



Debates

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Wednesday, 26 October 2011

MR SPEAKER (Mr Rattenbury) took the chair at 10 am and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Health—breast cancer awareness

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (10.02): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that October is Pink Ribbon month, which seeks to raise national awareness of breast cancer;
- (b) breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer amongst Australian women, accounting for 27 percent of all cancers diagnosed in 2007;
- (c) the number of women diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia increased from 5,291 in 1982 to 12,567 in 2007;
- (d) that events have been held around the ACT to raise awareness of breast cancer and raise valuable funds for research and treatment;
- (e) that early detection and screening programs are vitally important to assist in the fight against breast cancer and that BreastScreen ACT provided more than 11,666 screens in the ACT in 2010/11;
- (f) the BreastScreen ACT target is to screen 60 percent of women aged between 50 and 69 years of age in the preceding 24 months, with a current achievement rate of 53 percent of women in the target group;
- (g) that due to the skill and commitment of Capital Region Cancer Service staff, the percentage of treatment times for radiation therapy patients who commence treatment within standard timeframes has improved to 99.8 percent for the last financial year; and
- (h) the importance of responsible investment in additional accommodation and treatment services to ensure that current cancer services are able to meet expected demand in the future; and

(2) Acknowledges and extends thanks to all of those involved in making Pink Ribbon month in the ACT such a success.

October is pink ribbon month—a time to come together as a community to raise funds for research into and treatment of breast cancer and a time also to reflect on the impact that cancer has on the lives of individuals affected, on their families, friends and workplaces, and on the community generally. It is appropriate that this Assembly, elected by our community to speak and act for it in so many ways, also takes the time

this month to reflect on and express its solidarity with the many individuals and organisations that support pink ribbon month.

It may be useful to remind ourselves that breast cancer is just one cancer of many. The ACT Chief Health Officer is required to maintain a register called the ACT Cancer Register, which contains information on all cases of cancer notified to the Chief Health Officer under the Public Health Act. This information is analysed and reported biennially, with the aim of informing and guiding the planning of cancer services and policy development.

The Chief Health Officer will soon release the latest report, which incorporates data up to the end of 2008. Some of those findings will include that there were 1,433 new cases of cancer diagnosed in ACT residents in 2008. The risk of developing a cancer before the age of 85 is now one in two for males and one in three for females. The most common cancer among males was prostate cancer, followed by colorectal cancer, skin melanoma and lung cancer. The most common cancer in females was breast cancer, followed by colorectal cancer, skin melanoma and lung cancer. Between 1985 and 2008 there were significant increases in the incidence rates of breast cancer and lung cancer in females and prostate cancer and non-Hodgkin's disease in males.

The rates are such that it would be hard to find a family here that has not been touched, directly or indirectly, by breast cancer. It is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in Australia. Around 14,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year—about 38 women a day.

Age is one of the known risk factors for developing breast cancer. The older a woman, the greater her chance of developing the disease. Breast cancer can and does strike younger women, with around 700 women under 40 years diagnosed annually. However, about three out of four breast cancers are diagnosed in women aged 50 or more. In 2007, 51 per cent of newly diagnosed women were aged between 50 and 69. The average age of first diagnosis was 60. Because the population generally is ageing and because the overall population is increasing, we can anticipate that the number of women diagnosed with breast cancer each year will continue to increase, at least in the short and medium term.

To put it in perspective, in 1982, just 5,291 women were diagnosed. By 2007, the number was 12,567. By 2015, we can expect around 15,400 women to be diagnosed each year, a 22 per cent increase in the space of a decade. One in nine Australian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85.

Whilst breast cancer is predominantly, even overwhelmingly, a disease of women, men can also develop breast cancer. And while the numbers are small, they are growing too. The number of men diagnosed with breast cancer increased in Australia from 62 in 1982 to 103 in 2007.

Australia operates three main national cancer screening programs—for breast cancer, for cervical cancer and for colorectal cancer. The aim of these screening programs is to detect disease early. We know that, in most cases, the earlier a cancer or a pre-cancerous change is detected, and the earlier treatment begins, the better the health

outcomes. The evidence is unequivocal. Since the introduction of BreastScreen Australia, deaths from breast cancer have decreased from 31 per 100,000 in 1991 to 22 per 100,000 in 2006. In the ACT, the BreastScreen ACT service conducted more than 11,600 screens in the last financial year.

Breast cancer will, inevitably, affect someone that we know—a loved one, a friend, a neighbour, a work colleague. The awareness raising and the fundraising that take place during pink ribbon month give all of us the opportunity to be a part of finding a cure, to be a part of spreading awareness and urging vigilance. It is a chance for everyone to ensure that those affected are supported socially and emotionally during and after treatment.

Support for pink ribbon month comes from all areas of our community. On Sunday night I attended IndOz, an Indian dance and food extravaganza organised by the India-Australia Association of Canberra. During the night I was very pleased to present a cheque from IndOz to representatives of Bosom Buddies. The cheque came from the fundraising done that night.

There are still a few days of pink ribbon month remaining, for those members who have not yet taken the opportunity to consider how they might support this worthy cause.

Of course, the reality is that these are conversations that are not and cannot be confined to a month in a year. That is why the government is making the massive, historic investments that will make a practical difference to those Canberrans diagnosed with cancer—investments that mean early diagnosis, early treatment, better outcomes and better quality of life. I urge the Assembly to support this motion.

MR HANSON (Molonglo) (10.09): I thank Dr Bourke for bringing this important motion on today. It is nice that we can get together and combine as an Assembly to recognise such an important matter.

I rise today to speak on the importance of raising awareness of breast cancer in the ACT. I foreshadow that the Canberra Liberals will support both the motion and the Greens' amendment. Pink ribbon month is an important tool for exposing and promoting the importance of breast cancer detection, prevention and treatment in our community. This is an international annual event that aims to increase awareness of the disease and raise crucial funds for research.

Breast cancer is indiscriminate. There is no reason why people are struck by this cancer. Whilst vital research has brought us valuable information on risk factors and preventive measures, we can still not predict who may be the victim of breast cancer, and when.

One in nine Australian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85. The incidence of breast cancer has risen by 20 per cent in the last 10 years, and mortality rates have remained largely unchanged. Traditionally, we have thought of breast cancer as being an affliction of older women, but there is a growing awareness that breast cancer also affects younger women. Approximately 25 per cent of cancer diagnosis is for those less than 50 years of age.

While the percentage of young women diagnosed with breast cancer may be small, the impact is huge. Diagnosis for young women is difficult and often thwarted by the fact that they are perceived as low risk. They are not caught by national screening programs and therefore community awareness of the need for early detection is often more vital. The ACT Cancer Council continue to run their Girls Night In events that raise awareness amongst young women, whilst also being a valuable fundraising opportunity. In 2010 these events raised funds that helped the approximately 15,700 women who are diagnosed with breast and gynaecological cancers each year.

In the ACT we are fortunate to experience one of the highest rates of breast cancer survival in Australia. However, we also experience one of the highest rates of breast cancer diagnosis in Australia. Each year in the ACT 200 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed in women, and one new case in men. Although this is a disease that is often notable for its impact on women, it is important to note that this is also a disease that can affect men.

A 2008 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report predicted that there would be an increase of 22 per cent in the number of all cancers being diagnosed in the ACT each year. This is a result not only of our growing population but also of our ageing population.

Dr Bourke in his motion today highlights that the BreastScreen ACT target for women aged between 50 and 60 years is 60 per cent. In 2010-11, only 53 per cent of this age bracket was screened. This is in fact a decrease of two per cent from the year before. Women in this age bracket are specifically measured because they are most at risk of developing breast cancer. The ACT Health Directorate states:

Research has shown that regular screening of women in the target age group of 50-69 years has been effective in reducing deaths from breast cancer through early detection.

However, Dr Bourke highlights in his motion the failure to reach the target as if it were an achievement. He fails to even realise that the percentage of women who have had mammograms in the last two years has actually decreased.

Additionally, the percentage of women who receive their assessment within 28 days after being screened has also fallen. The target for the percentage receiving their assessment within 28 days is 90 per cent. However, only 76 per cent receive an assessment within that time frame. The time between undertaking any medical examination and being informed of the results of the examination is often stressful. Ensuring that women receive their breast screen assessments in a timely manner is important to maintain the mental wellbeing of the client.

The Canberra Liberals believe that action on breast cancer is important. Whilst we commend raising awareness by raising the issue in the Assembly, this must be followed up by substantive action.

We are not seeking political point scoring on this issue. The high rates of breast cancer in Australia mean that this is too important an issue to play politics with.

However, the government cannot continue to just talk about this issue without taking action to back it up and achieve the targets that have been set.

The ACT government have been quick to promote that they are establishing new facilities and investment in digital breast screening technology. However, without the staff for these facilities, their impact on the increasing breast screening rates, and therefore survival rates, will be minimal. The ACT Health Directorate annual report 2010-11 states that with the shortage of radiographers there will continue to be an impact on waiting times for appointments and assessments for breast screening services. Without a focused effort by the ACT government to train and recruit radiographers in the ACT, there will be little to gain.

As the Greens state in their amendment, there are consequences of treatment for breast cancer, which, while not exclusive to breast cancer patients, are experienced by a large number of breast cancer patients. The development of lymphoedema and the need to access the lymphoedema clinic at Calvary hospital is an example of this. Timely treatment in this clinic is important to ensure that the symptoms of lymphoedema are minimised and the condition does not get worse. That is why I will be supporting the amendment and asking the government to examine and report on the levels of demand at the clinic and also to examine the steps that could be taken to address this growing demand.

The cancer support agencies in the ACT can only do so much. They can raise awareness and provide information for the need for breast screening tests, but without the backup of the government, their work is redundant. We cannot let the valuable work of the ACT cancer support agencies go without results. The thousands of volunteer hours that go in to awareness programs in the ACT cannot be wasted because the government cannot back them up with targeted screening and adequate screening facilities being made available.

I would like particularly to commend the work of the Cancer Council and note the work done by Christine Brill from the Cancer Council, who is always active, certainly in bringing to the attention of politicians of all descriptions in the Assembly the good work of the Cancer Council and the need for all of us to remain attentive.

I was also recently honoured to be involved in the Bosom Buddies hat hat hooray competition, along with Gai Brodtmann, Annette Ellis and others. Although artistic pursuits may not be my strength, I was certainly enthusiastic about doing all I could to promote this active and passionate local group. Bosom Buddies is a local ACT organisation that actively supports women living with breast cancer. They also support their families and friends, and work to promote awareness of breast cancer in the Canberra community. Their membership is about 300 and is growing. This organisation is a great example of local people seeing that local people need support, and doing something about it.

The hat hat hooray competition invites people from across the community, including many who would hopefully have more millinery experience than me, to enter hats they have created. In doing so they not only raise awareness about breast cancer but also they raise much needed funds to ensure that their organisation continues to work.

My wife and I attended their annual dinner on Monday night and it was fantastic to see the number of women and their families out supporting this organisation.

As I have time I will discuss some of those women and the night. I would like particularly to thank Annette Ellis, a former member for Canberra, who is the patron of the organisation. She was MC this year at the dinner, as she was last year. She also contributed a hat to the hat hat hooray competition, and she does a magnificent job as MC. The speaker this year was Alex Sloan. She gave insights into her career as a journalist. It was a great perspective from a strong female here in the ACT. There were a couple of breast care nurses from Calvary at the event, Annie and Jen. It was great to see them come along after a very busy day working on a number of events and also continuing on with their normal job at Calvary, supporting women with breast cancer.

I would like to commend the work done by Kate Darcy, who is the President of Bosom Buddies, and the committee, including Linda Wright, Frances Chaloner, Marisa Gerussi, Sally Saunders, Eleanor Bates, Larissa Sinclair, Gigi Lungu, Kaye Johnstone and Marilyn Brookes.

As we recognise pink ribbon month, I ask us all to consider how we may further the work of these passionate volunteers. What was very sad on the night was that, as we know, across the ACT a number of people lose their lives, and the names of those who had lost their lives were read out. It was a very poignant moment. We had a minute's silence and it really brought home for me the importance of fighting this insidious disease, doing everything we can to assist in finding a cure, doing everything we can to ensure that there are adequate prevention measures available in the ACT, and doing everything we can to support those that have breast cancer.

To groups like Bosom Buddies and the Cancer Council, to Sue Owen and HeadsUp at Calvary, and all the other people that have contributed to supporting pink ribbon month and supporting women with breast cancer throughout the year, I say: well done. I commend Dr Bourke's motion to the Assembly. As I said, I foreshadow that we will be supporting the Greens' amendment. I congratulate all of those people who have been working so hard to fight this insidious disease.

MS BRESNAN (Brindabella) (10.20): I thank Dr Bourke for bringing on this motion today and also for the words from Mr Hanson. I note that the motion is very similar to the content of the motion that was moved 12 months ago; I will try not to repeat what I said last time although it was quite a comprehensive speech that I gave on that occasion. It is important that every year we recognise Pink Ribbon Day and breast cancer and acknowledge the work that goes into that day and the people who have died of breast cancer and also the people who have survived breast cancer.

The last Chief Health Officer report tells us that breast cancer accounts for about 16½ per cent of all cancers diagnosed each year, prostate cancer being second at 15½ per cent. Breast cancer is still recorded as the biggest killer of women. On average, 35 women in the ACT die each year from breast cancer related illness. It accounts for 18½ per cent of all cancer-related deaths amongst women. The rate is reducing with time, as more women receive a diagnosis at an earlier stage. In the ACT it may at some point be overtaken by lung cancer, which requires its own response.

With regard to the contents of Dr Bourke's motion, my office spoke to Bosom Buddies and they expressed some concern that one of the statistics reported in section (1)(c) of the motion was not correct, in that, according to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, it is estimated that nationally, nearly 200,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 die each year.

A representative from Bosom Buddies indicated to my office that according to the Australian National Breast Cancer Foundation 14,204 women in Australia are predicted to be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011, and in 2015, 15,400 women are projected to be diagnosed with breast cancer, an average of 42 women every day. While this is not an insignificant sum, it is not quite 200,000. Bosom Buddies also advised that each year in the ACT region, more than 350 women undergo surgical treatment and that at any point in time more than 2,000 women are in post-surgical treatment

For unknown reasons, the ACT is reported to have a rate of breast cancer even higher than the national average, with one out of 10 women diagnosed in their lifetime. This may be due to the fact that we are a more highly educated population in the ACT and also because of our high rates of detection.

Other statistics are available through the Australian National Breast Cancer Foundation. They show that one in nine women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime; women diagnosed with breast cancer have an 88 per cent chance of surviving five years after diagnosis; and improvements and survival are attributed to early detection of breast cancer through population-based mammography screening and improved treatment outcomes for breast cancer.

Increasing age is now seen as one of the strongest risk factors for developing breast cancer. About three out of four breast cancer cases occur in women aged 50 years and older. Last year, when Ms Porter moved a motion on this issue, I was able to raise a number of concerns about services on behalf of women who have or have had breast cancer. These concerns included the workload of the breast cancer nurses; the lack of services available for women with lymphoedema; the availability of bio-impedence, a method of early diagnosis; and the disproportionate impact breast cancer can have on women from poor socioeconomic backgrounds.

I have to say that there has not been a great deal of change to improve these concerns. Bosom Buddies have advised that breast cancer nurses are carrying increasing workloads and more attention is needed to ensure that there are always three breast cancer nurses working at any one time. The issue of funding for the nurses is an ongoing concern.

With regard to lymphoedema, there is increasing demand for support from the lymphoedema clinic at Calvary hospital and more staff are needed to provide this vitally important function to the many breast cancer patients who experience lymphoedema after losing lymph nodes to cancer. For those who do not know what lymphoedema is, it is the long-term swelling of parts of the body and their chronic inflammation. People with lymphoedema can become very ill with constant infections

and need hospitalisation. Fungal infections are also very frequent and are often quite difficult to clear up.

Lymphoedema can also be very painful and include other side effects such as decreased mobility, the embarrassment of having this sort of condition and depression. Last year when we had the debate about breast cancer, access to the lymphoedema clinic at Calvary was one of the top concerns listed, and it does not seem that this issue has been resolved. A lymphoedema clinic was established several years ago after advocacy by local groups, including Bosom Buddies and local members of Breast Cancer Network Australia. Bosom Buddies volunteers were able to raise funds and donate a laser machine to the clinic. Last year the clinic received about 25 new referrals every month, and once a woman experiences lymphoedema she will most likely need ongoing support and treatments by the clinic.

Bosom Buddies have reported that in recent times the demand for this service has become almost untenable for the two lymphoedema physiotherapists at the Calvary clinic and that the results of this are problematic for patients. Bosom Buddies wrote a letter to the Minister for Health pointing out that women with symptoms of lymphoedema are advised to seek treatment early but are having to wait longer to access the clinic, meaning that their condition may have considerably advanced before they receive intervention treatment.

Women also have to wait many weeks for appointments to get much-needed replacement lymphoedema sleeves, and there are very limited other sources for them in the ACT.

Due to constantly growing demand, patients cannot get frequent enough laser and other treatments from the lymphoedema physiotherapists. Laser treatment is in fact rarely offered to patients, due to the limited number of trained staff and the ever-increasing patient numbers.

Given that these issues do not appear to have been resolved in the last year, I foreshadow that I will move an amendment to Dr Bourke's motion calling on the government to investigate current and future demand for lymphoedema services and what it can do to increase the capacity of the clinic. It may mean, for example, that another physiotherapist needs to be employed. Given that so many women in the ACT are surviving breast cancer, it is important that we do what we can to minimise their ongoing chronic disease and assist them in their recovery.

The Greens are still concerned about the other matters we raised last year, including the workload of the breast cancer nurses, the availability of bio-impedance and the disproportionate impact breast cancer has on women from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Another concern that women have raised is the lack of surgeons that they can get access to.

Going to paragraph (2) of the motion, the women behind the pink campaign have been extremely successful. Some of the local heroes include Dragons Abreast, who held a dragon boat regatta on Saturday, 22 October at Weston Park. Breast Cancer Network Australia hosted a "field of women" at Calvary hospital on Monday, 24 October,

which was Australian Breast Cancer Day. And Bosom Buddies, established in the ACT 16 years ago by local women, hosted an annual dinner, which Mr Hanson has already mentioned, "Celebration of Life", on Australian Breast Cancer Day, for survivors, families and supporters.

Bosom Buddies volunteers do an extraordinary job supporting individual patients by working with the ACT specialist breast cancer nurses. They provide administrative support to the overworked breast cancer nurses. They make prostheses that specialist breast cancer nurses provide to surgical patients and coordinate the sewing of drainage bags by various consumer groups which breast care nurses provide to surgical patients. They deliver education about breast cancer to groups across the ACT region and host workshops for patients in treatment about ongoing support available in the ACT. And the volunteers provide a point of contact for patients to find out about all the information and support that are available to them.

Women who have engaged in the pink ribbon campaign and provide support to other women with breast cancer are wonderful role models for us all. As Dr Bourke has already said, many people in the community have been impacted by breast cancer; there are probably few people who do not know of someone who has died from breast cancer or survived it. My auntie died of breast cancer about eight years ago; that was an extraordinarily painful thing to go through. I also have a very close friend whose mother, auntie and grandmother have all survived breast cancer. That again goes to the importance of early diagnosis; if there is a history of breast cancer in someone's family, no matter what your age, as a woman it is really important to be tested and to make sure: if you do have the gene, that is something you have to keep a very close watch on.

In conclusion, I thank Dr Bourke for bringing this issue to the Assembly today and I hope we can continue to improve the services provided to women with breast cancer. I move:

Omit paragraph (2), substitute:

- “(i) the number of women who have lymph nodes removed because of breast cancer and then, as a result, develop Lymphoedema and require timely and ongoing access to the Lymphoedema Clinic at Calvary Public Hospital; and
- (j) anecdotal evidence that the Lymphoedema Clinic has been unable over the last 12 months to meet the needs of women who have experienced breast cancer in a timely manner due to increasing demand on the Clinic and its limited resources;
- (2) acknowledges and extends thanks to all of those involved in making Pink Ribbon month in the ACT such a success; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to work with Calvary Management to:
 - (a) examine current and future projected demand for the Lymphoedema Clinic;

(b) steps that can be taken to meet that demand; and

(c) report back on results of (3)(a) and (3)(b) to the ACT Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in March 2012.”.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.30): I will speak on behalf of the Chief Minister who, regrettably, is unable to be here this morning due to her commitments to farewell Her Majesty as she leaves Canberra today.

I would like to first of all thank Dr Bourke for moving this important motion. As members have already commented, pink ribbon month is a chance for the whole community to play a part in raising awareness of breast cancer. It is also a chance to help raise money to support the efforts of governments, researchers, the medical fraternity and the myriad community organisations involved in research, treatment and support. Breast cancer needs to be tackled from every direction. It is not just about the elusive cure. It is also about awareness, preventive health, early intervention, treatment options, research, and support for those affected—for their families as well as for patients themselves.

The community has embraced pink ribbon month with much enthusiasm, and if we look at some of the activities that are made possible as a result of the fundraising, it is easy to see why.

The division of Capital Region Cancer Service provided more than 53,000 occasions of outpatient care and over 3,800 occasions of in-patient care last financial year. BreastScreen, which offers screening to women who are symptom-free, conducted over 11,000 screenings in the territory over the course of the last financial year. And members may recall that from July this year, BreastScreen ACT became a stand-alone service, after operating for 18 months as a combined ACT and New South Wales regional screening service. It is hoped that this role change will result in more women in the target age group of 50 to 69 using the service. Last financial year 53 per cent of women in the age bracket had been screened in the previous 24 months.

In 2010 the Health Directorate signed a \$2 million contract with the Swedish IT and medical technology company Sectra to update the local BreastScreen service with the latest digital screening technology. Digital mammography machines and a digital picture archiving system have replaced the traditional analog machines. This investment is part of the Labor government’s commitment to expanding e-health services. But it is also about seizing opportunities to ensure that Canberrans have access to the latest and safest healthcare technologies. This new digital mammography equipment not only produces higher quality images but also lowers the radiation exposure for women being screened. The next stage of the upgrade project will be the incorporation of a business information system, which will enable the electronic transfer of digital images between clinics and medical professionals. This is expected to be operational by the middle of next year.

Members may be aware that from last year the government has funded a public diagnostic breast imaging service. This service, the first of its kind in the territory, provides X-ray and ultrasound assessment for women presenting with symptoms or women requiring follow-up services after treatment. The new service complements the long-running BreastScreen program, which offers screening to women aged over 50 who do not have symptoms.

Canberrans have been enthusiastic participants in this year's pink ribbon month. A number of special events have been held across the ACT, including across our public health system. It has been fantastic to see so many of the men and women who deliver public health services in this town throw their support behind such a worthy cause.

