the Australian Federal Police with an additional \$1.7m. This Government is also committed to providing police with alternatives to the use of lethal force. Capsicum spray is one such measure. I am pleased to announce that the AFP has agreed to a request from the Government for operational officers to be equipped with these devices later this year. As part of the Government's commitment to road safety, speed cameras will be introduced from 1 July this year, while red-light cameras will be operating in Canberra from July 2000.

Mr Speaker, the Government will commit additional funding of \$310,000 to meet the increased workload of the Director of Public Prosecutions. We have allocated \$70,000 for the establishment of an Aboriginal justice advisory committee and the development of a strategic plan in a measure aimed at addressing the overrepresentation of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the criminal justice system. The Government has also set aside more than \$1m for the introduction of a new victims assistance scheme which will provide counselling and rehabilitation services. This scheme is, of course, dependent on the passage of legislation that is currently before the Assembly.

The budget also makes provision for new and improved correctional services at a total cost of \$3.7m, the largest single increase since self-government. Payments to the New South Wales Government for prisoners will rise by \$2.1m in 1999-2000, while more than \$880,000 will be spent on increasing the capacity of the Belconnen Remand Centre. Funding of \$400,000 will be made available to improve the management and operations of the Quamby Youth Detention Centre, including skills development and education courses for young offenders. An extra \$200,000 will be provided to improve nursing and other medical services at both the Remand Centre and Quamby. Finally, the ACT's highly successful community corrections scheme, which was established by this Government, will be further expanded at a cost of \$85,000. Mr Speaker, this additional funding for justice and community services should be viewed against the overall decrease in the ACT's operating loss. It shows again how good financial management can produce real improvements in the social capital of our community.



This budget also marks major changes to the management and operation of public housing in Canberra. The eligibility and tenure criteria have been completely overhauled to ensure that, from 1 July this year, Canberrans who are most in need will receive priority assistance. We are determined to ensure that under this Government more low-income earners will be able to access housing faster. To this end, the Government will also aim to transfer responsibility for another 800 dwellings to the community sector over the next five years, bringing to 1,000 the total number under community management.

These changes, which are detailed in the budget papers, are accompanied by an increase of almost \$8m in spending on the refurbishment and construction of new dwellings. The Government is painfully aware that our current stock of housing does not adequately meet the changed profile and needs of today's tenants. An additional 74 units suitable for older persons will be built over the next 12 months as part of our promise to provide 200 new units over three years. The ageing Lachlan Court complex at Barton will be sold and the proceeds will be used to upgrade Burnie Court at Lyons and to purchase more suitable replacement dwellings.

Mr Speaker, this Government is conscious of the need to promote not only a sustainable budget surplus but also the sustainable development of the Territory. To support the ACT's greenhouse gas reduction strategy, funding of \$340,000 will be invested in a range of measures designed to reduce energy usage. These measures include a pilot subsidy program for water-efficient shower heads, extension of the Energy Advisory Service, the collection of emissions inventory data and a pilot public housing retrofit program to reduce energy consumption in up to 500 homes. The ACT will also commit an additional \$100,000 to enable the production of the year 2000 State of the Environment Report. It is worth noting, too, that funding for the construction of new bike paths and repairs to existing routes has been increased to \$660,000 in this budget, a record amount.

From December, a new water abstraction charge will be introduced to reflect the full cost of water supply and to encourage Canberrans to conserve one of our most precious resources. The Assembly has already passed the relevant legislation. In line with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Commissioner's recommendation, the charge will be applied at the rate of 10c per kilolitre. For an average Canberra household, this will result in an increase of approximately \$30 a year or about 60c a week - the cost of a packet of Fruit Tingles. We need to have something to eat later! Mr Speaker, it will still mean that Canberrans will be paying much less than residents of other major Australian cities for their water.

Mr Speaker, while this Government has already announced new moneys totalling \$1.3m under the streetsmart program to improve the appearance of Canberra's urban areas, we have decided to allocate an additional \$1m in 1999-2000 to help clean up our city. On top of this, the next stage of our precinct management program will see \$2.1m spent on improving public areas in Charnwood, Dickson, Hall, Kingston, Kippax, Manuka and Weston Creek.

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While the ACT currently has an extremely low unemployment rate, this Government has not reduced its support for Canberrans who are seeking work. While existing employment programs have been maintained, the ACT Public Service is set to increase the number of apprenticeships and traineeships that it will offer in 1999-2000. The budget also provides additional funding of more than \$1m for two major business development initiatives. The ACT industry development program will be established at a cost of \$250,000. It will provide small businesses with strategic planning consultancy services and advice. A total of \$775,000 will be invested in marketing Canberra as a business destination both interstate and internationally.

In cooperation with the National Capital Authority, a new ACT promotion centre is to be constructed at Regatta Point overlooking Lake Burley Griffin. The ACT Government will contribute \$1m to the centre, which will showcase our city to business visitors. The Canberra Tourism and Events Corporation will also receive an additional \$2m for marketing and promotion, the second instalment of a \$6m funding boost over the term of this Government.

This Government is continuing to lead the way in encouraging the development of Canberra as a centre for information and advanced technology. That leadership is in the form of the complete modernisation of our IT infrastructure across every agency and every service. Our aim is to have all major government transactions available online by 2001 and we are well on the way to achieving this. Our modernisation program will not only ensure that our critical systems are Y2K ready by late 1999 but also position the Territory to offer better and faster services to all Canberrans. Mr Speaker, \$10m has been allocated for the government-wide upgrading of information technology cabling, along with another \$8m for the replacement and upgrading of key systems within the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Canberra Hospital and the Emergency Services Bureau.

Mr Speaker, this budget provides for the allocation of \$300m to help meet the Territory's unfunded superannuation liabilities. The money will come from a capital repayment by ACTEW Corporation. It is a one-off payment allocated fully to the superannuation provision account and will not impact on the overall budget operating result. It replaces the plan announced last year and is consistent with the recommendations of the Assembly's select committee on superannuation. Mr Speaker, this is a second-best option but, in light of the Assembly's decision to reject the sale of ACTEW Corporation, the Government has been left with few alternatives.

From 1 July all new entrants to the ACT Public Service will be able to choose their own superannuation scheme or they will be covered by a default scheme selected by the Government. The government contribution will be consistent with the superannuation guarantee levy of 7 per cent, rising to 9 per cent in 2002. It should also be noted that the results of the latest triennial review of the Territory's superannuation liability should be available in the second half of 1999, which will provide an updated estimate of our emerging costs and liabilities.

Mr Speaker, this Government has significantly improved the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of its operations since coming to office. Over the past three years the size of the ACT Public Service has been reduced by about 10 per cent, or approximately

2,000 positions. These reductions have been achieved without compromising on the high quality of services that are provided by our hospitals, our schools, our police or other key agencies. In short, it is because we are working smarter that we can deliver the same outputs with fewer people. For the Territory's financial position to be sustainable in the long term, however, much more work remains to be done.

There are still tough decisions that need to be made in the years ahead and this Government will not shirk them. In 1999-2000, therefore, it is anticipated that approximately 450 voluntary redundancies will be offered across the general government sector. Again, these initiatives, together with other savings measures, are fully disclosed in the budget documentation. It is important to note that these redundancies equate to a reduction of less than 3 per cent in total staff numbers. They will occur at a time when our unemployment rate is extremely low and the bulk of Commonwealth downsizing in Canberra has been completed. Mr Speaker, these changes in staffing profiles will form part of the restructuring of operations in a number of agencies, chiefly Urban Services, the Chief Minister's Department, Justice and Community Safety, the Canberra Hospital and the CIT. I cannot emphasise too strongly the fact that the only way we can achieve an operating surplus and ensure our long-term financial position is by taking these steps to reduce the costs and to improve the efficiency of the services that we provide.