Staff at the Canberra Hospital have organised workplace activities and events, including a morning tea and a "Think Pink" fundraiser. Staff have been encouraged to wear pink to work on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the duration of the month. The Canberra Hospital has also been doing its bit, partnering with Bunnings and Dulux to paint the large planter box in the main foyer of the Canberra Hospital pink, along with several walls in treatment rooms in ward 14A. Posters and flyers have been strategically placed to communicate messages about breast cancer awareness to staff, patients and visitors to the hospital.

The Cancer Council of the ACT has also been very active throughout the month, particularly in recent days, when it has been selling Pink Ribbon Day merchandise at shopping centres across the city. The council also held a Pink Ribbon Day breakfast at Alto tower restaurant earlier this week. Alto sponsored the event, covering the costs of the entire breakfast, an exceptionally generous contribution to the month by a local business.

The Dragons Abreast dragon boating club held its local regatta on the lake last weekend. I understand that the Chief Minister launched that event, which this year was bigger than ever—a wonderful reminder that there is life, full and active life, for women after diagnosis. Bosom Buddies, another fantastic local support organisation, held an online auction of celebrity race-season hats, to mark the month.

More than 200 Canberra women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. This is a disease that well and truly touches all in our community. The outlook for women diagnosed today is, thankfully, better than at any time in the past, a fact borne out by the most recent records of the ACT Cancer Registry. But as a community we need to ensure that we keep moving in the right direction—that we arm women with the information they need; that our screening services pick up as many early-stage cancers as possible so as to maximise the prospects of recovery; and that we properly support those newly diagnosed, those going through treatment and those who have completed treatment and need to pick up their interrupted lives. For these reasons, it is great to see our community embrace pink ribbon month so wholeheartedly and with such spirit.

I would like to turn now to the amendment proposed by Ms Bresnan. The government will be supporting this amendment. The territory recognises the need for and

importance of providing women access to the lymphoedema clinic and we would like to thank Ms Bresnan for proposing this amendment today. I am pleased to report to members, on behalf of the Minister for Health, that a review of the lymphoedema clinic is already underway. So the motion wording is probably a little out of date; however, we agree with its thrust and we will support it.

The territory is pleased to provide a range of services through the lymphoedema clinic at Calvary hospital for women who require this service following treatment for breast cancer. The success and quality of this clinic have led to increased popularity of this service and we are happy to recognise this popularity and outline work currently underway to review its capacity. The territory does not provide specific funding to Calvary for specific services. Calvary receives a funding envelope, and it uses this funding to provide public hospital services for the ACT. The territory also provides enhancements to Calvary's funding above their base funding envelope. For example, in the last 12 months the territory has provided Calvary with over \$5 million in additional funding.

Calvary Health Care has initiated a territory-wide review of the lymphoedema clinic; this review includes review of current demand and projected demand for the service. The review is expected to be finalised in December this year. This review has occurred due to feedback that there have been delays in accessing the specialist trained lymphoedema staff. Consideration of additional capacity for the clinic will be considered based on the outcomes of the review, and the government is looking forward to working with Calvary once the review has been finalised. Women who require access to the service would currently wait approximately three months to access this service if they have a chronic need, with a shorter period of time for women with acute needs. They would then be seen regularly by the specialist trained lymphoedema staff. A primary objective of the review will be measures to reduce waiting times.

Further work is also underway to establish networks for the lymphoedema clinic. This includes networks with the Canberra Hospital, private providers and community organisations to further enhance the patient journey for women accessing this service.

The government will be pleased to share the findings of the review and report to the Assembly at a later date.

I commend Dr Bourke for bringing this motion to the Assembly this morning. This is a matter that touches an enormous range of people across our community and I am pleased that the government will lend its support today.

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (10.39): I thank Mr Hanson, Ms Bresnan and Mr Corbell for their support of this motion. I congratulate the government on its investment in new technology—new technology driving early diagnosis and earlier and better outcomes for Canberra women.

Much of our debate this morning has centred on the statistics of this terrible disease. I know that this does not detract from our understanding of the physical, emotional and mental trauma caused by breast cancer.

With regard to Ms Bresnan's assertion regarding item (c), I draw her attention to the statistics on the notice paper, which correct her assertion regarding those numbers. I thank her for her amendment. I note that the proposed review of lymphoedema services is already underway and I congratulate the government on its initiative.

The community response to breast cancer through pink ribbon month is to be applauded. Each of us has the opportunity to support our neighbours, family and workplace through fundraising and spreading awareness.

I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Ms Bresnan's amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Planning—Calwell

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (10.41): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that a number of community meetings at Calwell have identified a range of issues, which need to be considered with respect to planning for the Calwell commercial and shopping precinct and surrounding area, including:
 - (i) planning for new retail and commercial developments to enhance retail trade, including by extending the current building by incorporating a second level;
 - (ii) specifying land which could be used for additional residential purposes and for new commercial activities, such as a site for a hotel/motel;
 - (iii) enhancing the link between the Tuggeranong Homestead and the Calwell precinct;
 - (iv) enhancing the link between the ambulance station and the Calwell retail precinct;
 - (v) improving amenities for users of public transport and taxis;
 - (vi) installing and upgrading lighting and security cameras to enhance security and safety;
 - (vii) installing more pedestrian crossings; and
 - (viii) upgrading signage around the precinct;

- (b) the planned sale by tender of Section 790, Block 5 in Calwell for a proposed aged care facility, with tenders closing on 22 November 2011; and
 - (c) that work is about to commence on an extension to the existing supermarket; and
- (2) calls on the government to postpone the proposed sale of Section 790, Block 5 in Calwell until it has developed a master plan for the Calwell commercial and shopping precinct and the surrounding area.

The focus of my motion is on the Calwell retail and commercial precinct. I am sure that the area is well known to members of this place. It services not just Calwell and Theodore but also a lot of the traffic that comes off Tharwa Drive and Johnson Drive will shop there. Also, people in nearby Richardson are affected by this area. Adjacent to the area, of course, is the Tuggeranong Homestead and all stations south into Conder, Banks and Gordon also have an interest in this precinct.

I would like to emphasise the surrounding area. I am saying that this also encompasses the area to the east of the Alliance Church, which is the site of the proposed aged-care facility. Of course, the transport precinct on Johnson Drive includes the ambulance station and the entire block on which Tuggeranong Homestead is located.

There are three key reasons underlying my motion today. First, it is evident that some redevelopment is already being undertaken in the vicinity of the Calwell centre itself and it is important that this activity be considered in an appropriate, broader context. Indeed, for those who live in the area or who know the area well, there used to be some commercial units across from the existing shopping centre, which have now gone and been replaced by accommodation.

The second, of course, is the concerns of the community, which have been raised in numerous public meetings. Those concerns have been conveyed to me. I have heard some of those concerns at some of the meetings and I understand that letters have been written to various ministers. Third is the recent proposal to offer an adjoining block of land for an aged-care facility. Before I deal with the positive aspects of this important matter, I must again emphasise the failure of the government to approach planning matters in the correct, logical order.

Once again, this government is approaching planning matters the wrong way round. Once again, we have this government making a decision about a particular matter—in this instance, the location of an aged-care facility—without having an appropriate overall strategy for the area. And once again, we have a detailed decision in the absence of a master plan.

Do I need to remind members about the approach to the proposed great big new government office building, where we do not have a government office accommodation strategy? Indeed, the building will inform the strategy, according to the minister. Do I need to remind members about the ongoing fiasco which has been the new headquarters for the Emergency Services Agency?

Is it any wonder, Mr Speaker, that at this time the local community of Calwell is upset with these decisions? There have been a number of letters written to various people. For instance, Mr Nick Tsoulas has written to Mr Corbell and cc-ed a copy to me. He outlines the reason in a three-page letter. I will just quote some of it.

Dear Simon,

Residents and local business owners have contacted me recently seeking a delay of the upcoming option of the Calwell Aged Care Facility, Block 5, Section 790—which is to be auctioned on November 22nd this year.

In recent community meetings organised by local South East Tuggeranong residents group on 15th October 2009 and the local Neighbourhood Watch groups in November 2010, a good cross representation of the business community and local residents spoke out in favour of an idea for a masterplan for the Calwell Shops / and shoppers precinct area too, which we believe would solve any increases of current level of more traffic and current congestion to the only accessible street for all sites—Were Street.

The community response supports a masterplan study to be undertaken that would focus on the precinct between Johnson Drive, from Ashley Drive junction to the Monaro Highway Junction, Tharwa Drive to Were Street and Webber Crescent, and either side of these roads and its open land.

Whilst we understand the government has a new draft residential policy for the ACT, the Johnson Drive corridor would benefit from this policy, if consideration were given to a proper plan for the area.

Unfortunately, poor planning in the 1980's and 1990's for Calwell has seen a number of land sales in the area be released without any study on the broader radius of up to .5 / 1km, which includes child care, churches, community centres, local Club, and a swimming pool site. These sites currently are using existing car Calwell Shops parking which was good for 20 years ago, but circumstances have changed, and their capacity to fulfil their needs is limited, as these too are growing also.

I will not read the rest of it. I will refer to it later. What there is, again, is a plan to sell a block of land without considering the broader context. I know the case can be made that we need aged accommodation in Tuggeranong. Yes, we do. But what we need to do is get it right. I do not know if either of the ministers have been down to Calwell shops on any night of the week or on the weekend. It is a very busy shopping centre as it is. We all will accept that we inherit planning from the past—from the 1970s and the 1980s before self-government—but there is an opportunity to get it right here and there is, I think, an obligation to make sure that we do get it right.

How can we as a community get the ACT government to understand that there is a proper hierarchy to planning matters? This is one of the other frustrations that is coming from the community. First, there should come the strategy—in this case, the master plan. Then comes the high-level planning decision and then comes the more detailed planning decisions. This is simply what the community is asking for. Having spoken to a number of community leaders down there, whether they be business

owners or some of the church leaders, all they are asking for is some consideration about getting it right for the future.

All the community of Calwell and southern Tuggeranong ask for is a pretty simple approach in concept, but it has not been followed in respect of the Calwell retail and commercial precinct. That is why the local community is upset. As with many other regional centres across the ACT, the Calwell centre in the scheme of things is relatively small. But it is a significant retail and commercial centre for that neighbourhood. It is evident that there are growing pains within this precinct, however, as the demand for such activities as medical and associated services continues to grow.

I propose that a proper master planning project be undertaken for the Calwell centre, a master plan that takes account of the current and prospective retail and commercial activities planned for the precinct, a master planning project that recognises the growing significance of this precinct to southern Tuggeranong and the wider region.

I say the wider region because at some of the meetings we have had members of the Cooma council there. For the shire council and for a lot of Cooma residents, this might be somewhere where they park the car and catch a bus or it might be their last port of call on the way home, as some people do commute daily from Cooma, where they might do the shopping. So there is a regional significance here as well. A master planning project which facilitates the potential for this precinct to become a vibrant area in southern Tuggeranong for retail, commercial, community and other activities is what the people of this area want.

Once a master plan has been prepared, it will be possible to consider the proposal for aged-care facilities and any other activities in a reasoned way, in a way which provides the community with the best outcomes, not the short-term outcome or simply the financial outcome that the government seeks through the sale of a block of land.

In this context, I can tell the Assembly that the Calwell centre has been approached, for instance, to incorporate dentist rooms, but currently there is no room. The shopping centre is full. Southern Tuggeranong does not have a dentist and the Calwell community centre does not currently have the capacity to incorporate a dental surgery.

It also should be noted that the Minister for Community Services is seeking to encourage an increase in childcare places across the ACT. The Calwell centre could incorporate a capacity for either some additional childcare places in the existing facility or perhaps a second childcare centre. Some current businesses have expressed interest in doing so, but again there is no room at the centre for such a facility at this point.

That brings me to the crux of my motion. We have a situation where a block of land, namely, section 790 block 5 in Calwell, is currently being offered for sale by tender for an aged-care facility in a context where there is community concern about such a facility in the absence of a master plan—understanding the need for aged-care facilities at the same time.

Hence, my motion calls on the government to postpone the process for tendering for an aged-care facility in the Calwell precinct and for the government to commit to

undertake a master planning process for the precinct, including the area surrounding the precinct incorporating the block which has been proposed for the aged-care facility.

A master plan, prepared after appropriate consultation with all interested parties and individuals, will enable proper consideration to be given to such matters as the composition and, indeed, the juxtaposition of various activities in the total precinct; whether any changes are required to the existing buildings; the potential for new commercial development to be undertaken; whether any changes are required to parking arrangements, including a park-and-ride capacity; and understanding the needs of the buses. If you are ever down there at certain times, there is not a great deal of parking for buses and sometimes the roads, which are relatively narrow, can be quite full with parked buses. Consideration should also be given to whether any changes are required to roads servicing this precinct.

Members might not be aware that Clift Crescent intersects with Johnson Drive not far from the ambulance station. There has been talk that that road may continue across and link into the precinct thus providing another access road. Perhaps that is something we should discuss. But if the block for the aged-care facility is sold without this consideration being taken into account then of course that option may disappear for all time and the traffic woes of Calwell will always be there. It would be a legacy for the future residents and traders of the area of another failure of government. Already we have seen a litany of planning failures from this government.

Members will recall that we have debated the future of Erindale centre and the future of Kambah Village. I note that there have been some discussions about redevelopment of the Tuggeranong Hyperdome during the week. Clearly, the people of Tuggeranong are at a point where a thorough review of retail, commercial and associated development is required. I recognise that there may be pressure on resources to undertake such a master plan but we want to make sure that Calwell and south Tuggeranong have not been forgotten.

I note that there are various amendments being proposed to my motion. I will look at those additional proposals. In general, they seem reasonable but I would seek the support of the Assembly for my motion. I will read them now they have both been tabled. I will read them properly and then speak to them when I close. But I think that if we do not delay the sale of the block of land we really do have a sham process. It will be interesting to see whether members support the master planning of this area or whether they support master planning after we have sold the block. That can only be seen as hypocrisy—"Yes, we want master planning but not quite now."

It is important that we get this right. It is not just us. What we do here today and what happens at that centre over the next couple of years will be with that community for decades to come. There is an opportunity to get it right and to make sure that we have the most effective group centre that we can have in the Calwell area. There is the opportunity to make sure that does incorporate the surrounding district and particularly Tuggeranong Homestead.

I know that the community has called for things like hotels and other things in the area to assist the community. This is a chance to get it right. We are not asking for a

great delay. We will allow the government the time to prioritise it as their resources allow. But it is an opportunity to get it right by simply delaying the sale of this site. By listening to the community, by doing the master plan, we get a situation where everybody wins in this equation.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation) (10.54): I thank the shadow treasurer for raising this matter today and indicate that the government will be supporting parts of Mr Smyth's motion and also seeking to amend other parts. I have circulated amendments and I seek leave to move the amendments circulated in my name together.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: I move:

(1) Insert new subparagraphs (1)(d), (e) and (f):

- “(d) that Block 5 Section 790 Calwell has been subject to a site assessment and traffic impact assessment and has been found suitable for aged care accommodation;
- (e) the need for aged care facilities in Calwell to support the district of Tuggeranong; and
- (f) the master plan program that has previously been outlined in this place, including the use of the ACT Planning Strategy as the tool to inform and guide change in centres and areas.”.

(2) Omit paragraph (2).

To put it bluntly, the ACT government cannot and will not support the postponement of the sale of this site for aged accommodation. An aged-care facility is a permitted use on this site under the existing planning framework, and a number of analysis reports have verified that the site is suitable and that impacts can be managed.

The Assembly noted the importance of identifying a list of priority areas for master planning in August 2010. The Assembly agreed on the need to provide greater certainty around the master planning program, and the master plan program presents a meaningful opportunity for our community to engage not only on the development of local areas but also on how we plan, build and manage our city's growth and change.

In April this year I outlined the government's master plan program to the Assembly, and this included the process for establishing the priority list of centres for inclusion in the program as well as the process for preparing the master plans. I outlined that those areas that are likely to experience significant change or are in need of reinvigoration will be high on the priority list. I noted that the master plan program would include a range of centres—town, group, local and rural—to deliver on the themes established in time to talk. Time to talk identified what the community valued about Canberra. It explored how to address the challenges of a growing and ageing

population, environmental resilience and building economic diversity. Based on what we heard from the community, time to talk established a desired future scenario for Canberra in 2030.

The draft ACT planning strategy, which was released by my colleague Mr Corbell, the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, for public consultation last week seeks to deliver this scenario. It sets the direction for future development of our city to ensure it remains an attractive, liveable and sustainable place to live, work and play. The public consultation on the draft strategy, which is open until 18 December, gives the Canberra community a meaningful opportunity to consider what areas are important to achieve their preferred scenario.

It is critical that this revised strategy provide the context for the community to provide feedback on where the priorities for more detailed planning should be. Ultimately, the final ACT planning strategy, when it is adopted, will be the tool that informs and guides change in centres and areas. It will provide the context for considering the future program of master plans.

As has been outlined previously, the government envisages an ongoing program of approximately four master plans each year for the next six years, subject to annual budget funding. A master plan program with a forward agenda of centres provides greater certainty to the community on where, how and when master plans will be delivered. It avoids ad hoc planning undertaken on the floor of this place. It avoids ad hoc adoption of this centre or that centre without consideration that other centres might be equally worthy or, in fact, in greater need of a master plan. And it certainly avoids the Canberra Liberals coming into this place with a political barrow to push and demanding that one centre is more deserving than another. Although I note in that context that the members of the Canberra Liberals have different priorities—and we have already seen this—in relation to the master planning process. I wonder how Mr Hanson feels about the priority of Calwell, say, over Cooleman Court.

A forward agenda for the master plan program takes the politics out of planning. So we will not be supporting Mr Smyth's call for a master plan to be undertaken of the Calwell group centre today. However, Calwell will be part of the master planning process in the future, and a master plan for Calwell would be an appropriate mechanism to address the relocation of the swimming pool, the inclusion of a new hotel and additional residential uses in the centre. But the timing of the master plan will need to be determined in accordance with the processes that this place has agreed to—a process which is fair, transparent and equitable and not driven by private members' business motions from sitting to sitting.

Mr Smyth has also raised a number of issues that have been raised in the context of the Calwell group centre and its surrounding areas. I think it is important to note that the vast majority of these issues are not of the type usually resolved through a master planning exercise. The majority of these issues pertain to traffic management and the maintenance of paths, signs and lighting. These are issues that are appropriately addressed through the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate's works and maintenance programs. Indeed, installing pedestrian crossings, for example, requires detailed investigation and safety analysis. The need for a crossing can be established

by using standard safety and traffic management criteria. This type of improvement, along with improving facilities at bus stops and taxi ranks and upgrading pedestrian lighting, do not require the context of a master plan. Master plans operate at a higher and more strategic level. These plans set out objectives, principles and key initiatives that will guide the medium to long-term development and redevelopment for centres and key areas along transport corridors.

The issues raised in the motion around land use planning and identifying new development sites are issues that can be addressed through master planning. But, as I have said, the timing of any master plan for any centre needs to be considered in the context of the draft planning strategy, a priority listing across all centres and, importantly, recognition that there is not a vacuum here and that there is already a planning framework in place. We have the territory plan. It is not as if no-one has ever considered these issues. They are there within the existing territory plan, and it is in the context of change and managing changing and moving away from existing planning arrangements that you undergo a master planning process.

Mr Smyth's motion also calls on the government to effectively ignore and postpone the immediate demand for aged care in the area. As has been identified, the block in question is intended to be sold by tender for an aged-care facility, with tenders closing on 22 November. I think there is agreement—and I note Mr Smyth even acknowledged this in his contribution—that there is, indeed, demand for aged-care accommodation in this area, particularly as the population ages.

To respond to this demand, the government is determined to release a site for aged-care accommodation. It is worth noting that the existing planning framework, block 5 section 790, is zoned for a community facility and has always been identified for this sort of use. There are a range of uses permissible within this zoning, including supportive housing and accommodation for aged persons.

It is also important to stress in the context of this debate that in preparing this site for sale, the LDA undertook a thorough site investigation and traffic impact assessment. This was to ensure that the site was capable of being developed for an aged-care facility. The site investigation reported no significant constraints for its development as an aged-care facility in accordance with the territory plan. The traffic impact assessment looked at the level of traffic that would likely be generated by such a development. It concluded that the level of traffic generated would be of an acceptable level. It found that traffic could be accommodated by the existing road network without significant effect on safety, efficiency or amenity of nearby residents.

It is worth noting that consultation on the proposed sale of this site was originally undertaken in September and October 2009, and the community supported aged care on this site noting that the nearest existing facilities were far away in Farrer and Monash. Unfortunately, after this consultation was undertaken, the commonwealth bed funding did not eventuate in 2009 or 2010. But importantly, funding has been made available this year, which is why the site is being offered to the market.

There is undoubtedly strong demand for aged accommodation within the Calwell community and, due to circumstances beyond the ACT government's control, the sale

of this site has not been able to proceed for the last two years, but we should not miss this opportunity that is available now. The ACT government is committed to providing additional aged-care accommodation in Tuggeranong and, once developed, this facility will be a place where older people can reside closer to services. It will certainly help retail trade and the retention of social services in Calwell. Most of the issues that Mr Smyth has raised—issues he thinks should hold up the provision of aged care in this centre—can be dealt with without the need to produce a master plan.

In summary, we will not be supporting Mr Smyth's motion as it appears today on the notice paper. The sale of this land for aged care for the Tuggeranong community has already been delayed for two years and it should not be delayed any further. A master plan is not required before the land is sold. The inclusion of Calwell and its priority in the master planning program in the future must be considered in the context of the planning strategy and where the wider Canberra community considers the emphasis should be placed.

It is possible for the outcome Mr Smyth seeks and the outcome government seeks to be achieved. I do not believe they are fundamentally in conflict, and I think it is entirely possible to deliver both outcomes. Many of the issues that Mr Smyth raised are, indeed, valid and need to be considered in the context of the master plan. A number of them can be considered well before that, do not require that degree of bureaucracy to be involved and can be undertaken and progressed more quickly. I am surprised that a member of the Liberal Party, a party that apparently believes in cutting red tape, wants to put this through a whole other process that will slow the delivery of an important community facility in relation to aged care in the area.

MS BRESNAN (Brindabella) (11.06): I thank Mr Smyth for raising this issue today. There are certainly a number of issues in Calwell which the community have raised over the past few years, including with me, which need to be addressed. A key issue I would like to discuss is transport. Tuggeranong generally has a number of transport problems largely due to the way it has been planned and developed and its distance from major employment centres. However, Calwell in particular is one area which has a concentration and diversity of transport problems.

Members will be aware that I have been an advocate for a park-and-ride service at the Calwell group centre. As a group centre, Calwell is ideal for an ACTION park and ride. It will help the residents in this area connect to the bus network and receive the benefits from public transport. Currently many people are parking their cars at Calwell in order to take an interstate coach to the snowfields or other places in the region south of the ACT, including Cooma. One of the benefits of a park and ride is that these travellers can use the location on the weekends to park and then travel to the region. We also know a large number of people travel from the region to the ACT for work and to access services, which is another key reason for having a park and ride at a location such as Calwell.