While new and increased taxes and charges are electorally unpopular, it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that the Territory's revenue base is both adequate and adequately protected. This Government makes every effort to minimise the impact of these revenue measures upon Canberrans, especially those who have lesser capacity to pay. Total revenue is due to rise by 9 per cent above the forecast outcome for 1998-99. However, this is largely due to increased Commonwealth funding. Revenue from taxes, fees and fines is forecast to increase by 4 per cent, or \$24.7m. The largest single item is payroll tax, which is growing strongly, reflecting strong employment and wage growth in the private sector. We remain committed to keeping the general level of taxes and charges in the ACT at or below that of surrounding New South Wales.

A number of new revenue initiatives are detailed in the relevant budget papers as part of our commitment to full disclosure. They include a new sliding scale of gaming machine taxation rates to provide relief for small licensed clubs while increasing the rate for larger ones, a renewal fee for liquor licences and an increase in the ambulance service levy payable by private health insurance companies, bringing the ACT into line with New South Wales. The overall increase in rates revenue has been restricted to forecast CPI for the fifth consecutive year. From 1 July 2000 the Government will be introducing a polluter-pays charge to reflect the costs that pollution imposes on our environment.

Mr Speaker, this budget also responds to the concerns expressed by some sectors of the Canberra community about problem gambling. I can announce today that the Government has allocated \$500,000 for research into the social and economic impacts of gambling in the ACT, to be carried out by the new Gambling and Racing Commission, if that legislation is passed. Once again, the approach we have taken to this important community issue is in stark contrast to that of the previous Government, which did absolutely nothing. Finally, this budget does not rely on major asset sales.

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Without financial sustainability, attempts to produce equity and fairness through the budget would be built on foundations of sand. The only way we can create a clever and caring community and guarantee the maintenance of high standards of service is, first, to get our finances in order. This budget marks a watershed in the financial management of the Territory. It is not only fair and equitable but also financially sustainable. It lays the groundwork for the budget to move into genuine surplus in 2000-01, four years ahead of schedule.

This Government has been aggressive in its leadership. We have encouraged Canberrans to believe in their city, unlike those opposite. Our budget strategy reflects this can-do approach to government, and we are proud of that. We have reversed a legacy of irresponsible financial management left by the Labor Party and reflected in the \$344m operating loss that we inherited. In its place we have boosted revenue, trimmed spending and won a better financial deal from the Commonwealth. As a result, we will begin the new millennium with our budget in the black and our finances in better shape than at any time since self-government. The only thing we have to fear is a future Labor government taking us right back to where we started. Let me state again that it is only with good financial management that we can deliver the social outcomes and the social capital that Canberrans deserve and expect. Mr Speaker, I commend the 1999-2000 budget to the Assembly.

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

## **OWNERSHIP AGREEMENTS**

### **Papers**

**MS CARNELL** (Chief Minister and Treasurer): Mr Speaker, for the information of members, I present the 1999-2000 ownership agreement between me, as Treasurer, and the following chief executives and executives: Chief Minister's Department, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Department of Education and Community Services, Department of Urban Services, Department of Health and Community Care, ACTION, ACT Housing, and ACT Forests.

## **STATEMENTS OF INTENT**

### **Papers**

**MS CARNELL** (Chief Minister and Treasurer): I present the 1999-2000 statements of intent prepared by the following Territory authorities pursuant to section 58 of the Financial Management Act 1996: Agents Board of the Australian Capital Territory, ACT Community Care, Healthpact, the Milk Authority of the ACT, Australian International Hotel School, Canberra Cemeteries, Cultural Facilities Corporation, Canberra Institute of Technology, Canberra Tourism and Events Corporation, ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, Exhibition Park in Canberra, Gungahlin Development Authority, Legal Aid Commission (ACT), Public Trustee for the ACT, and the Canberra Hospital.

**PURCHASE AGREEMENT**  
**Paper**

**MS CARNELL** (Chief Minister and Treasurer): I also present the 1999-2000 purchase agreement between me, as Chief Minister, and the chief executive of the Chief Minister's Department.

**SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION**  
**Papers**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Community Safety and Minister Assisting the Treasurer): I present subordinate legislation, pursuant to section 6 of the Subordinate Laws Act 1989, in accordance with the schedule of gazettal notices circulated.

*The schedule read as follows:*

Fire Brigade (Administration) Act - Appointment to the Office of Fire Commissioner - Instrument No. 72 of 1999 (S19, dated 16 April 1999).

Health Regulation (Maternal Health Information) Act - Appointments as members of the Advisory Panel on Abortion Information - Nos 65 to 71 of 1999 (inclusive) (No. 16, dated 21 April 1999).

Motor Traffic Act - Motor Traffic Regulations - Declaration of a declared holiday period - Instrument No. 74 of 1999 (S20, dated 21 April 1999).

Corrigendum (S21, dated 21 April 1999) to the Motor Traffic Act - Motor Traffic Regulations - Declaration of a declared holiday period (23 April 1999-26 April 1999 (inclusive) (published in *Gazette* S20, dated 21 April 1999)).

Public Health Act - Determination of Chief Health Officer Functions - Instrument No. 64 of 1999 (No. 16, dated 21 April 1999).

Radiation Act - Appointment as a member of the Radiation Council - Instrument No. 73 of 1999 (No. 16, dated 21 April 1999).

**PURCHASE AGREEMENTS**  
**Papers**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Community Safety and Minister Assisting the Treasurer): Mr Speaker, for the information of members, I present the 1999-2000 purchase agreement between myself as Attorney-General and the chief executive of the Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

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**MR SMYTH** (Minister for Urban Services): Mr Speaker, for the information of members, I present the 1999-2000 purchase agreement between myself as Minister for Urban Services and the chief executive of the Department of Urban Services.

**MR STEFANIAK** (Minister for Education): Mr Speaker, for the information of members, I present the 1999-2000 purchase agreement between myself as Minister for Education and the chief executive of the Department of Education and Community Services.

**MR MOORE** (Minister for Health and Community Care): Mr Speaker, for the information of members, I present the 1999-2000 purchase agreement between myself as Minister for Health and Community Care and the chief executive of the Department of Health and Community Care.

### **RATES AND LAND TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 1999**

**MS CARNELL** (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (3.39): Mr Speaker, I ask for leave to present the Rates and Land Tax (Amendment) Bill 1999.

Leave granted.

**MS CARNELL**: I present the Rates and Land Tax (Amendment) Bill 1999, together with its explanatory memorandum.

Title read by Clerk.

**MS CARNELL**: I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present this legislation that will determine the rating factors for 1999-2000. Members will remember that the current rating system was introduced in July 1997 to provide more certainty to ratepayers and to reduce the fluctuations in liabilities from year to year. This system also achieves better equity, or fairness, by redistributing rates liabilities more evenly. It reflects both the capacity to pay of property owners and the level of services received.

Features of the current rating system include: A fixed charge to apply to all land except rural properties; an ad valorem charge based on a rolling three-year average of unimproved capital values; a threshold to apply to all average land values; separate revenue targets to apply to the residential and non-residential sectors respectively; and differential rating factors for residential, non-residential and rural properties.

Mr Speaker, this Bill adjusts the rating factors to take account of the total rates revenue for 1999-2000, the level of the fixed charge, and the inclusion of the 1999 property values in the rolling three-year average of 1997, 1998 and 1999. It has been the Government's policy to limit the increase in the total rates revenue target each year to the

forecast movement in the CPI. For 1999-2000, rates revenue is budgeted at \$104.3m, compared to \$101.7m in 1998-99. This represents an increase of 2.5 per cent. This forecast increase in the CPI is consistent with the Commonwealth Treasury forecast for 1999-2000 as published in the mid-year review. It is also consistent with the Reserve Bank's inflation target of between 2 and 3 per cent for 1999-2000. The Bill also includes an adjustment to the fixed charge applying to properties within the city area, from \$240 in 1998-99 to \$260 in 1999-2000.