The next important step is finding an appropriate site for the park and ride. The government has approved Calwell as a park-and-ride location and it will now be important to develop an appropriate location in a very timely way. The community wants certainty. It makes it hard for the community to know the value of other new

developments in the area if they do not know where the park and ride will be located. Like the residents of Calwell, I also support a bike-and-ride facility at Calwell. This should be incorporated with the park and ride as there are many bike riders in the Calwell area. It would be of great benefit to the community.

Parking is already very difficult at the Calwell shops and in the area generally as there are many community facilities, which Mr Smyth has outlined, such as the churches, in the area which also use the parking. The expansion of the supermarket there is also removing around 40 spaces. From what I understand, the parking plans were developed in 1991. The usage of the area has obviously increased drastically since then and trucks and interstate coaches also use the area.

As well as sorting out the parking issues and providing a park and ride, a number of other transport solutions should be integrated into the planning for the area, including the provision of a cohesive walking and cycle path network around the area, bike-and-ride facilities—as I have already mentioned—a taxi zone, traffic calming measures, pedestrian crossings and additional bus shelters on Johnson Drive and Webber Crescent, as well as the short-term solution of moving the bus shelter.

The Greens have also advocated improved bus services to Calwell and the surrounding area of Tuggeranong. This part of Canberra needs access to the Rapid bus network and integration of the Tuggeranong suburbs into the Rapid bus network. I note that the 2012 network expansions do not include any new services for this particular area of Tuggeranong, even though this is an area in great need. I think it is also worth noting that there are not any new services included for the Weston Creek area.

A key part of Mr Smyth's motion is that it calls on the government to put the tender process for the aged-care facility on hold until issues around access roads and paths have been addressed. I understand completely the concerns of the community in this regard. However, I also understand the growing need for aged care in Canberra and the length of time it takes for such facilities to be designed, go through the planning and community consultation process and then be built. We have a rapidly ageing population and already increasing demand for residential aged-care places, which will only grow.

I am proposing in my amendment, which I am foreshadowing now, that the tender process be allowed to continue so as not to hold up the aged-care development. What I am also calling for is that the government prioritise ensuring that adequate roads and footpaths are provided or allowed for, perhaps through the design phase of the facility. There is substantial community concern that, especially given other developments at the group centre, the site will be developed without adequate consideration of road and path access to surrounding blocks. It is very important that the government address these issues sooner rather than later and that the community are satisfied with plans for the aged-care facility and the area surrounding it.

Further on the issue, I think it is worth noting that the process for developing residential aged care is an already very lengthy process. The states and territories provide the land sites but then the federal government provides the funded aged-care

places. Then, as I have already said, the usual development application and planning processes have to be gone through. This takes quite some time. I am genuinely concerned that by stopping the sale of this land we will create delays to establishing much-needed aged-care places.

I understand there is also a site for auction at Isabella Plains. The fact that there are two sites for auction in this area of Tuggeranong indicates that there is a growing need for residential aged-care places, not just in this region of Canberra but in the whole of the ACT. I firmly believe there are other processes available to address the community's concerns about needing to stop this land sale proceeding.

Additional concerns the community have raised with me are related to site identification. I have already mentioned that a site needs to be identified for a park and ride, as well as for truck and coach parking. I also understand—and Mr Smyth has mentioned this—that there is demand for a site for a second childcare centre. I understand that a dentist approached the owners of the Calwell shopping centre about establishing a dental practice. However, there is just not enough room at the current site. The closest dental surgery is at Chisholm. It is of concern that there are no dentists in the southern part of Tuggeranong to provide this much-needed and absolutely essential service to people.

I understand that the proposal for a pool at Calwell has been going on for quite some time and has been long held up, waiting for resolution of issues such as overshadowing in the church area. I believe it would be appropriate at this stage for the government to undergo a site exploration process to see whether a better site might be found for the pool.

I understand that all these issues cannot be addressed at once and that all the requested items may not be able to be built all at once. But many of the community's issues can be addressed in a timely way without significant costs, such as creating a taxi zone, improving the lighting and signage in the area and building bus shelters.

A master planning process for the area should be able to take into consideration some of the more significant issues that the community has identified. I note that the government's new draft planning strategy clearly addresses the need for additional master plans, and Calwell is an area which certainly seems to warrant one. I know that the government has a priority list and a process for establishing whether the area is in high need. Changing circumstances is one of the criteria, from what I understand, and this area seems to fit into this category.

The establishment of an aged-care facility in the area certainly raises the need for examination of the adequacy of community access paths, pedestrian crossings and other aged-care needs, and this can be incorporated in the master planning process. As I said, I think it is important to acknowledge that the government has established the process of master plans in the ACT. We know that there are many areas in the ACT that are requesting master plans and need them. I think that needs to be built into the process.

The area subject to master planning needs to not just take into account the shopping centre but also the networks and travel patterns of people moving between the schools,

playing fields, churches and other facilities and amenities. The Calwell community are asking to be consulted on these issues and they have many ideas on how their neighbourhood could work. This is an opportunity to bring together the views and ideas of the residents, the businesses, the transport users and providers and the people who use the shops, services and community facilities to develop a process for the future development and ongoing viability of the area.

I would also like to note that Mr Smyth has talked about the concerns raised by Mr Tsoulis. He sent a copy of the letter that he sent to Mr Smyth to me, along with the email he had sent to the minister. My office also had a number of conversations with Mr Tsoulis yesterday. I directly expressed my concerns to him about stopping the sale of land for aged-care development and expressed the concerns I have already noted in my speech today.

I will note again that they are genuine concerns. Obviously my portfolios cover older people and aged care, and I am acutely aware of the needs around aged-care services in the ACT. We have to seriously take into account that fact that we do have an ageing population. That needs to be at the forefront of what we are considering here today—or part of what we are considering today, I should say.

Mr Tsoulis acknowledged my concerns as being valid and also had a conversation with my office on this issue yesterday. Mr Tsoulis recognised that it was a serious issue, which is why I have listed specific issues in my amendment which I will move shortly. It lists the concerns which the community have expressed and some of those things we think can be addressed. I also note that the aged-care units developed near Lanyon Marketplace are a really good example of how you can have an important development like that go ahead but also address concerns and issues with putting an aged-care facility in that sort of area. Traffic calming issues and bus stops have also been addressed there. I notice Mr Smyth is laughing. I actually think it is a really good example of how you can have—

Mr Smyth: You don't know what I was laughing at. I was having a conversation with Mr Hanson.

MS BRESNAN: a development like that go ahead and actually put in place the necessary infrastructure while not stopping that development occurring.

Mr Barr: It was a private joke—not about what she was saying.

Mr Hanson: Correct. You make the mistake to think that anyone actually listens to you, Amanda.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Ms Bresnan.

MS BRESNAN: I would just like to thank Mr Hanson for that lovely comment about making the mistake that anyone actually listens to what I say. Thank you. I just record that for the *Hansard*. Mr Tsoulis recognised this was an issue, which is why, as I said, I have listed these specific concerns.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MS BRESNAN: Although Mr Hanson finds this a hilarious topic, it is something I am actually taking very seriously. I know there are concerns in the community. It is something which has been brought to me directly, which is why I advocated for the park and ride. I think we can address the issues the community have without stopping this development. This is a very important development for the area—residential aged care. The process of getting these places is already very lengthy. I have major concerns about stopping development. As I said, I have expressed it to Mr Tsoulis. He acknowledged my concerns and acknowledged them as being genuine. It is to his credit that he did that. I think we can address the concerns without stopping the land sale. I move the following amendment to Mr Barr’s proposed amendments:

Insert new subparagraphs (1)(g), (h) and (i):

“(g) that the Government has agreed to establish a Park and Ride in Calwell, but a site has not yet been identified;

(h) that the aged care site under tender is back to back to other blocks without space being left between them for paths and roads; and

(i) that the Government’s new Draft Planning Strategy addresses the need for additional master plans; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

(a) address community concerns in Calwell through:

(i) provision of Park and Ride and bike and ride facilities;

(ii) provision of signage and paths around the area;

(iii) addressing parking, truck parking and interstate bus parking issues;

(iv) provision of a taxi zone;

(v) improved lighting for community safety;

(vi) provision of bus shelters for Johnson Drive and Webber Crescent; and

(vii) ensuring that adequate roads and footpaths are provided adjacent to the proposed aged care site before it is built;

(b) prioritise a master plan for the Calwell Group Centre and surrounding community and commercial facilities zones in line with the need recognised in the ACT Draft Planning Strategy and the previously agreed master plan process; and

(c) through the master planning process, identify:

(i) a site for a second childcare centre in Calwell;

(ii) a site for a dental practice in Calwell; and

(iii) an alternative site for the proposed pool development.”.

MR SESELJA (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.18): I thank Mr Smyth for bringing this motion forward today. It is no surprise that Mr Smyth has been the first member elected in Brindabella at every election that he has contested; it is because he is in touch with his local community, he understands the needs of the people of Tuggeranong and south Woden and he represents them so well. We see another example of that today with Mr Smyth bringing forward an issue which is important to the people of Calwell and south-east Tuggeranong.

Mr Barr: So you think that will be the case in 2012 as well, Zed? You will beat him, will you, Brendan?

MR SESELJA: Mr Barr interjects because he is sensitive about how popular Mr Smyth is. But there is a reason why Mr Smyth is the first elected in Brindabella: because he works so hard for his community. Mr Barr could take lessons from Mr Smyth in his work as a local member. We can see the sensitivity.

Mr Smyth does do a good job and this is another example of it. He has been listening to the people of Calwell and south-east Tuggeranong. He was out there at the community day on Saturday listening to the local business owners, listening to the local residents who were coming and giving feedback, and this motion is the result of not just those discussions but other discussions that have been taking place with local residents.

The opposition to this motion, the considerable amending of this motion that we are seeing through both Mr Barr’s and Ms Bresnan’s amendments, is unfortunate because it misses the point.

I will go to Ms Bresnan’s amendment. Ms Bresnan is part of a coalition with the Labor Party. She has been a member for Brindabella for the last three years and she is now, only in response to what Mr Smyth is doing, coming out with a list of all the things that should be happening at Calwell. We will go through that list of the things that she now, after three years and in response to the motion of Mr Smyth, believes are critically important for the people of Calwell. The question for Ms Bresnan and the Greens is: where have they been for the last three years?

Ms Bresnan says what we really need is the provision of park and ride and bike and ride, provision of signage and paths around the area, to address parking, provision of a taxi zone, improved lighting, provision of bus shelters and ensuring that adequate roads and footpaths are provided. Ms Bresnan and the Greens have voted for each of the last three budgets. Surely there was some scope in those three budgets for them to get something for the people of Calwell. Surely in those three budgets, in those \$4 billion-plus budgets each year, they could have found some money for signage and paths in the area, for the provision of a taxi zone, for improved lighting for community safety, the provision of bus shelters—but they have not.

Time and time again we are seeing the Greens, after more than three years in coalition, suddenly coming to the realisation that they have not achieved anything for their

electorates, that they have not achieved anything for the community, from being part of this coalition. All they have done has been to give a blank cheque to the Labor Party to keep doing what they are doing, and we see it again today.

Ms Bresnan suddenly is interested in Calwell shops and there being upgrades. Why didn't the Greens negotiate that when they were negotiating on the budget, as they do every year? People in Calwell and south-east Tuggeranong would be asking themselves the question: why didn't they go in to bat for us? Why are they only now, in an amendment, saying that these things are important? They were important a year ago, they were important two years ago and they were important three years ago." This government have failed to deliver and their coalition partners, the Greens, have supported their failure to deliver by giving them support for each of their budgets and all of their policies and by not pushing for outcomes for the people of Tuggeranong and, in this case, specifically for the people of Calwell and south-east Tuggeranong.

The other aspect of the amendment which does not make a lot of sense is proposed paragraph (2)(a)(vii), "ensuring that adequate roads and footpaths are provided adjacent to the proposed aged care site before it is built." The problem with that is that if you go ahead and sell it there will be development rights. If the argument is that you are going to sell the block and then take away some of those development rights later in order to provide adequate roads and footpaths, that is a problem. You would be far better off supporting Mr Smyth's motion, which would simply put it on hold for a little while, while the important planning takes place, so that we can get it right.

What we do not want is an aged-care facility built without the best access to the centre. We do not want an aged-care facility that is in a less than optimal centre in Calwell because the planning has not been done and because in fact provision of that aged-care facility stops the proper planning being done. That is what this motion is about. It is about saying, firstly, we do need a master plan for Calwell. This has been called for by the residents and by business owners in Calwell for some time, for a number of years, and the government have been very slow to realise—as they were in Kambah, as they are in Cooleman Court, as they are right around the city—that centres like Calwell are critical hubs and we do need a master planning process for them. But you do not then go and sell one of the biggest pieces of land—I think the biggest piece of land left—without having done the proper planning.

This is a motion that should be supported as it is—it should not be amended—and I think the Greens now have to be called for their performance. They have to be called for what they are and what they have done. In fact this proposed amendment by Ms Bresnan is an acknowledgement of all the things that she has not achieved for the people of Tuggeranong, and the people of Calwell in this case, over the last three years.

The Greens have been in the box seat to deliver these kinds of things. They could have said, "Sure, we'll vote for your budget if you provide proper facilities to our local communities that desperately need these upgrades." But they did not; they chose not to. And now they are desperately scrambling in the last year before the election to say, "We need these things to happen and we need them to happen now." People will see through that—and the Labor Party and the Greens will be judged on these last four years. They will be judged on the delivery in those four years.

That is why we are going to continue to listen to communities. Whether they be in Calwell, Lanyon, Gungahlin, Belconnen, Weston Creek, Woden or anywhere else, we will listen to those local communities. And what they are telling us is that they want a government that focuses on their core local services. Here it is; here is another opportunity to get the core local services right, in this case for the people of Calwell and south-east Tuggeranong.

Mr Smyth understands that. That is why he has brought this motion forward. He has been listening to the community, the Canberra Liberals have been listening to the community in south-east Tuggeranong and this is what is needed. That is why this motion should be supported and that is why the amendments should not be supported.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11.27): I rise to address both Mr Barr's amendments and Ms Bresnan's amendment but I will deal with the overall substantive motion as well.

The proposal to delay the delivery of land which is urgently needed for aged care in the Tuggeranong Valley is not a request that the government can agree to. It is absolutely imperative that more aged-care facilities are provided in the Tuggeranong Valley. The population in the Tuggeranong Valley is ageing and there is significant demand from residents in the Tuggeranong Valley to be able to continue to reside in the Tuggeranong Valley in suitable accommodation that meets their current needs. So the government cannot agree to a delay or any sort of hindrance that will see older residents of the Tuggeranong Valley not able to access the aged-care facilities that they need and that they deserve.

It is worth highlighting in the context of the master planning discussion—Mr Barr outlined this as from the period he was planning minister, and I am now that I am the responsible minister—that the government is focused on ensuring that we have a coherent set of criteria applied to those areas that warrant the need for detailed master planning. There is a limited capacity to undertake master plans in every location at the one time. There are priority areas already outlined for master planning in the city. Mr Barr, when he was minister, outlined the highest priority areas for the first year of a four-year program of master planning. The government has made an appropriation to fund this program and we have indicated our first priorities and indicated that other centres will be considered in the context of the overall planning strategy for the city.

The priority areas already underway or due to commence are Oaks Estate, Cooleman Court, the Athllon Drive corridor and Belconnen town centre and these are in addition to studies already underway or recently completed, including Kingston and Dickson, which have recently been completed; Tuggeranong town centre, which is underway; the Erindale group centre, which is underway; Kambah, which is underway; Hawker; and Pialligo. So you can see there are already three very important centres in the Tuggeranong Valley that are getting the attention of the government's master planning program and obviously there is a range of centres around the city where there is a need and desirability for those master planning exercises to take place.

Calwell's group centre was not considered to meet all the criteria for the first year priority list for master planning, but its priority will be established through the public consultation which is now underway on the ACT's draft planning strategy. If we are to focus our efforts in a strategic and considered manner we have to first of all look at the highest order planning document for the territory, which is our planning strategy, which identifies where we expect to see increased development or redevelopment activity, and ensure that we have an appropriate planning framework in place to guide and support that redevelopment activity as we work towards trying to accommodate the 65,000 dwellings that we expect will need to be built to meet our growing population between now and 2030.

We have to view the master planning exercise as a direct response to ensuring that the planning strategy itself can be implemented in an orderly and efficient manner. So Calwell must be and will be considered by the government in that context. For those reasons the government obviously believes the motion needs to be amended along the lines proposed by Mr Barr.

I will turn now to Ms Bresnan's amendment. Ms Bresnan's amendment first of all recognises that the government is doing work in relation to park and ride at Calwell, and I would be happy to address those matters shortly. She also recognises and asks the government to consider a range of other matters. I welcome that Ms Bresnan is saying that any master plan for Calwell should be prioritised in the context of the overall planning strategy and I take her at her word on her position that whether or not there is a master plan for Calwell should be determined in the context of the overall planning strategy and its relative priority. That is indeed the government's position.

If Ms Bresnan is saying in her amendment that, if and when such a master planning exercise commences, a range of issues such as childcare provision, provision of other retail facilities and alternative sites for any proposed pool development should be considered in the context of that master planning exercise, the government is comfortable with that position. If Ms Bresnan is saying that these are matters that should be taken into account if and when a master plan takes place, that is a reasonable position from the government's perspective. I will take it that that is what the Greens' position is and that they are not saying this needs to happen now with priority given to a Calwell master plan now. So I take it that that is what Ms Bresnan is saying.

Turning to the issues of transport infrastructure more generally, and in particular park-and-ride facilities, I was very pleased to meet with representatives of Calwell traders in the last week or so and to have a discussion with them about management of transport issues in the Calwell group centre. The government has, and I was pleased to confirm this to those representatives, committed to look at the establishment of a small-scale park-and-ride facility at Calwell. Those facilities are of a modest scale to address perceived demand for commuter parking and use of public transport, and it is something which the government believes can be trialled at that location. The government is currently looking at how the existing commuter park-and-ride facility at Calwell can be expanded to provide some additional spaces to take pressure off the existing car park to allow patrons, customers, to park at the centre for their shopping

and other needs and have the commuter parking occur at a different location which does not see a conflict between the use of those resources. The government is committed to pursuing that course of action and I was pleased to confirm that to representatives of the Calwell centre in the last couple of weeks.

The other issues that Ms Bresnan raised are issues around lighting, bus shelters and so on. These are all matters the government is quite happy to consider and look at as part of its day-to-day management of territory and municipal service infrastructure and whether or not improvements can be made in these areas. These types of requests come in regularly from around the city as different issues arise in relation to transport infrastructure. So the government will not be objecting to Ms Bresnan's amendment, on the basis of the comments I have just made and on the basis of our understanding of what she is seeking to achieve from that amendment.

I think the most important thing to reiterate in this debate is that the operation of the Calwell centre is obviously very important to its local community and to the catchment that it serves. It is of course always desirable to try and make sure that the centre works as efficiently and as effectively as possible. But when it comes to the allocation of limited resources in relation to planning assessments and the development of overall planning strategy documents, relative priority has to be accorded to a whole range of centres across the city and assessments made in the context of the overall ACT planning strategy, because ultimately all of our efforts in the planning and transport realm must be focused on the overall achievement of our strategic objectives for the city as a whole, as outlined in the government draft planning strategy, focusing development along corridors and around centres, ensuring the efficient operation of centres and ensuring that that occurs in an orderly and sequential manner.

The priority that is given to Calwell will obviously come through from the consultation we are now undertaking on the draft planning strategy. I would encourage members, and I would indeed encourage everyone in that area of Tuggeranong around Calwell who has a strong interest in this, to participate in the draft planning strategy consultation, to indicate why they believe Calwell is important and to allow Calwell to be viewed in the context of the other centres that equally seek to see this type of effort made.

I commend Mr Barr's amendments, obviously, and the government will not be objecting to Ms Bresnan's amendment.

MS LE COUTEUR (Molonglo) (11.37): I obviously support Ms Bresnan's amendment to Mr Barr's proposed amendments. I will not go through Mr Smyth's original motion because, by this stage of the debate, it has been well and truly spoken about, so I will just talk on the amendments.

Firstly, on Mr Barr's amendments, I point out that all they actually do is delete paragraph (2) of Mr Smyth's amendment, which holds up the sale of land for an aged-care facility. My colleague Ms Bresnan has spoken very eloquently about the need for aged-care facilities in Canberra in general and Tuggeranong in particular. While the Greens are very supportive of good planning—I will talk some more about the

planning issues—we also recognise there is a need for more aged-care facilities in Canberra. My one remaining parent is in an aged-care facility, and I am very well aware of the sometimes desperate need for these in Canberra. We need to look very carefully at anything we do which will delay the production of good aged-care facilities in the ACT. Yes, there is a need for good community consultation and a need for good planning, I am not saying anything against that. But there is also a need for good aged-care facilities in Canberra. In suggesting the Assembly might postpone the development of aged-care facilities for what would be many years, we have to consider whether that is in the best interests of Canberra.

The Greens support Mr Barr's amendment; it is all factual, really. It is important for people in Calwell to realise that the site was already a community facility site. It has not come out of the blue that this site will be used for aged care. Community facility sites often become aged care. It has been the subject of site and traffic impact assessments and found to be suitable.

I will now move on to Ms Bresnan's amendment. The first thing I will talk about is paragraph (1)(g), a park and ride in Calwell. I thought it was particularly bizarre that the Leader of the Opposition said that the Greens and Ms Bresnan had not, in fact, done anything to aid the people of Canberra while they have been in the Assembly. It is particularly bizarre in the context of this motion, where Ms Bresnan's first point is about park and ride in Calwell. As the Leader of the Opposition should be aware, the Greens put in a budget bid in the last budget for a park and ride in Calwell, and this fortunately was supported. I was very pleased to hear Mr Corbell talking about the government looking at expanding that even further.

The Greens, and Ms Bresnan in particular, also put in a budget bid for expansion of express bus services to Calwell. Unfortunately we have not been successful in that as yet, but we will continue working for better transport for people in Canberra and better services for the people of Brindabella, the people of Tuggeranong, and, in particular, the people of Calwell. I totally reject the statements that the Leader of the Opposition made about the Greens in general and Ms Bresnan in particular. She is a very hard working local member, and Ms Bresnan's amendment to this motion is testimony to her hard work as a local member.

Moving on to other issues, Ms Bresnan's amendment notes that there are some potential issues with this site in terms of paths and roads. This issue needs to be dealt with, but it is not an issue which means it should be put on hold for a number of years before anything happens. The amendment also notes that the government's new draft planning strategy addresses the need for additional master plans. That is on page 38, and I might just read it out to everyone because it says:

Extending the program of master plans. This will establish a process for informing and guiding change in group and local centres and the adjacent precincts. It is critical that more detailed planning processes identify the intended urban character, land uses, housing forms and public amenity to be achieved.

As I have said before, I support the intent of the draft planning strategy, but I would like to make a few comments. Mr Corbell said that comments on the draft planning

strategy were what was going to determine the priority for master plans. If that is the case, I do not think that has been adequately conveyed to the Canberra public. I do not think that the people of Calwell would realise, “Oh, if we want a master plan we need to put a comment in on the draft planning strategy.”

We have a general problem with consultation on planning in Canberra. You can see it in the Assembly—we keep on dealing with spot fires, where people get significantly upset about an issue and there is a call upon the Assembly to intervene in the nitty-gritty of planning. The Assembly has many virtues, but we are not really brilliant on doing nitty-gritty town planning. That is not our role. Our role is—

Mr Corbell: Have you seen your motion today?

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, I have, and I have seen Ms Bresnan’s motion, Mr Corbell.

Mr Corbell: No, no, your motion. Your motion on QIC.

MS LE COUTEUR: I will talk on the QIC motion in a few hours, and I will talk on this motion now. I consistently say that the Assembly is not the best place to do nitty-gritty town planning. Sometimes the government leaves issues of such public importance that the Assembly finds itself dealing with issues which should not be debated at this level. That is really the second point of Ms Bresnan motion—addressing the community concerns in Calwell on all of these issues. It is the role of this Assembly to point out community concerns, but it is not really our role to say exactly how they are going to be solved, where the signs should be and where the paths should be.

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot!

MS LE COUTEUR: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is very distracting when members conduct conversations while you are trying to speak. It is important that the government takes on board the fact that these are general issues that TAMS should deal with. I am pleased to hear Mr Corbell say that TAMS in fact is going to deal with these, and I think it is a good thing that they will come higher up on the priorities than they otherwise would have been.

Before finishing I would like to make a general comment about planning and the need for better processes. Part of the Greens’ agreement with the Labor Party was for better neighbourhood planning. This has not happened. As a result of a motion last year about master planning we now have at least a program for the first half dozen master plans. But what we are seeing, as I said, is that planning is important to the ACT people and real consultation on it is important. I would like to emphasise the words “real consultation”. I have had a number of recent emails from constituents basically saying they are sick and tired of putting a lot of time into being consulted about things and then finding that what they said made absolutely no difference.

The Greens would like to see real consultation in planning. Real consultation is consultation where what people say has the potential to make a difference. We agree

with the government that there is a need to prioritise our master planning exercises because we have limited resources. In cases where there really is no potential for change, it is better to tell the community there is no potential for change rather than spending time on consultation that has no possible outcome.

What we would like to see in Calwell is good planning and aged care being prioritised. Both of these need to be prioritised, and I think that Ms Bresnan's amendment has a good balance and will achieve that.

MR DOSZPOT (Brindabella) (11.47): I welcome the opportunity to support the motion of Mr Smyth. He has been a tireless worker for the people of Calwell and the Tuggeranong Valley and, like me, he is passionate about ensuring families in this area are not forgotten by those who sit on the government benches opposite and, needless to say, our crossbench partners, who say they support the community of Calwell in much greater fashion than we would have expected here this morning.

Mr Barr: So are you in the transition yet, Steve? Who are you representing? Tuggers?

MR DOSZPOT: Mr Barr, you will see how much of a transition I am in in a few weeks, and I look forward to our debates on Molonglo.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot, resist having a conversation across the chamber, please, and address the motion.

MR DOSZPOT: I am sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker, but it is so tempting when Mr Barr is giving me some wonderful morsels to counter.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: It may be tempting, but would you please go back to the motion.

MR DOSZPOT: Some weeks ago I presented a petition to this Assembly on the concerns of those who have businesses in the Erindale shopping centre. Their concern was the government's lack of understanding, its poor planning record in respect of development in the area, its poor transport planning and its lack of proper consultation with those who live and work and shop in that area. If we think that the problems that the Erindale people are having are bad, I guess there is no way of putting it other than it is a disaster when you have a look at something that has been given a fair bit of time to be planned. There has supposedly been consultation for months and months. But when the actual plans came out, the community was absolutely aghast at what they saw compared to what they thought was planned after proper consultation.

A few weeks later here we have another Tuggeranong community showing evidence of government neglect in planning. There is very deep concern that there are things that all of sudden have been discovered about Calwell, and all of a sudden the government wants to do something. Calwell is a growing suburb. It is named after a leader of the federal Labor Party from the 60s, Arthur Calwell, with streets named after Victorian politicians. You would hope that Canberra's Labor politicians would at least show more interest, and I guess that is what they are trying to rise to now—to

show that. After all this neglect of Calwell, they are coming to recognise how important Calwell is. I guess there is no surprise that there is an election coming up.

The Calwell shopping centre precinct serves the suburbs of Calwell, Richardson, Theodore and Isabella Plains. Until the Lanyon Marketplace was established in the late 1990s, Calwell also served the residents of Conder, Banks and Gordon. What the community of Calwell precinct in particular have been asking for is what Mr Smyth is asking for in his motion. I am surprised that Ms Bresnan's amendment so carefully sidesteps some of the issues the Calwell residents have been asking us to bring to the attention of the government.

The Calwell community is specifically asking their representatives in this Assembly to achieve a delay in the aged-care land release. I am sure you have that information as well, Ms Bresnan. I do not see that anywhere in your amendment, apart from some vague reference to the aged-care site where you note that the aged-care site under tender is back to back to other blocks without space being left between them for footpaths and roads. You note that, but you are ignoring the evidence that you should have seen through what has happened at Erindale that the government are not conducting consultation with the community as they should and as you know they should. As Mr Seselja pointed out, the lack of consultation and lack of planning are yet again coming to this time hit the good citizens of Calwell.

Mr Barr, we are actually trying to help you here. We are actually trying to make sure you do not make one of these offhand decisions that the government have become so used to making where, in two months, there will be an enormous community reaction to your decision. I can assure you that it will happen. There is quite an upsurge in disquiet about the lack of respect that has been shown to the community of Calwell by you wanting to just push ahead on this regardless of what the community wants. The community has indicated that they want aged care, but they want aged care that is properly planned so you have got proper access roads.

Your planning, Mr Barr, has given Calwell another headache. We have got a shopping centre that is already undergoing major problems with the car parking space that is available. What happens? All of a sudden, a road has been blocked off at the back of the Calwell shops—without much consultation with the people again—which is causing enormous safety issues where people are coming down a one-way parking area, the only place where they can find extra parking spaces. They used to be able to go around the shopping centre to get out. Now that has been blocked off because of some development that is happening at the moment at Woolworths. There has been no planning as to how all of the traffic that used to go there is going to be diverted.

Ms Bresnan, the problem is that unless we force the government to have a closer look, the same issues are going to be faced when and if the aged-care land is released. There is no proper planning process there. By your own words, the aged-care site under tender is back to back to other blocks without space being left between them for paths and roads. Is that proper planning? Do you sell it and then start putting all these plans into place? Or do you show the people who potentially want to buy this area what the plans are? How do you plan to put the roads in there? How do you give access to people to the very blocks we are talking about?

Calwell is disadvantaged as a major centre because the area has been neglected. What we are finding now is that all of a sudden it has been discovered and certain points are being tried to be put across by this government, again in opposition to what the community really wants.

Mr Barr, I come back to what I said before: if you listened to the motion that Mr Smyth eloquently put, you would know that we are speaking on behalf of the community to try and help you from making yet another Barr-flip. We know this has received a lot of attention this morning and the government is pointing out that it is for the community's good. Well, the community understands what is good for it, and lack of planning certainly is not. The problems that have been created by your so-called desire for action are what the community is fighting against. And, Ms Bresnan, it would be fair to bring into this discussion some of the concerns of the community that you claim to be representing here this morning.

I support Mr Seselja and Mr Smyth and the motion that is before us at the moment. I certainly support on behalf of the Calwell community calling on the government to postpone the proposed sale of section 790 block 5 in Calwell until it has developed a master plan for the Calwell commercial and shopping centre precinct and the surrounding area.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (11.56): It is very hard to support the Greens' amendment. It is badly worded, it is contradictory and it does not hold the government to account. I draw members' attention to a number of items. Paragraph (1) lists:

- (h) that the aged care site under tender is back to back to other blocks without space being left between them for paths and roads;

But paragraph (2) says that the government should:

- (a) address community concerns in Calwell through ...
 - (vii) ensuring that adequate roads and footpaths are provided adjacent to the proposed aged care site before it is built ...

If it is adjacent and back to back to other blocks, what Ms Bresnan is suggesting is that the government will build footpaths and roads on other people's property to service the aged-care block. So if you are going to reclaim property from, for instance, the Alliance Church, which is directly next to it, or perhaps the car wash, I would be very interested to know how the minister feels about starting that process. And that is the falsehood that is this amendment. What it says is, "We have got some concerns but you address it on somebody else's property." Is Ms Bresnan suggesting the road go over the stormwater drain or over the easement? Or is it going on other people's property? We do not know, because this amendment is contradictory.

It is interesting that what the Greens seem to be saying is, "Yes, aged care is important." We agree. What the government is saying is, "Aged care is important." Yes, we agree with that. But it is not important in isolation to the other concerns of the community and, indeed, the concerns of the aged community. There are aged

residents very close to the Calwell group centre who have already got concerns about the traffic on their street and the effect of what the new aged-care facility will have on that neighbourhood because there is inadequate planning and inadequate processes in place to ameliorate the poor planning and the failures of the past.

It is interesting that in Mr Tsoulas's letter Nick says:

Whilst our community understands the importance of the Aged Care facility site, which could provide up to an additional 100-200 residences in the area, it is important we address what first what we want in Calwell, and how that will integrate with the aged care and vice versa.

And that is an important point. There are traffic problems on Were Street. He goes on to say:

There is also some debate about noise mitigation and ensuring Were Street doesn't become the only access road from two of Tuggeranong busiest roads for the aged care site from Tharwa Drive and Johnson Drive, which carry combined approx 22,000 cars per day, as ... Tony Gill once quoted at the Tuggeranong Community Council meeting last year.

There is a problem. Selling this block immediately will not address that problem. And yes, we all agree there is a problem with the provision of aged care. But making more planning mistakes now will not fix the planning mistakes of the past. And that is what is going to happen.

Mr Barr, I think, was a little disingenuous in some of what he said. He got up and tried to ridicule some of the things that I have asked to be noted. If he had read it, they are the concerns of the community. It is a very broad range from traffic to the provision of new retail, all the way down to pedestrian crossing and signage. Yes, I know some of those things are not done in master plans. But it was to put on the table the broad range of concerns of this community, from the very small matters to the very large matters. What they want is the best opportunity for their community and what the government and the Greens do today in amending this motion is take away that opportunity.

The block will be sold. I am assuming there will be lease development conditions on the block when it is sold. That is the normal practice. But what Ms Bresnan is saying in her amendment is: "That does not matter. We will then make sure that there are adequate roads and footpaths provided adjacent to the proposed aged-care site before it is built." If that is not on somebody else's land, not on the easement and not over the stormwater drain, the only place those footpaths and roads can be built is actually on the site. Is Ms Bresnan proposing that we sell a site with one capacity and then some time down the path change it? That leaves the government open, that leaves the community open, to the owner of the block then coming back and seeking compensation. Is that the sort of good planning process that the Greens are proposing? Apparently it is.

Mr Barr also had the glib shot, "Here is the Liberal Party, the party that want to cut red tape." You do not cut red tape at the expense of the community. We are not saying,

“Throw out good planning.” We are not saying, “Throw out good regulations and good laws.” We are saying: “Get the process right. Put in place a proper process, not a convoluted process.” If that is the only jibe he has got, that there is good red tape and bad red tape, it is a pretty weak case.

I think the problem for Mr Barr is: Mr Barr in the main got a lot of the planning right, unlike Mr Corbell, and Mr Corbell is now back in charge. Mr Corbell, when for years I asked for a master plan for Tuggeranong, said, “Tuggeranong is not old enough for a master plan yet.” You have got to get old and decrepit and have all the mistakes come out before you can have a master plan. Mr Barr actually got that. He understood that you can master-plan and get ahead of the game. And indeed, we will give him credit for trying to get ahead of the game in areas like Tuggeranong. Mr Corbell did not want one in Tuggeranong. He did not want one in Erindale.

Mr Barr interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Mr Barr, thank you. Order, Mr Barr.

MR SMYTH: He did not want one in Erindale. But Mr Barr got it. But now Mr Corbell is back in charge—

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, members on both sides.

MR SMYTH: Mr Corbell is back in charge and, of course, nothing is going to happen. Mr Corbell is back. There is pressure, due to past failures to appropriately plan under Mr Corbell’s tenure as planning minister. We did not have adequate aged-care facility sites available. Give Mr Barr his due. He was trying to get them out there. But it is the problem that comes from Mr Corbell’s time as the planning minister that we are really dealing with now.

If this motion gets amended, and it will clearly get amended, Mr Corbell is quite happy to agree with what the Greens want to do, because the Greens do not ask for anything. There is no time frame here. They ask to prioritise the master plan and Mr Corbell says: “Yes, we will prioritise. We will prioritise right out of the park.” They will not make sure this happens. Instead of trying to fix the impact of the previous failures, Mr Corbell is now going to exacerbate them. The government are quite comfortable, and I am sure they are quite comfortable, with the Greens’ amendment because the Greens have basically given them a get out of jail free card on this issue.

It is interesting when you look at what Ms Bresnan had to say. Yes, again we agree with the whole issue of aged care. But that does not mean you make mistakes now that will exacerbate problems into the future. The Greens have had three budgets, and Ms Le Couteur exposed this. She said, “In three budgets we have asked for lots of things, and they gave us a park and ride.” They said they would do a park and ride. We do not know where it will be. Mr Corbell is already now describing it as a very small, very modest park and ride. “We will give the Greens a modest park and ride for three years support of the government.” But we do not know where it is.

Indeed, if this block is sold, it is not going to be close to the Calwell centre. It may be across the stormwater drain over near the ambulance station. But if this block goes, what else can you take back in the area to find space for the park and ride? There is already a crisis with the parking; there is a crisis with taxi space; there is a crisis with bus parking. So I do not see how that gets addressed. And the answer is that it does not get addressed. And that is why the government is happy to accept the Greens' amendment.

So much for third party insurance! Maybe it is third party insurance and maybe the government holds the policy. That is what it is. There is a fraud here. They said they were third party insurance for the community but the government bought the policy. The government is holding the policy and the government constantly cashes in the policy. It must be great to have a third party insurance policy like that.

Mr Barr interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Mr Barr, thank you.

MR SMYTH: Unfortunately, the community did not get the coverage. And that is the problem. We go to Ms Le Couteur.

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Members, order!

MR SMYTH: Ms Le Couteur pointed out how eloquent Ms Bresnan had been about aged care. Yes, there is a problem. The problem is the past failure to plan for adequate aged-care facilities in the ACT. Mr Corbell is the master of failing to plan adequately. He has got the talk and he has got the glib lines, but he never delivered. He delivered a crisis in housing affordability. He delivered a crisis in aged-care accommodation because his planning practices failed.

Ms Le Couteur said we should not get down to the nitty-gritty of planning in the Assembly. I note there are something like 22 individual points in the motion on Civic. Indeed, Ms Bresnan adds another eight to some of the things that I have already pointed out. So let us not get down to the nitty-gritty! Let us discuss the principle here. Are you in favour of good planning or not? Are you in favour of fixing the mistakes of the past as quickly as we can without exacerbating those failures into the future by not adequately planning for the provision of many services, whether they be commercial, aged care, community, in the Calwell vicinity, in the Calwell group centre, and are you willing to do it now? If you are, you will vote for my motion. If you are not, you will vote for the wishy-washy amendments that end up saying nothing and betray the community.

Question put:

That **Ms Bresnan's** amendment to **Mr Barr's** proposed amendments be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 10

Noes 5

Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves	Mr Coe	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Hunter	Mr Doszpot	
Ms Bresnan	Ms Le Couteur	Mrs Dunne	
Mr Corbell	Ms Porter	Mr Seselja	
Ms Gallagher	Mr Rattenbury		

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (12.09): I thank Mr Hargreaves for his interjection, “Another crushing by the coalition.” Yes, the coalition of the Greens and the Labor Party in this place has just crushed the will of the people of Calwell. The people of Calwell wanted something better out of this Assembly today and they have not got that. What they have got is not clear and what they have not got is certainty.

Yes, there is pressure to deliver aged care in this city but there is also pressure to get it right for the people of Calwell. In the main, it is due to past failures to plan adequately. The Calwell centre was planned before self-government. The placement of this property today is not the fault of this Assembly but it is the fault of this Assembly, particularly the Labor government in the time that they have been in office, that adequate planning was not made for the arrival of this day. And this day was always coming. And what will happen today is that we will not address past failures by planning adequately for a better future for the community of Calwell.

How will the Greens and the Labor Party address those past failures? They will address those past failures by further failure to adequately plan for the long term. What we are now about to pass is a motion that has a number of contradictions and those contradictions lead to nothing happening. The government is not committed to doing a master plan quickly. The government is not committed to holding off the sale of the land. The government, aided and abetted by the Greens, is failing the community of Calwell.

What we have is a watered down motion. The government gets its way. The Greens acquiesce as they always do, and the community loses. What this will do is compound the failures of the past into a burden on the future, and that is not a good outcome for the Calwell community and the people of southern Tuggeranong.

The Canberra Liberals will not vote for a mediocre outcome for our community. We listen to our community. We are out in our community and we want the best for our community. The community does not want platitudes, it does not want motherhood statements, and it does not want the contradictions that Ms Bresnan’s amendment has put into this motion.

The motion as it will now read has a number of the things that the community have said to many of us, and that is fine. But let us go to paragraph (1) as amended where Ms Bresnan points out:

- (h) that the aged care site under tender is back to back to other blocks without space being left between them for paths and roads.

If Ms Bresnan believes that, that it is back to back, but she wants paths and roads, she has an obligation to tell the community and this place where the space for those paths and roads will come from. And she does not.

She then says in paragraph (2):

- (a) address community concerns in Calwell through ...
 - (vii) ensuring that adequate roads and footpaths are provided adjacent to the proposed aged care site before it is built ...

The Greens, in their badly worded, contradictory amendment, have ensured nothing but a dismal outcome for the people of Calwell and planning confusion well into the future as to where these magical roads and magical footpaths will go. Will they be in the stormwater drain? Will they be on the easement? Or will they be on somebody else's property? If she believes in what she has told this Assembly, that they are back to back to other blocks, then she has got, quite literally, no room to move. And that is the problem for the community. Nothing will change as a consequence of this motion. The people of that community have an expectation that their Assembly would endeavour to do something better for them, for the community, for the people that we are here to represent.

We have had a request from the community that a master plan be done. We have had a request from the community that the block not be sold until that master plan is completed. We have had a request from church leaders, community leaders, business leaders, residents of that area, to do something on their behalf and this Assembly, through these amendments, turns its back on those various communities. And what the Assembly does is fail to address the failures of the past and it will now compound those failures of the past into a burden on those who will come in the future. This will take more time and even more money and more grief for residents, the business community and the church communities in that place, into the future.

This is a truly bad outcome for the people of Calwell. Calwell has so much potential. Calwell is a huge hub not just for Calwell, Theodore and the Chisholm and Richardson residents to the north of Johnson Drive, but it also services a large part of the population from Conder, Banks and Gordon who pass by it every day in the 22,000 car movements that the government tells the community come along Johnson Drive and Tharwa Drive. It is the intersection of those major roads servicing southern Tuggeranong. It should be accorded more respect by this place. It should be given better planning by its government.

It should be given greater support by the three parties in this place. But the only party willing to stand up today for the people of Calwell is the Liberal Party. The others will vote for mediocrity, the others will vote for contradiction, the others will simply vote for motherhood statements, and the others in this place will vote for the abandonment of the hopes and aspirations of the Calwell community. They have been betrayed

today by those they thought represented them and those they thought understood what good planning is and making sure that we get it right for future generations by doing it properly today. It has not been done properly today, and that is a shame because this is another opportunity lost. As Mr Hargreaves so eloquently put it, the coalition of the Greens and the Labor Party today is crushing the desires, the wishes and the aspirations of the Calwell community.

Question put:

That **Mr Barr's** amendments, as amended, be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 10		Noes 5	
Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves	Mr Coe	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Hunter	Mr Doszpot	
Ms Bresnan	Ms Le Couteur	Mrs Dunne	
Mr Corbell	Ms Porter	Mr Seselja	
Ms Gallagher	Mr Rattenbury		

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question put:

That **Mr Smyth's** motion, as amended, be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 10		Noes 5	
Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves	Mr Coe	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Hunter	Mr Doszpot	
Ms Bresnan	Ms Le Couteur	Mrs Dunne	
Mr Corbell	Ms Porter	Mr Seselja	
Ms Gallagher	Mr Rattenbury		

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.21 to 2 pm.

Questions without notice

Emergency Services Agency—flooding

MR SESELJA: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, as you would be aware, the new ESA headquarters at Fairbairn were inundated in December 2010 and the construction site for the ESA training facility at Hume was also flooded. Minister, were you ever advised that either or both of the Fairbairn and Hume sites are on a flood plain?

MR CORBELL: I would have to check the record, but I can advise that in relation to the flooding event at the ESA headquarters at Fairbairn, that was the consequence of a very severe storm cell immediately over the building and the airport. It is not anything to do with its location on the flood plain and the flooding that occurred was not as a result of inundation coming from the flood plain. In relation to flooding at the ESA training facility, there has been no flooding per se, except for the large volume of rain that collected on the site whilst the excavations were being undertaken for the commencement of that work.

MR SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr Seselja.

MR SESELJA: Minister, were you ever briefed to the effect that either or both of these sites had the potential to be at risk of flooding? If so, what was the nature of that advice?

MR CORBELL: I do not believe so, but again I will check the record.

MR SMYTH: A supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, is it correct that the then commissioner, Gregor Manson, informed you in a brief that there was potential for flooding to affect these sites?

MR CORBELL: Which sites is Mr Smyth referring to? If he is referring to the ESA training facility, the ESA training facility is, obviously, located in the Jerrabomberra Creek area. It has been constructed above the one-in-100-year flood level.

MR SPEAKER: A supplementary, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, will you table by close of business today any such briefs that indicated that either the emergency services headquarters at Fairbairn or the ESA training facility at Hume may be affected by flooding?

MR CORBELL: I am not aware of any advice. I cannot recollect any advice to me in relation to flooding at the ESA headquarters. There has been no flooding at the ESA headquarters aside from the storm cell event, which is not associated with flooding from inundation from a creek line. It was the result of flooding from a severe rainfall event in the immediate proximity of the building. In relation to the ESA training facility, as I have reiterated, the ESA training facility is built above the one-in-100-year flood level of the Jerrabomberra Creek.