Mr Speaker, a gradual increase in the fixed charge reflects more closely a user-pays principle, without causing major impact on individuals' rates bills. It distributes the liability more evenly according to the benefit received by property owners by recognising the minimum fixed costs of providing essential municipal-type services to each ACT property, regardless of its location or land value. The fixed charge also reduces the proportion of rates based on the property value and therefore reduces the impact of movements in valuations from year to year. The other features of the rating system are unchanged from 1998-99, including the rates-free threshold of \$19,000, the revenue targets of 85 : 15 for the residential and non-residential sectors respectively.

Mr Speaker, this Bill continues the work that commenced in July 1997 to improve the rating system that applies to around 117,000 rateable properties in the ACT. The combined changes to the fixed charge and the rating factors for 1999-2000 result in the best possible outcome for the largest number of ratepayers, and at the same time meet the revenue target required to provide municipal-type services for ACT residents.

Mr Speaker, this Bill also introduces a determined fee for the lodgment of objections to decisions or assessments relating to rates and land tax. The cost of processing objections to revenue matters is quite high and there is no mechanism to deter the lodgment of frivolous objections from ratepayers or land tax payers. The objection lodgment fee will be refundable to the ratepayer or land tax payer upon a successful result, either in whole or in part, at the objection or appeal stages. The introduction of an objection lodgment fee will result in resources being effectively used to review the more genuine cases, and at the same time maintain and protect the rights of taxpayers and land tax payers to seek a review of decisions affecting them. Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

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

### **REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 1999**

**MS CARNELL** (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (3.45): Mr Speaker, I ask for leave to present the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 1999.

Leave granted.

**MS CARNELL:** Mr Speaker, I present the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 1999, together with its explanatory memorandum.

Title read by Clerk.

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**MS CARNELL:** I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Mr Speaker, this Bill provides omnibus legislation to implement a number of the Government's revenue initiatives announced in the 1999-2000 budget speech by amending, where appropriate, the Gaming Machine Act 1987, the Lotteries Act 1964 and the Taxation Administration Act 1999.

Essentially, the Bill will provide for the following fees and charges: Changes to ACT gaming machine tax rates; gaming machine licence application fee; gaming machine licence variation fee; gaming machine repairer certificates fee; interclub link jackpot permits variation fee; lottery permit variation fee; and objection fees.

Mr Speaker, in relation to the ACT gaming taxes, a number of small clubs will now pay no tax, and more than 30 per cent of Canberra clubs, those with annual gross gaming revenue above \$600,000, will still only pay a 25 per cent tax rate in the ACT, which includes the one per cent levy to the Academy of Sport. Even with the new increases, the top tax rate in the ACT compares favourably with other jurisdictions - 24.75 per cent to 26.25 per cent tax rate in New South Wales, 33.33 per cent in Victoria, and through to 45 per cent in South Australia and Queensland. In addition, Mr Speaker, in New South Wales and many other jurisdictions, licensed clubs also need to compete with the casino, hotels and taverns for revenue from gaming machines.

Mr Speaker, in regard to the other matters dealt with by this Bill, the fees and charges adopted are based on the principles endorsed by this Government, and that is cost recovery for the service provided, similar levies for similar services in both the private and public sectors, and price indexation in line with expected movements in the CPI. Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

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

## ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

## Women's and Girls Jogalong

**MR STANHOPE** (Leader of the Opposition) (3.48): Mr Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to reflect briefly on the twenty-first birthday of the women's and girls jogalong, if I may.

**MR SPEAKER:** It is your adjournment debate.



**MR STANHOPE:** Mr Speaker, I want to acknowledge the Canberra women's jogalong. I was very happy to attend the twenty-first birthday celebrations of this event on Sunday. It is a wonderful event. I do not know whether the Minister for sport, Mr Stefaniak, has visited it, but I would encourage him to do so.

The women's jogalong, quite obviously, has now been in existence for 21 years. The event last Sunday attracted 400 women and girls. It is quite easily the most significant women-only mass participation sporting event in Canberra, and possibly in Australia. It is a very significant event. It is currently organised by a dedicated group of runners and supporters headed by Annette Sugden and others. I commend the effort and dedication which people put into organising events such as this. The event, in the last 12 months, has attracted 1,700 different women. So, over the space of that last year, 1,700 women, most of whom I am sure do not participate very fully in mainstream athletics or sport, were attracted to this six-kilometre run which is conducted in Stromlo Forest.

I think the women's jogalong is a great model for sporting organisations and sports administrators of the sorts of issues which sports administrators should take into account in order to attract women into sport and into physical activity. As I am sure all members are aware, one of the remaining areas of significant and patent discrimination in our community and society is in relation to opportunities for women to participate freely and equally in sport. Every indicator tells us that that is the case. I think it is sad that even in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, something that I think most of us are quite proud of, there will be more events for men than for women. There will be many more male athletes at the Sydney Olympics than women athletes. There will be many more male officials, coaches and trainers at the Sydney Olympics than women coaches and officials.

It is quite likely that, irrespective of those disparities, our women athletes and competitors will probably achieve greater results than our male athletes, as they traditionally have done on a per capita basis. A view of most of Australia's representation in Commonwealth and Olympic games shows consistently that women outperform men in Australian sport. That is a bit of an aside, but I think it goes to a very serious issue - the need for us as a community to concentrate on the reasons why men in sport have actually fared better in terms of resources and participation than women.

The women's jogalong is a great event and it has achieved this enormous result. There were 400 women in one event last Sunday, and a total of 1,700 women participated throughout the year. It is a colossal result and it has been achieved as a result of some hard work and some dedication from a group of people associated with the Cross Country Club.

One of the things I would like to draw to the attention of members is the formula that was employed. It was the need to provide some events for women who do not wish to be overtly competitive in an environment in which they do not feel exposed to overtly competitive behaviour and where they are allowed to maintain some dignity in terms of their performance. It was the need to provide sporting opportunities where women can socialise in a non-threatening, social and friendly environment. It was the need to gain some sense of achievement out of the event. The jogalong is a handicap event and every participant manages to gain that sense of achievement. It was the need for women to have a safe environment in which to be able to exercise in safety. There is a range of

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constraints facing women that do not face men. To wind up, the women's jogalong was the first sporting event in Canberra to provide full, free child care, and I cannot overemphasise the importance of that.

**MR SPEAKER:** The member's time has expired.

**MR STANHOPE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The women's jogalong is a wonderful event.

**MR SPEAKER:** The member's time has expired. You do not get an extension in the adjournment debate.

### **Women's and Girls Jogalong**

**MR STEFANIAK** (Minister for Education) (3.54): Mr Speaker, I would like to join with Mr Stanhope in congratulating the women's jogalong on 21 years of fine achievement. Yes, I have been along, Mr Stanhope, and I must go again, although I do not know whether I could run the six kilometres. Five is quite enough for me these days, and I do it slowly.

Mr Stanhope is right in terms of the need to encourage women into sporting events, and events like the women's jogalong are excellent in relation to that. As a result of some steps the Bureau of Sport and Recreation have taken over the last three or more years to actively encourage participation by women, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of women and girls participating in events. It does not have to be supercompetitive. It is just events which they enjoy doing and which they do not feel threatened in. They can get out there, have a good time and develop skills, and perhaps that will then lead them to taking up other physical activity.

I am pleased to say that I think it is a result of significant efforts we have made in the ACT over the last few years. We have the highest participation rate by women - that is classed now as 15 years-plus - of any State or Territory. I think we are about 10 or 12 per cent in front of our nearest rivals. I think the figure is well over 50 per cent. It is still below that of men - we have an incredibly high 72 per cent participation rate for men and boys over 15 - but it is something that is narrowing. We, as a government, actively encourage the participation of women in various sporting events.