Education—student expulsions

MS HUNTER: My question is to the minister for education regarding education and training options for young people. Minister, at a recent meeting I was informed of a young person who was expelled from a school and who has spent at least seven weeks not engaged in education or any other supports. What policies, protocols or support mechanisms are followed when a child or young person is expelled from school?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Hunter for the question. There are within the ACT Education and Training Directorate guidelines in relation to public schools. I will presume that it was a student enrolled in a public school. There is a requirement for a re-engagement plan for any student who is suspended. In the absence of any detail in relation to the individual case, it is difficult for me to comment.

I am certainly happy to follow up with the directorate this individual circumstance. I think it is best not to do it in the public forum that is question time. But there is a policy and procedure in relation to a re-engagement plan. Depending on the nature of the suspension, the various support services will be engaged to assist the student, the family and the leadership within the school to ensure that there is a smooth transition back into education and training.

As I say, if Ms Hunter would like to provide the details to my office, I am happy for the individual matter to be investigated outside of the question time forum.

MR SPEAKER: Ms Hunter, a supplementary.

MS HUNTER: Minister, how does the government propose to achieve the first listed aim of the ACT youth commitment to ensure that no child or young person is lost from education, training or employment like this young person who was expelled?

MR BARR: There are alternative settings available for students who may not be fully engaged in a mainstream schooling environment. The opportunity for education, training or employment is part of the youth commitment, and that is around ensuring that no-one is slipping through the cracks.

I will obviously need to look at the detail of this individual case to ascertain what may or may not have happened. With the evidence in front of me—the very limited information of a question in question time—it is difficult to comment on the specifics of the case. But the policy framework is there. It is obviously incumbent upon individuals within the system to work within that policy framework.

MS BRESNAN: Supplementary.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Bresnan.

MS BRESNAN: Minister, what is the government doing to ensure that when young people with a disability move from school to further education, training or work they will continue to be accounted for, cared for and supported as set out in the youth commitment?

MR BARR: Close engagement between the various stakeholders is critical in this area. Ensuring across ACT government directorates but also importantly within the community sector and those organisations who may be working in partnership with the government to deliver services and further education, training or employment opportunities for young people with a disability is critical to achieving this outcome.

MS BRESNAN: A supplementary.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Bresnan.

MS BRESNAN: Minister, what has been done to ensure that there are appropriate links between agencies so that the youth commitment is being fulfilled, and have all the relevant government agencies been communicating with the youth sector to ensure complementary measures are in place?

MR BARR: Yes, there has been a whole-of-government approach. I am certainly aware of a number of working groups across ACT government directorates and engagement with key stakeholders. I had the opportunity at the Menslink breakfast the other morning to hear Dr Chris Peters from the chamber of commerce outline how the chamber of commerce and the business community are working with government and other stakeholders in relation to the youth commitment. It is very pleasing to see that level of engagement from the business community.

ACT economy

DR BOURKE: My question is to Minister Barr. Minister, I am concerned about the harm done to Canberra businesses by the negative diatribe from the Canberra Liberals, the constant talking down of the best economy in Australia by the Chicken Littles—

Mrs Dunne: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne, I am just going to hear the question and then I will come to you on the point of order.

Mrs Dunne: You have anticipated my point.

MR SPEAKER: I think I probably have. Dr Bourke, let's start again, thank you.

DR BOURKE: Minister, I am concerned about the harm done to Canberra businesses by the negative diatribe from the Canberra Liberals, the constant talking down of the best economy in Australia by the Chicken Littles of the Canberra Liberals. My question—

MR SPEAKER: Let's come to the question, thank you, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Regarding the recent Deloitte Access business outlook and CommSec state of the states report, is the minister aware of these recent reports, and how do these reports reflect on the ACT economy?

Mrs Dunne: Mr Speaker—

MR SPEAKER: On the point of order, Mrs Dunne.

Mrs Dunne: The point of order is that the preamble is entirely out of order, and the sorts of things that were said, apart from being unparliamentary, have been things that you have ruled out of order. What the Canberra Liberals think or do is not the ministerial responsibility of any member on that side.

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order! Mr Corbell, did you want to take a point of order? No. Dr Bourke, I think you redeemed the question; I think the second half of the question is in order. Further questions like that in the future will be ruled out of order.

Mr Seselja interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Members, we get the usual round of protests on this side of the chamber whenever I rule against the point you are taking, but through this chamber consistently there are a range of questions that make a political case in the question. Dr Bourke's was perhaps more brazen than most, but—

Mr Hargreaves interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: The actual question is in order.

Mr Seselja: Mr Speaker, I seek to clarify your ruling. You are now ruling that, no matter how out of order a preamble is, the question will be ruled in order.

MR SPEAKER: That is not what I am saying, Mr Seselja.

Mr Seselja: It is unclear to us, but if that is the new standard we do look forward to it.

MR SPEAKER: Minister Barr.

Mr Seselja interjecting—

Mr Hargreaves: Point of order, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I would like your advice on the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. He said, "We can now say anything we like in the preamble." Is that true?

Members interjecting—

Mr Hargreaves: That is what Mr Seselja just said.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, that is enough. Mr Barr, you have the floor.

MR BARR: I thank Dr Bourke for the question. Members would be aware of two recent reports outlining the strength of the ACT economy. The Deloitte Access business outlook report presents some very good news. The findings show stable growth in gross state product and state final demand, wages and CPI under control and population growth exceeding the national average at the moment and expected to be stable in the long term. The report notes that Canberra has a reputation and track record as a safe haven in times of trouble. When we look at the state of the global economy, that is clearly an important factor in the medium-term outlook for the territory economy.

In relation to the CommSec state of the states report, it is comparing current economic performance with the decade average performance of each jurisdiction. It then ranks states and territories according to their relative performance against that decade average. It is very pleasing that the ACT has again held its position in this comparison, second only to Western Australia, noting of course the unique circumstances that currently apply in the Western Australian economy. It is noteworthy that the ACT has achieved this strong economic result in the absence of a resources sector. The ACT has the highest performance in terms of population growth, construction, housing and finance and dwelling commencements and the second highest performance in relation to economic growth.

There were some areas of concern that were noted within the CommSec report, most particularly in relation to unemployment and retail trade. But let us look a little at the detail of that. In relation to unemployment, it is worth while noting that the ACT's unemployment rate remained well below the national average, by 1.2 percentage points in September 2011. The ACT has recorded the second lowest unemployment rate and the second highest participation rate of all jurisdictions in September 2011. Full-time employment continues to trend upward, remaining well above the levels of years ago. This is an important point to note. The underlying strength of the territory economy is, indeed, in full-time employment.

Whilst we note that there has been a relatively soft performance in retail trade, it is worth noting that it is coming off a very high base. Whilst there are some challenges to retail spending growth, we do continue to have high levels of disposable income in the territory. What we are observing is a change in consumption patterns, particularly through three factors. Firstly, people are paying down debt after an extended period of indebtedness. Secondly, there is a change in discretionary spending towards other areas, particularly around leisure and recreation. We are certainly seeing, in terms of outbound tourism figures, a number of people taking advantage of the very high Australian dollar to pursue overseas travel.

A third factor that is apparent in relation to the retail sector is a steady move towards online shopping. I think a question for those who are collecting statistics in this area would be how we appropriately measure that level of online retail and where exactly those purchases are recorded. I think it is going to be an increasing issue as more and more commerce moves online that our statistical systems are able to accurately reflect that.

But overall, I think it is a very good picture for the territory economy. There are, as there always are, medium-term risks.

MR SPEAKER: Dr Bourke, before we proceed with your supplementary, I would like to clarify the result of the earlier question. I did consider the preamble to your question to be out of order. Nonetheless, the actual question was in order. If those sorts of questions come forth again, including in your supplementary, I will sit you down.

Mr Seselja: Mr Speaker, can I get your clarification? Is your ruling that Dr Bourke is able to—

MR SPEAKER: Are you taking a point of order?

Mr Seselja: I am taking a point of order. I am asking for clarification. Is your ruling that Dr Bourke is able to do that on a one-off basis, but members of the opposition and other members will be ruled completely out of order if they engage in the same sort of invective that Dr Bourke did in his preamble?

MR SPEAKER: Mr Seselja—

Mr Hargreaves: On the point of order, Mr Speaker, Mr Seselja was just talking about the invective that came across the chamber. I presume he was referring to Dr Bourke's question. The most pejorative term Dr Bourke used was "Chicken Little". I am not aware that that is unparliamentary, and it is about a group and not a person.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Hargreaves.

Mr Hargreaves: I don't think you're listening, sir

MR SPEAKER: I am listening to you.

Mr Hargreaves: Sir, I do not think you are listening.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hargreaves, you are warned for inappropriate reflection on the chair.

Mr Hargreaves: All right; I take it. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Seselja, on your point of order—

Mr Hargreaves interjecting—

Mr Coe: On a point of order, can I please ask Mr Hargreaves to withdraw what he just said?

MR SPEAKER: Which was? I am sorry, I was concentrating on something else.

Mr Coe: It was definitely unparliamentary and I do not want to repeat it.

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Order! Mr Coe, I am afraid I actually did not hear it because I was concentrating on something else.

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Speaker, I am quite happy to indicate to Mr Coe, who cannot clearly remember what it was I said, what I actually did say. I said, "Then you can now march one of those." That was not unparliamentary. It was not a reflection on the chair; it was a comment across the chamber.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. In light of the circumstances, Mr Coe, I cannot rule on your point of order.

On your point of order, Mr Seselja, I think that you asked me, before Mr Barr gave his answer, for some clarification. I took the opportunity during Mr Barr's answer to reflect and I am seeking to give the chamber a clearer understanding of the point I was trying to make earlier, given your concern about my apparent lack of clarity before, which was perhaps fair enough.

Mr Hanson: Mr Speaker, on the point of order, there seems to be a clear inconsistency here in that the point of order was raised about an unparliamentary and inappropriate preamble to a question. You have made the ruling that it is okay to have a preamble that is unparliamentary and to have a question that is parliamentary.

MR SPEAKER: Sit down, Mr Hanson, thank you. On the point of order—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, sit down. There is no point of order. I think you might have the grace to acknowledge that I sought to clarify my position in light of Mr Seselja's earlier questioning.

Mr Coe: On a point of order, Mr Speaker—

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Coe.

Mr Coe: Can I please ask: to the best of your ability, do you believe what Dr Bourke said would be included in *Hansard*?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, it will be. Let us proceed. Dr Bourke, you have a supplementary question.

DR BOURKE: What policies does the government have to continue to grow the economy?

MR BARR: The government will continue to pursue sensible economic policy settings that enable territory businesses to continue their expansion path. I think it is worth noting that the ACT has the most generous provisions in relation to exemptions from payroll tax of any jurisdiction in Australia. We exempt most small businesses in the territory from participating at all in the payroll tax system—the highest threshold providing comparatively greater assistance to small businesses than any other Australian jurisdiction.

The government are also heavily focused on exports. We recognise the expertise of ACT businesses in a number of areas where we have comparative advantage over any other part of the country, particularly in the area of services to government. Our comparative advantage presents an ideal opportunity to export that strength and our very clear advantages to a number of large governments. Most particularly—and it is

something that we will be pursuing in the next week—a team of ACT exporters will be heading to the United States to tap into the US government services market. That market is over a trillion dollars. It is larger than the Australian economy, and there are a number of ACT businesses that are exceptionally well placed to grow in the significant US market.

Exports are clearly the future for this economy, particularly in the services sector. We will continue to support those businesses that are seeking to grow their export market and to have policy settings that facilitate that to put in place a framework for small business to grow and for the ACT's comparative advantages to be taken advantage of.

MS PORTER: A supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, will the ACT government continue to have policies that strengthen the ACT economy?

MR BARR: Yes, and I think it is important that we maintain an appropriate balance between government intervention and market forces in relation to setting our policy framework. I certainly do note that there are a number of calls for significant government intervention in relation to the ACT economy. I think that would be a misguided and wasteful effort. What is important is to ensure that the broader macroeconomic policy settings are correct, that we have in place the right pricing signals and the right opportunities for businesses to grow. That is what is important, not seeking to micromanage and have industry plans, not seeking a return to the sort of economic policy that dominated Australian policymaking in the 1950s and 1960s.

It is an open trading economy that we live in, one that the ACT is very well placed to take advantage of. We should be export focused. We should not be meddling in individual industry plans, and we certainly should not be adopting the idea that government is going to be setting industry plans, command economy style, into the future. I absolutely and utterly reject that as a policy framework for the territory economy. The ACT will continue to pursue reforms, microeconomic reforms, that enhance competition within markets and ensure that ACT businesses are positioned to succeed.

MR SMYTH: Supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, are your policies leading towards market equilibrium, given your interest in the market?

MR BARR: In relation to which market, I would ask, Mr Speaker? Overall, the government's policy settings are about ensuring, firstly, that the broader macroeconomic settings facilitate business investment and growth and ensuring that, where there are supply-side constraints within the territory economy, we are working to alleviate those. There are a number and we are working to ensure that supply-side

constraints are addressed. But the overall policy settings need to ensure that there is not heavy-handed government intervention, that we are not seeking to have command economy style interventions of the sorts that Mr Smyth—and I know he is very tender about this because it is most unusual for a shadow treasurer—

Mr Smyth: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Just one moment, Mr Barr. Stop the clock.

Mr Smyth: Point of order. It was a very simple question: will his policies lead towards equilibrium in the market? He has not mentioned equilibrium in the first half of his allotted time. Perhaps he might do it in the second half or sit down if he does not understand the concept of equilibrium.

MR SPEAKER: Minister Barr, could you try to focus on Mr Smyth's question.

MR BARR: I do find it amusing to get a lecture on economics from the shadow treasurer, who would be the least qualified and worst person—

MR SPEAKER: Mr Barr, come to the question or sit down.

MR BARR: I was referring to the interaction between supply and demand. Where there are supply-side constraints, as I indicated, the ACT government will seek to intervene. Ensuring that our broader macroeconomic policy settings enable business growth, business investment and ensuring that there is not unnecessary government intervention are the important point that needs to be made here.

That where there is a clear contrast between the approach put forward by the shadow treasurer and the approach put forward by the government. The government are not interested in micromanaging individual businesses. We are not interested in developing umpteen industry plans. What we are interested in are the broad policy settings. (*Time expired.*)

Energy—solar

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development and is in relation to the installation of solar electric systems in the ACT. Minister, in recent weeks there have been many complaints about the delays for residents who are waiting for up to five months for ACTPLA to assess their solar installations so that they can be connected to the grid and start feeding in renewable electricity. What are the main reasons that installations have failed these safety inspections, and what action is required to remedy these failures?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. The circumstances in the ACT are that we obviously have a 100 per cent mandatory double inspection for all PV installations here in the territory, and that is a good thing because it ensures safety in terms of both electrical safety to prevent risks of electrocution but also to prevent to the greatest extent possible the risk of fire in a premises from the inappropriate installation of a PV system.

The types of failures that we are seeing are broad ranging. What we have seen is that at the moment the inspection rate is identifying about a 50 per cent fail rate in the first instance from the Planning and Land Authority's electrical safety inspections. That means of course that that inspection has to recur prior to a final inspection being booked with ActewAGL. Of course every inspection which fails is another inspection that needs to be done because the installation has to be reinspected and that obviously adds to the overall waiting list.

The natures of the failures are many but they can include a range of issues which I would not attempt to be completely proficient with—I would seek further advice from the regulator in relation to these matters—but needless to say they are not meeting the required Australian standards in terms of installation and therefore they cannot be passed for approval and they cannot be connected.

So, whilst this is of concern to residents who have paid money to have these systems installed, I would simply reiterate that the government's objective is that it is about safety first; it is about ensuring that we do not have systems on roofs that present a danger to the houses' inhabitants or that potentially could cause a fire in the premises. The double inspection regime ensures that we maintain a very high level of safety and prevent to the greatest extent possible any accident that could cause harm or an even more serious impact on individuals.

MR SPEAKER: Ms Le Couteur, a supplementary question.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, what action has the government taken to reduce the times that residents wait for these inspections?

MR CORBELL: We are working very hard to get through this backlog as soon as possible. The electrical safety inspectorate is working very hard. We have considerable numbers of staff working overtime. We have recruited additional electrical safety inspectors to the directorate to improve our response times. But it is important to remember that our electrical safety inspectors are not just inspecting PV installations; they also have to inspect all new homes before a certificate of occupancy can be granted, to ensure that those homes' electrical systems are safe. So they have a range of other duties that they have to perform.

We do give first priority to the granting of certificates of occupancy, particularly as we move towards the end of the year. Many people plan to complete their construction projects by the end of the year so that they can move in prior to Christmas. Obviously it is important that we process those particular actions as a high priority, and that is exactly what our electrical safety inspectors do. But we are working very hard as well to progress through the backlog that has been generated in relation to PV systems.

I am confident that every possible step is being undertaken. It is not easy to simply go out and secure additional inspectors. Inspectors have to be trained to the relevant standards to ensure that systems are appropriately tested and inspected and that they themselves understand what standards need to be maintained. But we have been able

to recruit some additional electrical safety inspectors and they are contributing to the overall task.

MR SESELJA: Minister, how many safety incidents relating to the installation of solar panels under the feed-in tariff scheme is the government aware of, and will you table a list of all of those incidents by the close of business?

MR CORBELL: I am unclear what Mr Seselja means by “safety incidents”.

MS BRESNAN: A supplementary.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Bresnan.

MS BRESNAN: Minister, what action has ACTPLA taken to manage the demand for increased customer services, including initial phone bookings, given the increased numbers of applicants in recent months?

MR CORBELL: First of all I should reiterate my previous answer, which was that the government has recruited additional electrical safety inspectors to improve processing times. Bookings for electrical safety inspections are normally done by the installer of the PV system. But what we have seen is an increase where the installers are relying on the customer to make that booking, or both the installer and the customer are seeking to make the booking.

So this is actually creating a large number of phone calls that have to be dealt with, because we have got a duplication. In fact, it needs to be the installer who makes the booking wherever possible, because the installer will know when the system is ready to be inspected, whereas the customer may not always know that the system is complete to the point that it warrants an inspection.

That is creating some challenges, but again, as I have indicated, staff are working long hours, hard hours. We are seeing considerable amounts of overtime being worked to try and respond to this issue. I would like to commend the staff in the electrical safety area of the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate for the very hard work they are doing. I am cognisant that they are working hard, but I am grateful that they continue to place their priority on maintaining electrical safety. If there is a choice between some delay and electrical safety, I would much rather be putting electrical safety first.

Emergency Services Agency—headquarters

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, I am concerned that you do give an honest answer, given your record of being censured in this place.

Mr Hargreaves: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, that has got to be out there. You cannot talk about Chicken Little and then talk about that.

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: I would ask the house to not engage in a round of tit for tat at this point in time. I think it would be to the benefit of all of us if we could simply proceed.

MR SMYTH: If I could—

MR SPEAKER: Go for your life, Mr Smyth. I am simply asking the house—

MR SMYTH: I will finish the question and you will see why I am concerned. Minister, I am concerned that you do give an honest answer, given your—

Mr Corbell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the question is alluding to my honesty. It is a reflection on me. It is unparliamentary. He can only make suggestions about the honesty of a member through a substantive motion in this place. Mr Smyth knows it. I ask that he be asked to withdraw the comment.

Mr Hanson: On the point of order, Mr Speaker, Dr Bourke was casting aspersions on the Liberal Party. A similar point of order was raised by Mrs Dunne, and you ruled that he could finish his question. So on a point of consistency, I think that Mr Smyth should be allowed to finish his question before any point of order is raised by members opposite, based on your previous ruling.

Mr Hargreaves: On the point of order, Mr Speaker, my understanding from practice in this place gone forward has been that the Speaker's discretion has been applied where there have been comments made about groupings, collectives, but where there have been comments made or insinuations made or imputations made about specific members, then the Speaker has ruled them out of order. I would ask you to do so in this case.

MR SPEAKER: On the point of order, you will recall that I indicated that the preface to Dr Bourke's question was out of order. Mr Smyth, I would ask you to proceed directly to the question.

Mr Corbell: On the point of order, Mr Speaker, are you indicating that Mr Smyth should not withdraw any imputation that he has made against me?

MR SPEAKER: I am asking Mr Smyth to proceed directly to the question. Unfortunately, Dr Bourke set the standard for question time, Mr Corbell.

Mr Corbell: Mr Speaker, there is an imputation in Mr Smyth's question that I am dishonest. It is unparliamentary and it should be withdrawn.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Smyth, I ask you to withdraw the specific imputation and then let us proceed with some maturity for the rest of question time.

MR SMYTH: Mr Speaker, I withdraw. Minister, yesterday in question time, in response to a question from Mr Seselja, you said:

The studies that Mr Seselja refers to relate to the problems with the buildings that were proposed to be utilised for the ESA headquarters at Fairbairn.

Later, you said:

That report was not per se about the physical location ...

Minister, the study in question is an expert report from quantity surveyors Wilde and Woollard. The title of their report is “ESA Relocation Study: Cost Benefit Analysis”. The stated purpose of their report is “to analyse ... the proposal to relocate the existing Emergency Services Authority from their existing accommodation at Curtin, Belconnen, Kambah and Fyshwick to a co-located site at Canberra Airport”. Their report concluded that the proposal would be “substantially negative ... the proposed relocation is not financially beneficial to the ACT”.

Minister, did you mislead the Assembly yesterday by saying that the Wilde and Woollard report related to the problems with the buildings that were proposed to be utilised for the ESA headquarters at Fairbairn and not to the site selection?

MR CORBELL: The relocation question that Mr Smyth raises is in relation to the suitability of the buildings. Wilde and Woollard identified in their study that the buildings proposed to be used, should the ESA relocate to Fairbairn, would be inadequate, and the government took steps to respond to that inadequacy. As the government has already made clear, a contract was already in place, a long-term contract was already in place, to utilise facilities at the Canberra airport. Exiting that contract would have meant that the government would have faced significant costs in breaking that contract. Therefore the prudent course of action was for the government to renegotiate its contract terms and provide for an effective operational headquarters at the airport.

I want to make it very clear that the ESA headquarters function is not as a primary response facility for the emergency services. Response to emergencies, particularly first response, occurs from ESA stations that are spread across the city.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order, members!

MR CORBELL: Primary first response does not come from the ESA headquarters.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order, thank you.

MR CORBELL: Some response from the ESA headquarters occurs if an incident is of a larger nature—for example, if headquarters personnel need to be dispatched to provide a higher level of supervision or operational command at a larger incident. The headquarters has performed its function extremely well.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Speaker, you really have to do something about this. Please, I implore you to do something about this constant interjection across the chamber when the minister is trying his best to answer, in a voice which is not inflammatory. It does not suggest anything from those opposite. They constantly carp. It has been going on all day and I implore you, Mr Speaker: take charge of this Assembly.

Mrs Dunne: On the point of order, Mr Speaker, I am objecting to the tone of Mr Hargreaves, who is already on a warning for disrespecting the chair, and I consider that the tone is disrespectful. By this disingenuous imploring you to do something, he is actually attempting to bully you.

Mr Seselja interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order! Unfortunately, Mr Hargreaves, a most unfavourable tone was set earlier in question time. It is going to be one of those difficult days. Let us just try and proceed with respect across the chamber, thank you. Minister Corbell, you have the floor.

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Speaker, I need to take a point of order on this. Mr Speaker, I accept your ruling without equivocation, but I do point out to the chair that Mr Seselja did say, “But he has lost control.” I suggest, Mr Speaker, that that is an imputation on the chair.

Mr Seselja: Mr Speaker, I was responding to what Mr Hargreaves said. He was the one with the imputation. He said, “You should take control of the Assembly.” One can only assume that he means you do not have control of the Assembly.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Seselja. This is not a free-for-all. Mr Corbell, you have the floor. Let us proceed, members.

Mr Smyth: Well, will you ask Mr Hargreaves to withdraw? He said you have lost control. He said you must take control. He must withdraw.

MR SPEAKER: Order, members! We are proceeding with question time. Mr Corbell, you have the floor.

Mr Smyth: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Mr Hargreaves said you should take control of the Assembly. That implies you do not have control of the Assembly—

MR SPEAKER: I did not take that implication, Mr Smyth, thank you.

Mr Smyth: and in that case it is a reflection on the chair and you should ask him to withdraw it.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Smyth, for your advice. Mr Corbell, you have the floor.

MR CORBELL: I have concluded my answer, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Smyth, you have a supplementary.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how can you confuse a report which analyses relocation options and their costs with a report which assesses the quality of existing buildings?

MR CORBELL: I am not confused, Mr Speaker.

MR HANSON: Supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, what was the response of your government to the conclusion of the cost-benefit analysis undertaken by Wilde and Woollard that the proposal to co-locate at Fairbairn would be substantially negative?

MR CORBELL: I refer Mr Hanson to my previous answer.

MR SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr Hanson.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear Mr Hanson's question.

MR HANSON: Minister, why did your government ignore the conclusion of the expert report from Wilde and Woollard?

MR CORBELL: The government did not ignore the report. The government took action in response to the report, and I refer Mr Hanson to my previous answers on that subject.

Children and young people—care and protection

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Community Services. Minister, in January this year, the Victorian Liberal government established a panel of inquiry into Victoria's protection services for young children. This week the Victorian Ombudsman released his report on his investigations regarding the Victorian Department of Human Services' child protection program in the Bendigo region. Minister, given the fact that you have been censured for your mismanagement of the care and protection portfolio and you have been described as "embattled" in your portfolio, are you following the progress of the inquiry and are you following the Ombudsman's report? Have you asked for and received a briefing from your directorate on the report and any relevance it may have to the ACT? If not, why not, and will you do so in the future?

MS BURCH: I thank Mrs Dunne for her question. Again, she has not let me down: she continues to be negative and somewhat insulting—

MR SPEAKER: Order! Minister Burch, the question.

MS BURCH: I am getting to the question, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: No, you are not. You will come to the question or you will sit down.

MS BURCH: I am coming to the question, Mr Speaker. In response to this, yes, I am aware of the Victorian Ombudsman's report. I think anyone who was listening to the radio this morning or on days previous to this would be aware of it. Yes, I am aware of it and I am watching it, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne has a supplementary.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, are you doing anything other than just watching what is going on? Do you consider that there are lessons to be learned from the Victorian Ombudsman's report that may serve to highlight matters for improvement in the care and protection system in the ACT?

MS BURCH: I thank Mrs Dunne for her question. There are slight differences between the Victorian system and our system. We do not have targets. We respond to reports where there is a statutory obligation to respond. Of reports being received, 13 per cent met the statutory obligation or the statutory threshold for investigation. That is what we have gone on to do. As far as what lessons you can learn is concerned, across jurisdictions we could all learn from various aspects of any service provision in a human service environment.

MR HARGREAVES: A supplementary.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: Minister, did the Liberal minister responsible for the Ombudsman's comments resign from office?

MS BURCH: No, she did not resign or was even asked to resign, I understand.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Seselja, a supplementary.

MR SESELJA: Minister, what similarities have you observed between the Victorian Ombudsman's report and the report of the ACT Public Advocate?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Seselja for his question. The similarities I think just go to the complexity and the difficulty of managing a human service such as care and protection. It highlights that this is an environment that is difficult and that we struggle with recruiting adequate staff members. There are pressures. The concern reports are increasing not only here but across other jurisdictions. I think the similarities are that this is a system that is complex, that is hard. We are dealing with vulnerable families and children and young people that are at risk and a system that does what it can to respond.

Here in the ACT we do not go to targets. As I said, we respond to concern reports and here in the ACT we have same-day, 24 hours, 72 hours and seven-day levels of reporting depending on how they are assessed once the report comes in.

Children and young people—care and protection

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Community Services. Minister, this week the Victorian Ombudsman released his report on his investigation regarding the Victorian Department of Human Services child protection program. In that report the Ombudsman notes a range of bureaucratic failings, including the pursuit of numerical targets overshadowing the interests of children, the provision of the minimum possible response to child protection reports that can be justified, poor record keeping and that the department made “deliberate policy decisions to reduce the number of child protection reports that are investigated”.

Minister, in light of the recent report of the Public Advocate on her review of the emergency response strategy for children in crisis in the ACT, can you assure the Assembly and the people of the ACT that the bureaucratic failings highlighted in the Victorian care and protection system are not replicated in the ACT?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Coe for his question. There are some significant fundamental differences in the system. I think I have made comment in an earlier response that we here in the ACT do not operate under specific targets as those referred to in Victoria. We here operate on the same-day, 24 hour, 72 hour and seven-day response rate.

Just in 12 months, Care and Protection here received 13,030 reports, I think it was. This is a 10 per cent increase. In New South Wales, in the ACT, in Victoria—in any state—this is a system that continues to be under pressure. It is a complex environment and all systems can certainly look to contemporary practice and look to improve, as we can. I am sure that Victoria—I think I heard that the minister there today was accepting of the report’s recommendations and is looking to get on and do what she needs to do to improve the system.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Coe, a supplementary.

MR COE: Minister, what are you doing to assure yourself, and what assurances can you provide to the ACT community, that the ACT’s care and protection unit investigates all child protection reports it receives and that those reports are investigated fully?

MS BURCH: Again Mr Coe—I thought he was a bit quicker—seemed not to listen. I made a comment earlier that we do not operate under targets. Where a report meets a statutory threshold for investigation, it will be investigated, and a risk assessment rating determines the immediacy of the response. That response is same day, 24 hours, 72 hours or seven days.

MRS DUNNE: A supplementary question, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, what are you doing to assure yourself and what assurances can you provide to the ACT community that Care and Protection Services prioritise the best interests of the child over bureaucratic processes?

MS BURCH: I will give a guarantee that each and every worker over in 11 Moore Street does their best for the children.

MRS DUNNE: A supplementary question, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, what are you doing to assure yourself and what assurances can you provide to the ACT community that bureaucratic record keeping is fulsome and factual and that the people engaged in the care and protection system can get appropriate and ready access to relevant records in relation to them?

MS BURCH: I think I have responded to this broadly and specifically in a number of questions. The care and protection system here is under pressure, but I know that each and every worker over there does their best. As I have said, we have a different response rate. On the same-day rate we were meeting 99 per cent of responses.

Mrs Dunne: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, my question was about record keeping and access to records. I would ask the minister to come to the question.

MR SPEAKER: Minister, focus on the question that Mrs Dunne asked, thank you.

MS BURCH: Well, record keeping to me indicates that 99 per cent of the reports that come in that meet the statutory threshold for a same-day requirement are met.

Public housing—energy and water efficiency

MS BRESNAN: My question is to the minister for housing and is in relation to modelling that has been undertaken by the government on the estimated cost of bringing public housing stock up to an energy efficiency rating of 3. Minister, on Tuesday last week the Attorney-General indicated that the figures he relied on to publicly state in the *Canberra Times* that it would cost more than \$200 million over five years to upgrade public housing properties to a 3-star energy standard were provided by your department. On Wednesday last week the Chief Minister indicated that the data relied on by the attorney would be released publicly when cabinet had made a decision on the bill. Minister, will you now table that data the attorney relied on to brief the *Canberra Times*, given that, according to the summary of cabinet outcomes on the ACT government website, cabinet considered the bill on 19 September?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Bresnan for her question. We have taken some advice from the department about the cost of upgrading when we discussed this bill. It has been

discussed through cabinet, and the information, I am sure, will come through when we further discuss the details and the cost of that bill.

MR SPEAKER: Ms Bresnan, a supplementary.

MS BRESNAN: Minister, given that you must have also closely considered that data, on what basis was that figure calculated, given that ACT Housing does not have baseline data on the energy efficiency ratings of more than 85 per cent of the public housing stock?

MS BURCH: I am sorry, Ms Bresnan, can I ask you to repeat that?

MS BRESNAN: Yes, I will repeat the question. Given that you must have also closely considered that data, on what basis was that figure calculated, given that ACT Housing does not have baseline data on the energy efficiency ratings of more than 85 per cent of the public housing stock?

MS BURCH: Without having the detailed figure in the brief in front of me, we are the largest stockholder. We have close to 12,000 properties. Much of our property is 40 years and older. So they will require significant upgrades to meet the standards that were outlined and inspected in your bill, Mr Speaker. There were estimates and calculations on what those upgrades would be, and the advice to me and to cabinet from Housing was that that would be the cost, as outlined in the *Canberra Times*.

MS HUNTER: Supplementary.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Hunter.

MS HUNTER: Minister, how do you explain that the cost of bringing public housing up to an EER of three stars is, according to the attorney's comments, approximately \$20,000 per house, a cost well above what would apply to most houses, and what does this say about the quality of the ACT's public housing stock?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Hunter for her question. The comment in there is "up to \$20,000 per property". We have 12,000 properties in our stock. They are ageing properties and they need significant reform. But as the Attorney-General has indicated, this information will come in full when the bill is being debated.

MS LE COUTEUR: Supplementary.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, is it the government's position that ACT Housing tenants should live in houses below an EER rating of 3 and, if not, when will you commit to lift the standard to ensure that the most disadvantaged tenants in Canberra can live in houses that are free of damp and are easier and cheaper to warm?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Le Couteur for her question. Certainly all the new housing stock, any stock we put in place, has a six-star energy rating. We have always tried to

do the best we can but certainly all new stock is energy efficient. We look at water consumption and energy consumption throughout all our new properties, particularly the 420 we brought on through the economic stimulus package.

What we have also in place is \$4 million each and every year to go through and do some energy upgrades across our properties. We will target those older properties, those properties that certainly would benefit from any modification. With 12,000 properties, I think there are about 3,000 properties we have covered under that rolling program of energy efficiency upgrades. That still leaves 9,000 properties left to have any attention to this level of work. It will be a long program, if we maintain and increase our stock at around 12,000, to get all properties up to that rating.

Waste—large items

MS PORTER: My question is to the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services. Minister, what has the ACT government done to provide a service for the disposal of ACT householders' bulky waste, such as household furniture, timber, metal items and other items not able to be disposed of in a regular bin?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Porter for her question and for her interest in these improved services for the community. As members would know, the disposal of large items of the types referred to by Ms Porter can be a problem for many people in our community. That is why the Labor government has implemented its commitment to provide a bulky waste household collection service as a trial.

The trial commenced on 27 April this year and is running for a 12-month period. The trial is being managed by Territory and Municipal Services and is being delivered through Tiny's Green Shed. Many members would be familiar with Tiny's Green Shed, the recycling facilities at Mugga and just about to commence also at Mitchell. Eligible households will be entitled to one free collection, with others able to access bulky waste collections for a fee. Collection fees range from \$33 to \$127, depending on the material type and the amount. Additional recycling fees apply for some items, such as televisions, computers and mattresses, as there are higher costs associated with handling and recycling these items.

The collection is for two cubic metres per household, which is about the size of your average box trailer. The type of bulky items that can be collected through the bulky waste collection include household furniture and appliances, garden tools and equipment, timber up to two metres in length, whitegoods, kitchen sinks and bathtubs, building materials and other products, metal products, scrap metal, electrical equipment, blankets, linen, manchester, automotive parts, camping and outdoor equipment, tools, toys and play equipment. Members will note that these are often items that are difficult for some people in our community to dispose of properly, especially if people do not have a car or access to a trailer. There are a number of other items which are not able to be collected as part of the trial as they pose a danger or require special handling or disposal.

I am very pleased to say that the trial is being monitored and information is being gathered as it progresses, so that we have a solid basis on which to assess whether this

type of service should be offered permanently and to see what other issues arise which need to be addressed. So far, we have had just over a thousand bulky waste collections made from ACT households. This has been over the quieter months of winter and, as we head into spring and summer and people are more active in their gardens or clearing out their garages and sheds, we expect to see an increase in demand in the coming months.

The details of what can be collected and how to book are available online and people can get information also from Canberra Connect. This trial is a great example of what the government is trying to do to improve services to Canberrans while ensuring there is a focus on those who are disadvantaged. In this case the bulk waste disposal service is available to all residents who need special help and support by way of a free collection. So particularly pensioners and the elderly are benefiting greatly from this service, and the government is delighted that they are taking advantage of it.

MS PORTER: Supplementary.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, you mentioned the elderly. I wonder what special services the government has put in place for seniors and others in the community who find it especially difficult to manage bulky waste.

MR CORBELL: As I alluded to in my previous answer, the trial offers a free collection of bulky waste to any resident who currently holds a Centrelink pensioner concession card, an ACTION gold concession card or a Department of Veterans Affairs gold card. This is a very important service for people in those circumstances. Pensioners, often living alone—commonly they no longer have a car, perhaps because they are unable to drive or cannot afford a car—often have smaller homes and they struggle with having all of the space they need to deal with larger items for which they no longer have a use. They cannot simply put them away somewhere in the garage.

These are the people the government is seeking primarily to assist through a free collection service and access to further collections at a competitive rate. The free service to eligible residents can include one mattress as part of the two cubic metres to be collected. This is a common item that older residents often need to dispose of and that are difficult to dispose of because of their size and bulk.

The bulky waste collection is serving these residents very well and I am receiving increasing numbers of correspondence from older Canberrans, pensioners and others, saying what a terrific service this is and also commending the work of Tiny's Green Shed and Tiny himself for the very effective customer service he is providing on behalf of the government in assisting pensioners with the removal of these types of waste items.

MS LE COUTEUR: A supplementary.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, how did the government determine this was the highest priority for extra work on waste, given the higher volume in organics and the toxics from compact fluoros and batteries?

MR CORBELL: This was an election commitment, Mr Speaker.

DR BOURKE: Supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Dr Bourke.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order, members! Dr Bourke has the floor, thank you.

DR BOURKE: Could the minister advise the Assembly what has been the—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, order! Dr Bourke has the floor.

DR BOURKE: Could the minister advise the Assembly what has been the community feedback on the trial?

MR CORBELL: We are certainly receiving very positive feedback from many people in the community. Certainly Tiny's Green Shed, which is providing the service, is giving us good feedback that people are increasingly taking it up. As members will know, it is often the case that items that have been unwanted for a long time and have been causing great inconvenience to owners are often those ordinary matters that make the most difference when you can see them resolved. So we are working very closely with Tiny's, getting, as I mentioned previously, good feedback from pensioners and others about the desirability of the service, and we will be taking those issues into account as we move forward with our decisions about whether the trial should be continued.

Children and young people—care and protection

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Community Services, who is considered by many to be the worst performing minister in the country and who has failed to look after the vulnerable children in the ACT. Minister, over the past few years what has been the trend in child protection reports? Have they been increasing or decreasing?

MS BURCH: In response to that question, I would just say that there are many in the community that think Mr Hanson is probably the most arrogant man in this place.

Mrs Dunne: Mr Speaker, the last time Minister Burch rose to her feet you called her to order and asked her to answer the question. I think that she has overstepped the mark again.

Mr Hargreaves: On the point of order, Mr Speaker, my understanding of the question from Mr Hanson was that it called for an opinion or it was hypothetical and I would ask you to rule on that basis.

MR SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Proceed, Mr Hanson, with your supplementary.

Mr Hanson: Could you stop the clock on the point of order, please, Mr Speaker? Is it possible? On Mrs Dunne's point of order, there was certainly a preamble to my question. But the question was quite specifically: over the past few years what has been the trend in child protection reports? Have they been increasing or decreasing? It is quite clear Ms Burch's answer did not answer that question.

MR SPEAKER: Ms Burch, do you wish to add anything to your answer?

MS BURCH: No, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr Hanson.

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order, members! Mr Hanson! Mr Coe! Mr Hanson has the floor.

Ms Burch interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order, Ms Burch! Mr Hanson has the floor.

MR HANSON: Minister, over the past few years what has been the trend in child protection reports? Have they been increasing or decreasing?

MS BURCH: They have been increasing. I think I have already made that comment here today.

MRS DUNNE: A supplementary question, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, what are you doing to assure yourself and what assurances can you provide to the community that all child protection reports are fully investigated and resolved as quickly as possible?

MS BURCH: I can tell those here and those in the community that those concern reports that meet the threshold requirement are dealt with in the appropriate time lines and to the extent that they are required to be.

MRS DUNNE: Supplementary question, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, on average, how long does it take for a child protection report to be investigated, substantiated and orders to be issued?

MS BURCH: That really would depend on the circumstances of each and every case that comes forward.

Planning—Tuggeranong

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development. We have recently had representations from community members in Tuggeranong raising concerns about the 18 December 2011 deadline for consultations for the planning strategy draft. Two issues that are consistently brought up are: the high number of consultations involving Tuggeranong—Tuggeranong centre, Erindale centre, Kambah centre and the transportation—and the proposed 18 December 2011 deadline being so near to the holiday season. Minister, as this is an important strategy with repercussions throughout our city, would you consider extending this deadline to the middle of February 2012?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Doszpot for the question. I find his criticism that there is so much consulting going on somewhat ironic when the consultation for the master plans that Mr Doszpot refers to were actually demanded in some instances by those on the other side of the chamber, and they are now saying how dare we impose all this terrible consultation on people.

In response to Mr Doszpot's question, the government has provided 11 weeks for feedback on the draft planning strategy. Eleven weeks is two months of consultation on the draft planning strategy, a very significant period of time; a period of time that exceeds the standards set out in the Chief Minister's guidelines in relation to community consultation. I have already indicated that the government will keep these issues under review, but at this point in time, we consider that 11 weeks is a very reasonable period of time for consultation.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot, a supplementary question.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, I am sure the community is concerned about your answer on that, but why, minister—

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, that is a preamble and you have warned on it before.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, no preambles in supplementaries. Can we just have the question, Mr Doszpot, thank you?

MR DOSZPOT: I am concerned, like Dr Bourke is concerned, about issues.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot, the question, or you will sit down.

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order, members! Mr Doszpot, I am giving you a chance to frame the question or you can sit down.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what are the pressing issues that are preventing you from consenting to an extended deadline that the community is asking you to undertake?

MR CORBELL: I have had one request for an extension of the deadline from one organisation. I have had no other requests to date from other organisations. As I said, 11 weeks I think is a very generous period of time for consultation. It is important to stress that this draft has not emerged out of the blue. This draft has been framed in the context of a very exhaustive time to talk consultation process that occurred throughout last year where hundreds of Canberrans participated in giving their views about what they believed the future form and structure of our city should be.

We have taken that into account in devising the draft strategy. We have now released this draft strategy for a further round of consultation. The period that has been provided for is 11 weeks—two months. It is an extensive period of time for public consultation. As I have said, I will keep this matter under review, but at this point in time I do not see any reason to extend that consultation. But that is a matter we will continue, as a government, to keep under review.

MR SMYTH: Supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, I understand the community group you spoke of is the Tuggeranong Community Council and they have asked for an extension of time. Will you now consider that extension to allow them to also consult with their members as they only have meetings monthly?

MR CORBELL: We will be working with all community organisations to provide them with full details and briefings, make officials available to provide advice and answer questions at public meetings and so on. Members should also be aware that we are pursuing a whole range of other avenues to get community feedback. I would draw members' attention to the fact that in this very building there is a public display that has been running for the past week, throughout the week, with officials present, to answer questions and to explain the context of the planning strategy. Those officials will also be going out into the community, not just sitting here in this place, and talking with community organisations, talking with resident groups, talking with business organisations, explaining the context of the strategy and getting feedback on it. So at this point in time I think a two-month period for consultation is a very reasonable period for consultation. But, as I have just said and as I will reiterate, we will keep these issues under review.

MR COE: A supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, what genuine consultation will be taking place away from the Assembly building, like in local and group centres in my electorate in Belconnen, or down in Tuggeranong or Weston Creek?

MR CORBELL: Planning officials are presenting at all of the relevant community councils, which is all of them. They are also presenting at any other community-based organisations that are seeking representation and advice from the relevant officials. So we are working very hard to do that. We are also maintaining a very strong online community consultation presence.

I would draw members' attention to the provision of all this documentation through the Time to Talk website, which provides direct and specific opportunities for people to make their comments, to raise questions and concerns and to make their suggestions. The Time to Talk website has proven to be a very effective forum for giving all Canberrans direct access on these important issues. So we will be pursuing all of these avenues over the next two months.

As I have said before, and I will say it again, two months exceeds the required consultation time frame in the best practice guidelines issued by the Chief Minister's directorate. I think that a two-month period is a very reasonable period of time but, as I said in reply to previous answers and as I will say again, we will keep the period of consultation under review, taking account of comments received during the consultation period.

Office of Multicultural Affairs—work experience and support program

MR HARGREAVES: My question is to the Minister for Community Services—some would say the best minister for community services in recent times.

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Mr Hargreaves has the floor.

MR HARGREAVES: You love it, don't you? Could the minister—

Members interjecting—

MR HARGREAVES: For the benefit of those opposite who have not enrolled in economics 101 yet, the ACT government provided an additional \$40,000 a year to expand the work experience and support program—

Mr Smyth interjecting—

MR HARGREAVES: And there is room on that program for you, Mr Smyth.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hargreaves, thank you. The question.

MR HARGREAVES: It provided an additional \$40,000 a year to expand the work experience and support program delivered to migrants through the Office of

Multicultural Affairs. Can you advise who benefited from the expansion of the WES program, please.

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Hargreaves for his ongoing interest in assisting our multicultural community here in the ACT. Any time you want to provide a comment and a compliment to me, go right ahead, Mr Hargreaves.

Over 14 years, the WES, or work experience and support, program has been successfully assisting migrants and refugees in securing meaningful employment in the ACT. I understand that the program is unique across Australian jurisdictions. The additional \$40,000 has allowed the work experience and support program to double its annual intake to 40 participants across two programs.