One of the key reasons for adopting the physical education in schools policy at the end of 1995 was to encourage young teenage girls to get into activities which were enjoyable at school. There are about 60 listed activities which are there to encourage young teenage kids, especially girls, to get into physical activity. Hopefully, that will then become a lifelong pursuit. Certainly, events like this are worthy of encouragement, and I think 21 years is a very good time to celebrate.

Mr Stanhope also mentioned a problem. I went to a seminar last year at which I spoke in relation to getting the media more involved in quality women's events. That is incredibly difficult, Mr Speaker. I am pleased to say that over the last couple of years, probably as a result of Atlanta and the success of some of the Australian women athletes there, the

amount of coverage went up from something like 3 per cent. During Atlanta it was about 40 per cent. After that it dropped down to about 10 per cent rather than about 3 per cent. There was certainly a quantum leap generally. In terms of getting the mainstream media to concentrate more, I am not quite sure what to do. Last week we were very lucky to have the Hockeyroos play in Canberra. In terms of an elite women's team, that is right up there with the best. It certainly has to be one of them.

**Mr Stanhope:** The best sporting team in Australia.

**MR STEFANIAK:** I have compared them, Mr Stanhope, you will be pleased to know, with some of the great sporting teams in Australian history. We had those brilliant Davis Cup teams. We have had some magnificent Australian cricket teams. There were the Alan Jones Wallabies and the 1991 Wallabies that won the World Cup. We have had some very great rugby league sides. We have had club sides like St George which won 11 premierships on the trot. The Hockeyroos are one of the best sides in the world, and have been since 1988 when they won gold at Seoul. They won at Atlanta and have consistently won international competitions since then. I think they are one of the best Australian sporting teams we have had for many decades, and I wonder how many people appreciate that.

We were lucky to have them, along with South Africa, India and Korea, in some hockey matches over the weekend, which I am pleased to see Australia won. Australia beat the South Africans 5-3 in the last match, and they go on to Perth. It is a good team. It contains the Powell sisters, Lisa and Trini Powell, from Canberra. It is a particularly good team and is a role model for any aspiring female sports person. They certainly are great role models. It is one of the best Australian teams in any sport and might be of great assistance in encouraging more women to get out there and have a go at whatever physical activity they enjoy.

### **ACT Budget**

**MR HIRD (3.58):** Mr Speaker, I rise to say to the Chief Minister and her colleagues, the Ministers who prepared the 1999 budget, well done. I say well done also to all those who put in the effort to bring this budget about. The Opposition members are leaving the chamber. They know that this is a good budget.

**Mr Berry:** Turning up the volume does not increase the quality.

**MR HIRD:** Mr Speaker, I have to say to the Chief Minister and her officials, well done. I would like to point to three areas in this document entitled "A Clever Caring Community". Mr Berry is leaving the chamber with his head bowed, and so it should be. On page 18 it says:

Canberra has, on average, a much younger population than the rest of Australia, with one quarter of the population aged between 12 and 25. The Government has taken an active role in seeking out the views of young people ...

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Congratulations. Under the heading “Older Canberrans”, it says:

Canberra’s population is rapidly ageing. The number of people 65 years and older is expected to more than double in the next 15 years. This changing population profile is placing far greater demands upon the government to provide services and policies that address key issues such as retirement incomes, health, home and community care and transport.

The Government is taking an active role in that area.

On page 20 there is a heading “A Contributing Community”. Contribution to the community is something that we well know. Perhaps the Minister responsible for one of those areas of volunteers is going to close the debate on this subject. This document says:

Volunteers in the ACT are an invaluable resource to hundreds of organisations, large or small. They are found in a wide range of areas, including health, welfare, education, the arts, sport and recreation, tourism, emergency services and the environment.

I especially mention emergency services, the unsung heroes, for the efforts that are put in. When we need those people they are there to answer the call. This Government has recognised it by making a sizeable contribution to those people. Congratulations, Chief Minister.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**Assembly adjourned at 4.01 pm**