This year I was pleased that the Office of Multicultural Affairs collaborated with the Republic of South Sudan Australian community association of the ACT to deliver the WES program particularly for members of Canberra's South Sudanese community. I think that is the newest nation that we have on our globe so it is wonderful news that we here in the ACT offered that hand of help to them.

Through this program, 19 members of the South Sudanese community participated in this WES, which included four weeks of recognised training in government, office skills and job seeking skills. Fifteen of the group have now completed their eight-week work experience placements across the ACT public service or with a community organisation and four will soon undertake community-based placements.

I am particularly pleased to inform the Assembly that one of these 15 young Sudanese migrants and refugees has completed their placements to date, and seven are now paid employees of the ACT government, having been offered contracts of up to six months duration across three directorates, of Education and Training, Community Services and Treasury. An additional 20 migrants from Canberra's broader multicultural community will take part in the second WES early next year.

We know that unemployment is a major concern amongst our refugee community, and programs such as WES provide the practical skills and support and employment outcomes that they need.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hargreaves, a supplementary.

MR HARGREAVES: Minister, can you advise the Assembly about any other initiatives under consideration to support migrants in the ACT to improve their employment prospects?

MS BURCH: Yes. As I have said, employment is a key issue for our migrant and refugee communities. In addition to the WES program, the Office of Multicultural Affairs is implementing a range of other initiatives to assist unemployed or underemployed migrants in the ACT to improve their employment prospects. This includes assisting bilingual migrants to become accredited translators and interpreters, allowing them to enter paid employment whilst also benefiting members of their own community, and improving access to services and service delivery.

Each year the National Multicultural Festival provides practical hands-on experience to over 100 volunteers, many from Canberra's multicultural community. All volunteers train in occupational health and safety and may gain experience in administration, customer service, public speaking, stage management, event organisation and logistics.

I would also like to highlight that next month I will be holding an employment roundtable bringing together employers from the retail, hospitality and community sectors to discuss linkages and opportunities for Canberra's migrant community, particularly for those members from new or emerging communities.

I would like to make a point of mentioning that this initiative was proposed to me by one of this year's WES graduates, Mr Jok Thuch—a lovely man who undertook some work experience in my office this year. So it is an idea that has come directly out of the community that will benefit the community.

I would also just like to say that what our migrant and refugee communities need most of all when it comes to finding work is practical assistance and solid employment outcomes. That is the focus of this government. I look forward to the roundtable and discussing how we can build on the good work that is currently underway.

Ms Gallagher: I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Rostered ministers question time

Minister for Ageing

Seniors—cost of living

MR SMYTH: The COTA ACT lifestyle survey 2008 stated, "What is abundantly clear is that older people in Canberra are being squeezed by both rising costs and poor returns. They are making substantive changes in relation to both maintenance and consumption. Many of these adjustments appear to have undesirable personal or social consequences." Minister, why has the ACT government continued to place cost of living pressure on older people resulting in seniors making adjustments with undesirable personal or social consequences?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Smyth for his question but I need to say that I refute the premise of his question. This is a government that is committed to supporting older Canberrans. I find it interesting that Mr Smyth is asking this question on the same day that he has brought a motion to this place that seeks to delay access to aged-care places for his own local constituents.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Smyth, a supplementary.

MR SMYTH: Minister, why has the government ignored the impact of rapidly rising rates and electricity bills on senior Canberrans?

MS BURCH: This government has responded to the cost of living pressures experienced by seniors. We have signed the national partnership agreement on certain concessions for

pensioners and senior cardholders and introduced a national reciprocal public transport concession card for senior cardholders. We have a strong ACT concessions policy. We have expanded water concession eligibility to health cardholders and holders of temporary protection visas from 1 July. We have increased the spectacles subsidy and taxi subsidy scheme. We have increased concessions primarily across the board.

In 2010-11 there were approximately 25,000 recipients of the energy concession and \$6.4 million was allocated in the last budget for energy concession rebates, \$5.8 million for water and sewerage rebates and \$2.1 million for utility concessions.

Seniors—employment

MS HUNTER: Minister, in relation to employment for older people, what policies and programs does the government have in place to increase the rates of employment for older people and to combat employers discriminating against employing older people?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Hunter for her question. An action within the *ACT strategic plan for positive ageing: towards an age-friendly city* was to improve the retention rate of ACT government staff aged over 55 years. To meet this, the Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate is developing the ACT public service mature age employment strategy consistent with commitments made as part of enterprise agreements.

In September this year I launched the ACT business guide to mature workers and the ACT business guide to older customers. That has been supported by local businesses. The publications were a commitment within the ACT strategic plan for positive ageing. There are copies available if members are interested. I am quite happy to provide those booklets that have been circulated extensively to employers and businesses throughout Canberra.

MR SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms Hunter.

MS HUNTER: Minister, are you aware of any discrimination complaints in regard to older people in employment that have been made? If yes, what did those cases involve?

MS BURCH: As we know, the Discrimination Act 1991 makes it unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of their age. I am aware of a few reported complaints of discrimination by older employees in the ACT. I do not have the details of those. The federal government has appointed Susan Ryan as Australia's first full-time Age Discrimination Commissioner. I think this and the other strategies put in place here and federally will make a difference.

Canberra Seniors Centre and Woden Senior Citizens Club

MR COE: It has been noted in question on notice No 1761 that the government is currently in discussion with the Canberra Seniors Centre and Woden Senior Citizens Club about possible new sites. What is the government proposing regarding the clubs' existing premises and land?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Coe for his interest in senior Canberrans. The ACT government has been in discussion with both groups over quite a period of time to better understand their needs and the pressures on both facilities from the growth in the town centres in which they are located. In each case there would be advantages in co-location or

proximity to other community facilities. Both organisations have undertaken user requirement planning or architectural scoping to define their needs. A range of alternative sites have been considered in conversation with the two organisations.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Coe, a supplementary.

MR COE: Minister, will progress with these clubs be quicker than the Tuggeranong seniors club where progress was compared to the gestation period of an elephant?

MS BURCH: I look forward to inviting Mr Coe to the opening of the Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club next month.

ACT seniors card

MRS DUNNE: Minister, what is the progress in having the ACT seniors card recognised by other states and territories?

MS BURCHE: I thank Mrs Dunne for her question. In December 2008 former Chief Minister Jon Stanhope signed a national partnership agreement whereby the ACT agreed to participate in a national reciprocal public transport concession scheme for senior cardholders, which has been operating successfully in all jurisdictions since that time.

Each state and territory encourages participating businesses and partners to offer discounts to senior cardholders from other Australian jurisdictions. This national recognition is indicated in various senior card business directories by a map of the Australian symbol. In the current ACT seniors card directory, 2011-13, those participating ACT businesses have agreed to recognise the seniors cards of other Australian jurisdictions.

MR SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne, a supplementary.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, can you clarify whether Canberra seniors cards are recognised interstate? What are you doing to ensure that seniors cards are recognised in the Canberra region?

MS BURCH: The national seniors card reciprocal public transport concession has been made possible by, for example, the government entering into an agreement with the New Zealand government to mutually promote our seniors card to private businesses. It may not necessarily be in the region but I am sure our Canberrans that visit the sunny climates of New Zealand will support that.

Tuggeranong seniors centre

MR HARGREAVES: Could the Minister provide details regarding progress with the development of the new Tuggeranong seniors centre, other than inviting Mr Coe to the opening?

MS BURCH: I do thank Mr Hargreaves for his question. I know that the construction of this centre is certainly a matter very close to Mr Hargreaves's heart. I acknowledge his role in initiating this project. The new Tuggeranong seniors centre, which has been a commitment of this government, overlooks the Tuggeranong lake. It sits between the

Greenway childcare centre and the Tuggeranong college. It has been constructed and is currently being fitted out, with the official opening planned for mid-November.

The building is 300 square metres in size and includes a large hall catering for a number of recreational activities, meeting rooms and kitchen facilities. The building will meet or exceed energy efficiency requirements and have energy efficient appliances. Solar panels have been installed to offset energy costs.

Discussions are continuing with the Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club, a not-for-profit organisation, on the management of the seniors centre. The Community Services Directorate is facilitating these arrangements and will provide support to the steering committee for the first 12 to 24 months. It is anticipated that the Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club will take on the management of the centre within 24 months.

I would also like to make a point of noting the excellent location of the centre. It really is in quite a magnificent spot. Being located between the childcare centre and the college, I think it provides an opportunity for great intergenerational activity.

MR HARGREAVES: Minister, what facilities will be included in the new building? Will there be facilities for the playing of music by geriatric guitarists like Mr Hanson and the teaching of Bollywood dancing by other members of the Assembly? How will older Canberrans in the Tuggeranong region benefit from this new facility?

MS BURCH: The new centre will include a large hall for various activities and a computer room to facilitate not only access to the internet but also a place for educational sessions on how to use the internet and how to use computers generally. A lounge space for informal gatherings, a kitchen and accessible bathrooms are also included in the centre. The centre will offer for the first time a dedicated building for all Tuggeranong seniors. The principal tenant will be the incorporated Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club. The building will be open to all Tuggeranong seniors groups and individuals who can use it for meetings and activities.

Being involved in seniors groups is an important way for many people to stay active and socially connected, for example, through craft or exercise groups. It could even include guitar playing or Bollywood dancing should we have a Bollywood instructor who wanted to provide some guidance in that craft.

Currently, Tuggeranong seniors groups are dependent on community halls, registered clubs and churches for meeting spaces. Tuggeranong seniors may continue to enjoy activities and social events at these venues but now will have a dedicated space in the Tuggeranong seniors centre that allows for inclusion of all, particularly our seniors with limited financial means.

Answers to questions on notice

Questions Nos 1781 and 1784

MS GALLAGHER: Mr Speaker, in question time yesterday Mr Hanson asked me, in relation to questions on notice 1781 and 1784, where they were. I am advised that they were delivered to Mr Hanson's office on Thursday, 13 October.

Supplementary answers to questions without notice

Social procurement Environment—e-waste

MR CORBELL: I apologise if they are not in the correct order, but in question time on 18 October Ms Bresnan asked me how social procurement considerations were taken into account when awarding an e-waste contract. My answer is that a social procurement criterion was not included in this request for quotation process or evaluation methodology. The development of the request for quotation was underway prior to the introduction of the requirement for social tendering. The services were subsequently not considered suitable for social procurement, largely due to the technical nature of e-waste processing and the requirement to have an in-depth understanding and appreciation of the processes employed, the environmental and health and safety issues, access to downstream supply chains and access to markets for the disposal of component parts.

Prior to the introduction of the social procurement policy, the waste and recycling industry regularly delivered social outcomes. It often provides employment opportunities for entry level, low skilled workers or those seeking re-skilling following an absence from the workforce. Under the government's social procurement policy, ACT NoWaste includes social tendering in its procurement processes where appropriate. For instance, the request for tender for the management of the reusable facility at the Mitchell Resource Management Centre and the request for tender for provision of weighbridge services for Mitchell and west Belconnen resource management centres both included social tendering requirements.

Ms Hunter asked me a question related to this matter on 18 October about why Renewable Processes only awarded the contract for secondary waste, not the main contract, given that they are the local provider that employ staff with mental health issues. The answer to Ms Hunter's question is that Renewable Processes were not rated as the best value for money and no weight was given as to whether a company was local or not in deciding whether to issue the company a contract when the request for quotation was assessed. A social procurement criterion was not included in this request for quotation because the request for quotation was underway prior to the introduction of the requirement for social tendering.

Ms Le Couteur asked me a question on the same day in relation to e-waste collected in the ACT being stored at Mugga Lane prior to being recycled by a local company called Renewable Processes. Ms Le Couteur said:

Renewable Processes only has this role temporarily because the government is waiting for a national company called MRI to take over the recycling of e-waste.

She asked: "Have the contracts been signed for MRI and Renewable Processes, the two chosen providers, and what is holding up the contracts being finalised?" I can advise Ms Le Couteur that contracts with both MRI and Renewable Processes have been signed.

Health—palliative care services

MS BRESNAN (Brindabella) (3.34): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that people who are dying and their carers need to be able to access a range of quality palliative care services;
- (b) the ACT government's current Palliative Care Strategy spans from 2007 to 2011, and a new strategy will need to be created to commence in 2012; and
- (c) on 18 December 2009 the ACT government said it would commission an independent review of palliative care services in the ACT, however this review has not taken place; and

(2) calls on the ACT government to:

- (a) commission an interstate person or body to conduct an independent review of palliative care services in the ACT to assist in the development of the 2012 Palliative Care Strategy; and
- (b) include in that review an examination of:
 - (i) increasing demand for services;
 - (ii) adequacy of the range of services provided and the capacity to increase services;
 - (iii) adequacy of resources, including workforce;
 - (iv) successful models used in other jurisdictions;
 - (v) matters affecting the success of advance care planning;
 - (vi) support for existing non-government organisations and volunteers; and
 - (vii) education programs for the public and health professionals.

The Greens are moving this motion in the Assembly today to recognise the importance of palliative care services for people who are dying and their carers and to ensure that those services are best practice. One of the most difficult and emotional challenges people will face in their lifetime is the prospect of their own death. The only other challenge that could be deemed as or more difficult is the death of a loved one. All people have the right to safe, compassionate and appropriate care as they approach the end of their lives, and in the ACT we need to ensure that our services meet that test.

The ACT will soon have an opportunity, through the drafting of the next ACT palliative care strategy, to ensure services are of a high standard and meet the needs of the people who need them. The current strategy covers 2007 to 2011 and is about to come to an end. It is important that the government, as it moves to the next phase, takes this opportunity to examine the lessons from the past four years and gathers evidence about best practice and innovative models to assist with planning for the future. The ACT is recognised as having a high standard of palliative care services, but it is important that we maintain those high standards.

During the debate about whether the Little Company of Mary should sell Calvary hospital and buy the ACT's only hospice, Clare Holland House, there was considerable debate about the importance of palliative care and the manner in which it is provided. Questions were raised generally about the future of palliative care services and the impact an ageing population will have on these services. There were also concerns raised about whether current services meet people's needs and whether or not the sale of the hospice was involved. These were important questions that deserved discussion.

The ACT government did say in late 2009 that it would commission an independent review of palliative care services in the ACT to assist with resolving these issues. I wrote to the Minister for Health in February 2010 asking for the independent review to consider matters regarding demand, best practice models of care, service providers and the testing of contracts. The Greens at the time were concerned that a non-government provider would have a long-term monopoly over palliative care in the ACT. When the sale of the hospice did not proceed, neither did the independent review.

The Greens asked the Minister for Health why the review did not proceed, as we believed there was merit in the review, despite the sale of the hospice not proceeding. The minister replied that the Little Company of Mary had commissioned an internal review of its palliative care services in Canberra and that this was sufficient. The key issue which this misses is the point of the review being independent. Given the government is about to begin working on the next four-year strategy, the independent review should occur.

In preparing for this motion today my office consulted with community groups that have a direct interest in palliative care. All groups expressed their support for this motion and the independent review process. In fact, much of the discussion with the groups was on what the independent review would need to discuss, as this was something which they brought to the discussion—basically agreeing that this review should occur and saying, "Let's go to what should be included." Some of these issues included funding, diversity in services and infrastructure.

The community groups also made it clear that the ACT government would need to get an expert from interstate to come in and do the independent review, given many local stakeholders have involved themselves in the debate about the sale of the hospice. In paragraph (2) of the motion I have set out a number of suggested items that the independent review could inquire into. They include demand and supply, diversity of

services, interstate innovations, advanced care planning, support for community organisations and volunteers, and education programs.

We know that demand for palliative care is increasing. A report released just last week by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that from 2004-05 to 2008-09 the number of palliative care separations from public hospitals increased from 411 to 699—an average annual increase of 14.2 per cent. When the age distribution and population size are taken into account for each of the years considered, the age-standardised rate of palliative care separations in the ACT went from 15.7 palliative care separations per 10,000 people in 2004-05 to 23.1 per 10,000 persons in 2008-09.

The AIHW does not provide strong data on the number of people who choose to die at home, but the latest newsletter from the palliative care society has a quote from a Palliative Care Australia survey stating that about 16 per cent of people die at home, 20 per cent die in hospices and 10 per cent die in nursing homes. The remaining 54 per cent die in hospitals.

Notes my office took from a meeting with the Little Company of Mary in November 2009 indicated that Calvary Health Care, in its provision of palliative care services to the ACT, dealt with around 221 palliative care patients at any one time. Nineteen of these people could be in the hospice and 202 would be in palliative care in the home. LCM expected that, by 2020, palliative care services in the ACT would be servicing about 480 people at any one time.

In addition to palliative care services currently provided by Calvary Health Care, there is a palliative care liaison nursing service run out of Canberra Hospital, some community-based services, general practitioners who practise palliative care and the ACT Palliative Care Society with its volunteers.

One recent innovation in Canberra is the Covenant Care Day Hospice in Jamison. This project is a joint venture between the ACT Palliative Care Society and the Holy Covenant Anglican Church. The program is expected to open shortly and cater for between eight and 10 patients once a fortnight. The ACT Palliative Care Society will be responsible for the financial management of the joint venture, establishing appropriate financial accounts, leading fundraising activities and providing general assistance, including administrative and clerical assistance. The society will also provide assistance and advice in relation to the identification and training of volunteers who will work in the program.

Anglican Church Jamison will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the day care hospice, including accommodation, meals, activities, transport, housing and maintenance of all equipment used by covenant care, employment and remuneration of staff and rosters for staff, volunteers and clients. The Jamison branch of Bendigo Bank is sponsoring the project and Canberra Southern Cross Club Jamison will provide meals. There is the potential to replicate this service in other sites around Canberra if it is successful.

This project allows a carer to have a day off and some much-needed respite. The role of being a carer is one which is extremely draining and it is important that carers are

provided with respite to maintain their role. Another important aspect of this new service is that it will provide transport to the patients. Too often if transport is the responsibility of the carer, they or the patient will not access a service or activity. By having someone provide transport there is greater certainty that the respite will actually occur.

There is a strong and growing demand in the number of people who wish to die at home. The survey conducted by Palliative Care Australia showed that 74 per cent of respondents wanted to die at home. This is consistent with overseas findings but contrasts sharply with reality, as only 16 per cent remain at home, 20 per cent die in hospices, 10 per cent in nursing homes and the remaining 54 per cent in hospitals.

During the debate about the sale of Calvary and the hospice the community raised concerns about existing home-based palliative care services. I quote:

Since home based palliative care management transferred to LCM nursing staff the resources available to provide palliative care in the community appear to be considerably less than when home based palliative care was part of ACT Health. Consumers are expressing concerns about these reductions in available resources while the need is growing and the population increasing.

Another point raised during the debate was that consumers wanted improvements to the current support and consultancy model of home-based palliative care services in the ACT and a best practice home-based service that is socially inclusive. These are matters that should be considered by an independent review.

It is quite clear that Clare Holland House will continue to be owned by the ACT government. I think we are fortunate in the ACT to have a hospice that is under secular ownership. There have been questions raised by groups, such as the Health Care Consumers Association, as to whether the ACT needs a second hospice, be it at the new hospital site or on the south side. There is no definitive answer as yet, but this is, again, a discussion that needs to occur. There are also questions about whether Clare Holland House should be expanded. Given planning and development can take quite some time, we need to start planning now for those services in the immediate future.

Another factor affecting the success of a person's journey through palliative care is the development and implementation of advanced care plans. A survey conducted by Palliative Care Australia shows that a majority of Australians have not discussed dying with their loved ones, as less than 20 per cent have recorded any sort of plan for their end of life care. We know that the resources behind ACT Health's respecting patient choices program, which promotes and facilitates advanced care planning, are limited and in demand. COTA made a budget submission last year requesting funds to promote advanced care planning, but that submission was not successful. Consumers have also questioned whether advanced care plans are always followed because there are situations where families or doctors can sometimes intervene. More work needs to be done to ensure that advanced care plans are promoted and followed, which is why this is included in the motion I have moved today.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage all members to support this motion today. Now is the right time to commission an independent review of palliative care services.

Demand will increase in coming years and we need to ensure that we are prepared for that increase. We also need to ensure that services are designed to meet the various needs of people who are dying and their carers to ensure their final time together is as peaceful and as pain-free as possible.

I note that the Chief Minister has circulated an amendment, which I am happy to support. I just foreshadow that I understand there is an issue with procurement processes in getting someone from interstate. I do understand that. The key thing is that we would just like to see an independent review, which that amendment retains.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health and Minister for Industrial Relations) (3.45): I acknowledge Ms Bresnan's longstanding interest in matters to do with palliative care in the territory's healthcare system. The government is happy to support this motion, subject to the successful passage of the amendment that I have circulated, because it reinforces the work that is already underway but it also articulates well the scope and purpose of that work. As health minister, I am particularly happy to speak to the motion and to have the opportunity to assure Ms Bresnan that the very work she seeks to be carried out is in train.

The nominal end date of the palliative care strategy is the end of 2011, so it was always going to be the logical point at which to review the achievements and limitations on the system, examine future needs and directions and also look at matters of choice for the ACT community. Indeed, I have had several briefings on the palliative care strategy in recent times. As late as Monday, we were discussing this in terms of the scope of the palliative care strategy and some of the issues that I wanted to see explored during the consultation phase.

Without question, palliative care is an area that is growing—I cannot think of another area in the healthcare system that is not—as our population ages. It is crucial that we review our strategic direction in light of our demand projection. That is why the government has already begun working on the new strategy.

An independent consultant is being engaged. That consultant will work with stakeholders, along with the Health Directorate and Calvary Health Care, to assist us with developing a strategy for the coming years. The strategy will set out the core principles that should underlie palliative care service provision and will inform policy making and decision making. Among the factors to be examined by the independent consultant will be the projections of demand; the adequacy of the current level of support for existing palliative care services; workforce needs, now and also in coming years; support for non-government organisations, including looking at models of care in other jurisdictions; and possible new models of care which may be appropriate for the ACT.

The review will start before the end of the year, with an expected completion date in the middle of 2012. The independent consultant's work and the consultations will also be used to feed into plans for the new north side subacute hospital and proposals that a new facility incorporate additional in-patient palliative care services on that side of town.

I think it has been important to consider the future of palliative care services as part and parcel of our intentions for health care more generally in north Canberra. To nail down our thinking on palliative care options too far in advance of our thinking on other north side health services would not have the most sensible outcomes, as I am sure many would agree.

We are conscious that demand for palliative care services is growing generally in line with demographic changes in our community. In recent years, the government has been dedicating additional funding to the palliative care sector in recognition of this growing demand. We are also aware that a growing number of Canberrans in need of palliation in the final months or weeks of their lives would prefer to receive that care at home rather than in a healthcare facility. That is something that many people in the community talk to me about—the desire that they are able to pass away at home with family and friends close by. But everybody who has witnessed somebody in the last couple of days of their life understands just how confronting that can be for loved ones and that the extra assistance from healthcare professionals is gratefully received. The trends in overall demand and in the growing demand for palliative care at home are both compelling reasons to take a fresh look at how we deliver palliative care services, as the period covered by the current strategy draws to a close.

The Canberra community is currently served by a range of primary and specialist palliative care services, as well as by some wonderful community-based services. Specialist palliative care services are currently provided through the ACT's dedicated 19-bed hospice at Clare Holland House and through the home-based palliative care which provides an outreach service at people's homes. Both of these services are managed by Calvary Health Care. Additional specialist palliative care services are provided by the Canberra Hospital through Capital Region Cancer Service. In addition, the government funds the ACT Palliative Care Society to provide professionally trained palliative care volunteers to assist and support people with a life-limiting illness and their carers, whether in the hospice, at home, or in residential aged-care facilities.

The Health Directorate has always had a very productive relationship with the ACT Palliative Care Society and works closely with the organisation to ensure that they have adequate support for their highly regarded program. In 2009 additional funding was provided to expand the volunteer program into residential aged-care facilities. There are a number of other non-government organisations which are supported by the ACT community through the ACT government. These are Carers ACT, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Services, the Cancer Council and the Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group. Each of these groups provides services to palliative care clients and carers in the community.

The Health Directorate is also currently planning for a commonwealth-funded six-bed palliative care service which will probably be established within a residential aged-care facility. This new facility will provide specialist palliative care services for patients transitioning from an acute setting to home or patients needing a subacute facility admission from home. These beds are anticipated to be operational in 2012 and will complement the respite options available through existing services.

With every budget round, the adequacy of funding of palliative care services is examined. For example, in the last budget we allocated almost \$11 million to Capital Region Cancer Service to help it meet its rising demand for cancer services. This funding boost will give the service the necessary resources to meet anticipated growth in demand in the short term, but I am sure we will see budget bids from them for next year's budget as well.

In recent years, the government has made extra investments in the palliative care workforce, including funding for a palliative care aged-care clinical nurse consultant to liaise between the specialist palliative care services and residential aged-care facilities. The government has also recently filled two new palliative care nurse practitioner positions, with the assistance of some funding from the commonwealth. One is based in cancer services at the Canberra Hospital and the other is with the home-based palliative care service.

In the policy area, the ACT is, of course, actively engaged on the national stage. The national palliative care strategy was developed by the Australian government and agreed to by all states and territories in 2010. We are currently working with the Australian government, and indeed I have outlined a couple of the areas to implement the national strategy. This process is being overseen by the national palliative care working group, a committee under the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council.

Another important recent development has been the finalisation of *National framework for advance care directives*, which was recently agreed to by Australian health ministers. This document aims to provide direction for policy and practice for advance care planning in Australia and to assist in working towards nationally consistent use and application of advance care directives. The ACT will be working with other states and territories to implement recommendations under this framework.

Overall, the current ACT palliative care strategy which is about to be reviewed has served the community well. It was developed in the context of Palliative Care Australia's national palliative care standards at the time, and services delivered under the strategy were delivered in accordance with those standards. Implementation of the strategy has been overseen by a steering committee which has included representation from all major stakeholders. The committee has made considerable progress to date in promoting coordinated palliative care services in the ACT. But times are changing, expectations are changing, thinking changes and demand changes. It is time for this new strategy that will look at all of those issues over the future years. Work has already begun on that.

I turn to the amendment I have circulated. I move:

Omit subparagraphs (2)(a) and (b), substitute:

“(a) conduct an independent review of palliative care services in the ACT to assist in the development of the 2012 Palliative Care Strategy; and

(b) include in that review an examination of:

- (i) increasing demand for services;
- (ii) adequacy of the range of services provided and the capacity to increase services;
- (iii) adequacy of resources, including workforce;
- (iv) successful models used in other jurisdictions;
- (v) matters affecting the success of advance care planning;
- (vi) support for existing non-government organisations and volunteers; and
- (vii) education programs for the public and health professionals.”.

I will speak to the amendment quickly. First, I go to the reason for the amendment. As I have said, the government will be supporting, and does support, the intention behind the motion, with the minor change, which is to take out the reference that the consultant or the reviewer be from outside the ACT. There is a tender process underway for the palliative care strategy, and I understand that submissions have started coming in. Under the procurement guidelines, it would be difficult to specify, exclude or include just consultants that were based outside the ACT. That process is underway, and my amendment seeks to again endorse the fact that we want an independent review. It will look at all those areas outlined in Ms Bresnan’s motion, but just take out the need for that person to come from outside the ACT.

MR HANSON (Molonglo) (3.55): I rise today to speak on the important topic of palliative care. This is an issue that people often do not give much thought to until one of their loved ones is nearing the end of their life. The issue is complex and raw with emotion. It is difficult in a time of grief to try and rationally address the questions of palliative care. That is why I foreshadow that the Canberra Liberals will be supporting this motion for an inquiry into palliative care services in the ACT. We will also be supporting the government’s amendments, for the reasons outlined by the minister.

There is a variety of ways in which palliative care services are currently provided in the ACT. Many people are cared for in hospitals and aged care facilities. However, an increasing number of people are cared for in their home. What must be remembered when considering the palliative care services available to people in the last stages of their lives is that they should be at the centre of the decision making; that the needs of the patients and their families should determine the best model of care. Whilst a person may be denied the physical control over their last days, we can give them the dignity of having control over how they spend these last days. This sentiment is reflected in the Productivity Commission’s comments about palliative care:

Older people want to be cared for by someone who cherishes them, who has time for them, who respects their right to make their own decisions. Most older people also want to continue to be relevant and connected to their families and communities.

The arena in which palliative care services are provided is changing. With our ageing population there is an increased demand on services, public, private and in the

community sector. The number of Australians aged 85 and over is projected to increase from 0.4 million in 2010 to 1.8 million by 2050. They will then make up over five per cent of the Australian population. By 2020 it is expected that over 3.5 million older Australians will access aged care services each year, with approximately 80 per cent of services being delivered in the community.

There are significant links between end of life care and aged care facilities. The ageing population will place ever increasing demands on residential and community aged care services. Access to, and the quality of, palliative care is diverse and inconsistent in residential aged care. Some aged care facilities enjoy ready access to primary care physicians well skilled in palliative care and to specialist palliative care physicians. Some facilities, particularly high care facilities, have health systems in place to limit hospitalisations by providing care in place. In the ACT we all know that aged care facilities and funding are largely determined by the federal government and it is more complex for us to engage in the provision of such services. However, that is support that can be provided. The ACT government has a significant role to play in supporting subsidiary and support services such as funding for community-based palliative care services.

The increase in chronic illness and therefore the unfortunate increase in deaths from chronic illnesses are placing increasing demand on palliative care services. The complex nature of many deaths from chronic illness is also raising greater pressure on those services. Also, with further advances in the management of some diseases, more people will require complex care for dementia, diabetes and other morbidities associated with longevity, as well as palliative and end of life care.

To address this ageing population we need a needs-based approach to end of life care services. We need a well-articulated plan for providing equitable access to palliative care while promoting effective and ethical use of resources.

The Canberra Liberals will be supporting this motion today which calls for an independent review of palliative care services in the ACT. We believe it is important for this review to be independent and, given the small ACT community and often emotional ramifications of decision making in this area, it is important that the review address these issues rationally and holistically.

The government have indicated that they are on track to implement a new palliative care strategy once the current 2007-11 strategy ends and this independent review has the capacity to inform the strategy and provide another avenue for stakeholders to engage in the consultation process.

In the ACT we are fortunate to have community organisations and their committed volunteers providing sensitive and timely care to people in their last days. For a volunteer this cannot not be an easy time; they are entering a person's home and their family situation at possibly the most traumatic and stressful point. We should be commending organisations such as the ACT Palliative Care Society for undertaking work that is difficult but so very necessary. The Palliative Care Society state that they undertake this work because, and I quote from their website:

You matter because you are you. You matter to the last moment of your life and we will do all we can to help you to die peacefully but also live until you die.

The ACT Palliative Care Society are doing such a good job in providing community-based palliative care services that they are placing increased pressure on themselves. There is an increased knowledge and expectation of palliative care services being available, and as more people learn of the society's good work the more people demand it. The Productivity Commission's report into caring for older persons recognised the important role of volunteers in this arena. It states:

Informal carers and formal care workforce play important roles in providing care and support. Volunteers also contribute to the wellbeing of older people, with many providing highly valued social engagement and special support, and should be appropriately supported in these roles.

Many of us had the opportunity to engage very closely with the Palliative Care Society during the debate over Calvary hospital and Clare Holland House and certainly I would like to extend my thanks for the work they do, to their patron, Shirley Sutton; to the president, David Lawrence; to the vice-president, Robert Lloyd; the honorary secretary, Jennifer Hall; the treasurer, Bernie Ayers; to the council members, Valerie Brown, Richard Hall, John Hanks, Peter O'Keeffe, Andrew Skeels and Brad Smith; and to the co-opted members, Graham Moss, Andre Poidomani and Jo Spencer; to their public officer, Robert Lloyd, and to the very many hardworking volunteers who contribute so much to our society through the Palliative Care Society.

As the pressure grows on the public, private and community-based organisations to provide palliative care services, it is timely to examine the additional resources that may be needed to address the growing demand. Results of a 2011 Palliative Care Australia survey shows that most people would like to die at home but less than 20 per cent have recorded any sort of plan for their end of life care. Currently about 16 per cent of people die at home, 20 per cent die in hospices and 10 per cent die in a nursing home; the rest die in hospital.

The Productivity Commission recommends that older Australians should have access to palliative care irrespective of their care setting, which would result in a more efficient use of services, less cost and better outcomes. This independent review will go towards addressing that issue.

Although I support the motion that the Greens have brought here today, it is important to remember the history and why we are talking about this motion today, based on the letter that was written by Ms Bresnan back in February 2010. In the lead-up to that letter we had had the debate about Calvary hospital and Clare Holland House. I would like to re-litigate some of that debate because I think it is important in showing how late in many ways the Greens have come to this party.

When this debate first arose in April 2009, when it was leaked to the media that Calvary hospital was to be purchased by the government and Clare Holland was to be sold, essentially as a sweetener to that deal, I moved a motion in the Assembly, and the quotes from the Greens then were illuminating. The Greens supported the move

by the government, the push by the government, to sell Clare Holland House. I will quote from Ms Bresnan from 17 June in *Hansard*:

The Greens think that public health services should be in public hands and we support the purchase; we think it is a good thing to be happening.

In the media and in the Assembly the Greens supported this move. And the reason was that they were completely oblivious to the impact on Clare Holland House. I do not think they even knew what Clare Holland House was. I do not think they understood what was happening in relation to palliative care. Ms Bresnan will no doubt try and rewrite history, but I will read what she said further in the debate on 17 June 2009 about the proposal that had been put forward by the government. We remember it well: it was a proposal to purchase Calvary hospital and sell Clare Holland House; that was a \$9 million component of the deal. What Ms Bresnan said in the debate was:

It is a hospital and it is a religious organisation that we are talking about here. We are not talking about anyone else, land sales or anything like that ...

But quite clearly we were. In fact the substance of my motion was about conducting a period of consultation regarding the purchase of Calvary hospital and the sale of Clare Holland House. But she said:

It is a hospital and it is a religious organisation that we are talking about here. We are not talking about anyone else ...

What Ms Bresnan then did was to amend my motion to take out any reference to Clare Holland House. I do not think she even knew it existed or she was just oblivious to its role in the deal. So I think it is quite remarkable that, while the Greens were saying that public health services should be in public hands, that they supported the purchase and thought it was a good thing to be happening, at the same time they were oblivious to the fact that the government were intending to sell Clare Holland House to a private organisation in complete contradiction of what they were saying.

So it is worth noting that the Greens, through the negligence of Ms Bresnan, missed what was happening; they leapt into a position that was essentially contradictory to their publicly stated ideology about public health being in public hands, and they have been backtracking ever since, furiously. This is in many ways the culmination of that. So I think that it is worth putting that on the record.

I certainly support the motion here today. I note that the government is doing some work in this area, and that is good to see. But let us not pretend for a minute that Amanda Bresnan has been the long-term champion of palliative care in the ACT. Essentially she was humiliated into a position when she realised that she had missed such a substantive part of Katy Gallagher's deal on Calvary hospital, and she has been backtracking ever since.

MS BRESNAN (Brindabella) (4.08): I will close the debate if that is okay.

Members interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Hargreaves): Order members! Members, please!

Members interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Excuse me, members; Ms Bresnan has the floor.

Mr Hanson: Mr Assistant Speaker—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: On a point of order?

Mr Hanson: Yes, on a point of order, Ms Gallagher just said that this is a pissing contest in the chamber, or words to that effect, and I would ask her to withdraw what is clearly unparliamentary language.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: With respect, Mr Hanson, I did not hear what was said across the chamber. All I heard were voices going across the chamber. I heard the Chief Minister's voice, I heard Mr Smyth's voice and I heard your voice. For me to arbitrate on any of that would be inappropriate; we will end up with a "he said", "she said". So I would ask for all members to just calm it and just keep it to yourselves. The debating process means that you have an opportunity to stand on your feet and have a go. But I cannot ask people to retract something I did not hear, Mr Hanson.

Mr Hanson: Mr Assistant Speaker, Ms Gallagher knows what she said, I am sure it will be recorded in the *Hansard* and I would invite her to withdraw.

Ms Gallagher: Mr Assistant Speaker, I withdraw those comments.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Ms Bresnan, you have the floor.

MS BRESNAN: I thank members for supporting the motion and for their contributions. I was hopeful to think we were going to get through a motion without anyone having some cheap political shots at people, but obviously that is too much to expect from Mr Hanson. It is good to know that he is actually listening to my speech, though. He mentioned in relation to another motion today something to the effect that anything I said was not worth listening to, so it is good to know that you do actually listen to some of what I have said in this chamber.

I would just like to refer to Ms Gallagher's speech and clarify why I mentioned in my speech about having an interstate consultant. As I mentioned earlier in my speech, this was an issue that was brought to us from stakeholders because there had been such involvement in the debate that we had about Clare Holland House. A high number of people with an interest in palliative care involved in the debate brought the issue to us that it might be best to have someone from interstate. But I do absolutely acknowledge the fact that this is a difficult thing to incorporate under procurement guidelines and also the fact that there has been a tender process underway; I do acknowledge that. The key thing for us is that it is an independent review, and obviously that is occurring.

I would also like to acknowledge too that this is a really difficult issue to discuss and obviously it is not often an issue that people generally think about until it actually affects them or applies to them. I would also just like to note that the Palliative Care Society are doing some really good work in terms of helping people to bring up the issue and address it as a public issue.

This is not something I would normally mention in the chamber, but I am going to take issue with something that Mr Hanson said. He said that this is an issue I have come to in a late stage; that I was not aware of Clare Holland House or Calvary Health Care's role in palliative care. In fact, my auntie died in a Calvary Health Care palliative care service. So I was actually very aware of Clare Holland House and Calvary Health Care. I think it is really important before people make comments like that that they think about what they are saying.

Again I thank members for their contribution to this important issue.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Government—payment for goods and services

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (4:12): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes the:

- (a) significance of the ACT government as a purchaser of goods and services from ACT businesses;
- (b) the critical importance of a regular cash flow for the sustainability of smaller businesses in particular;
- (c) failure of the ACT government, notably the Community Services Directorate, to pay invoices in a timely manner; and
- (d) adverse effect of this failure on the capacity of the organisations to maintain their functions;

(2) calls on the ACT government to agree to implement the following policies:

- (a) all contracts up to \$1 million will be paid within 45 days, and failure to do so will result in penalty interest being paid to the contractor;
- (b) greater opportunities for small businesses to compete for tenders will be created by breaking up large projects into smaller components;
- (c) all agencies will be required to provide quarterly reports on their payment performance and that small business participation rates shall be published on the Procurement Solutions' website; and

- (d) the Auditor-General will conduct compliance audits on the performance of government payments, and will review small business participation in government tenders; and
- (3) calls on the government to table by Thursday 27 October 2011 details of payments due to suppliers of goods and services which are outstanding for periods greater than 30 days.

In this debate I want to emphasise the key role the ACT government have as a major player in the ACT economy and, indeed, as a play on words, a major payer in the ACT economy. With expenditure of more than \$4 billion in the financial year 2011-12, a significant proportion of this spending will be buying goods and services from ACT businesses and non-government organisations as well as engaging local entities such as consultants. This spending has a direct effect on the viability of these businesses and organisations. Indeed, it has a direct knock-on effect on the businesses that they buy services from or that their staff, when paid, spend in the ACT economy.

We also need to emphasise the key role of small and medium businesses in the ACT economy. There are more than 25,000 smaller businesses in the ACT. A number of these will have at least part of their activities dependent on the ACT government or, as I have said before, have expenditure from people that receive ACT government payments come to their businesses. Some may be almost completely dependent on the ACT government for their businesses. For these businesses, cash flow will be a critical factor in their operations and hence in the sustainability of their businesses.

A key feature of the ACT economy is the important role of non-government organisations. We have dozens of different types of organisations from the very small to the very large. Many of them deliver government services to the community or they deliver services to the ACT government through contracts to build infrastructure or perform other projects for the ACT government. As with private sector businesses—or perhaps to a greater extent—these non-government organisations rely very heavily on the payments received from the ACT government. Typically, particularly for small or even medium businesses, they do not have access to substantial reserves, and any disruption to their cash flow can be a disaster for these businesses.

Many small businesses and non-government organisations rely on timely payment of invoices submitted to the ACT government. Of course, the payments may not rely on invoices, but they may be made under the terms of contractual arrangements. Either way, the cash flow of these businesses and organisations can be highly dependent on timely payments made by the ACT government. This is, I believe, essential background for my motion.

I note the document tabled by the Minister for Community Services last week. It is a schedule of outstanding invoices in her directorate which shows that there are tens of thousands of dollars of payments outstanding for between 30 and 60 days. It shows that there are tens of thousands of dollars outstanding for between 60 and 90 days. Indeed, it shows there are thousands of dollars outstanding for more than 90 days.

You only have to look at some of the numbers of the days outstanding to realise that some businesses in the ACT are not being treated with the respect they are due. There

are some dreadful overdue figures. We can leave the 30 to 60 and the 60 to 90 days; they are quite clear. But there is a list of overdue figures over the 90 days—119 days, 140 days, 597 days, 131 days, 223 days, 200 days, 191 days, 169 days, 204 days.

If anybody wants to stand up and say that the government is paying on time, then they obviously have not read the payables produced by that particular department in one case. It would be interesting to see what the case is in all of the departments. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Seselja, who put questions on notice back in December 2009. It would be interesting to see if the government can come up with any data to show any improvement.

Those invoices show—for instance, the Chief Minister's department—percentage of invoices overdue, 19 per cent. That is one in five invoices that were overdue at that time. Executive, three per cent; ACTPLA, 12 per cent—one in eight invoices overdue. Remember, a lot of these are the small businesses. The then Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, 78 per cent, which means basically one in five invoices were not paid on time; ACTEA, 15 per cent, one in seven not paid on time—so it goes on—DECCEW, one in 10 not paid on time; ACT Health, 12 per cent, one in eight not paid on time. And so the list goes on. If people are saying that the government is paying their bills on time and this motion today is unnecessary, then they need to come up with the evidence to prove that.

We saw the document last week tabled by Ms Burch. Quite clearly there are some enormous days outstanding just on that list of payables. A very significant issue is highlighted by this history of delayed payments. Remember, 60 days is two months, 90 days is three months. What is two months to a small business? Well, two months to a small business is a significant period. Two months is the period during which a small business has to be able to pay its bills and has to pay its staff while waiting for payment from the ACT government. It is the period during which a small business might have to rely on obtaining funds through an overdraft or drawing into its cash reserves. All that comes at an additional cost to the small business.

We all know that overdrafts have relatively high rates of interest imposed. If a business has no other sources of funds to carry it through the period that it is waiting for the ACT government to pay its bills, it can be a very distressing time for small and medium businesses. These periods are very important to these businesses and organisations. How do they carry on their businesses or deliver their services if there are gaps in their cash flow? Of course, there is always the knock-on effect to the businesses to which they owe money.

I turn to the motion. This component of the Canberra Liberals small business policy was announced by the Leader of the Opposition in his speech to the National Press Club last week. It was well received by the community. There are four elements to my motion. First, all invoices up to a threshold of \$1 million will be paid within 45 days. This will ensure that small businesses can sustain their business activity. It gives government time to do the necessary checking that is required.

We recognise that there are times when there are delays in receiving the invoice, managing invoices internally and resolving any issues with the invoice, hence the

proposal to put a 45 day limit for payments to be made. If the payment is not made on an invoice within 45 days, a penalty rate of interest will be determined and paid to the business or organisation.

Secondly, there are concerns that some projects are too large when they comprise a combination of activities for smaller businesses to consider tendering to deliver these projects. The Canberra Liberals will ensure that, where it is feasible and economic to do so, larger projects will be broken down into smaller components to give small and medium businesses in the ACT the opportunity. This will facilitate those opportunities for smaller businesses to tender for projects which are appropriate to their size and capacity to perform.

Third, in the spirit of openness and transparency that has been trumpeted by the Chief Minister in this new era of openness and transparency, my motion seeks appropriate reporting of the performance of ACT government agencies in delivering timely payment of invoices. To date virtually all the information we have on payment performance has been obtained by the opposition as answers to questions asked on notice, and there is absolutely no reason why agencies should not be required to report on their performance in paying invoices.

As I have emphasised, the payment of invoices is critical to cash flow, and cash flow is a significant factor in the operations of the private sector businesses and hence to the overall economic activity in the ACT. Indeed, especially in tough times and times of uncertainty, as perhaps we are travelling through now, it is even more important that the ACT government is a good corporate citizen and pays all of its bills on time.

Fourth, the Canberra Liberals will require the Auditor-General to conduct audits to assess compliance by ACT government agencies with these requirements. The Auditor-General also will undertake reviews of ACT government tenders to determine whether smaller businesses are increasing their participation in ACT government contracts.

My motion seeks to enhance the role and contribution of smaller businesses in the ACT and to ensure that the vital work of our many community non-government organisations continues in a secure way. We are all emerging slowly from the effects of the global economic and financial crisis. Fortunately, Australia came through this crisis in relatively good shape, largely due, I think we all appreciate, to the good work of the Howard-Costello governments in low government debt and large federal government cash reserves, some of which was squandered recently. Nevertheless, one of the significant outcomes of this crisis has been a much more conservative and risk averse community. In this environment, in particular, it is essential for the ACT government as one of the major players in our local economy to ensure that our smaller businesses are able to continue operating as successfully as possible. I commend my motion to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation) (4.23): The government recognises the importance of a vibrant small business sector. There are, at the latest count, around 23,000 small businesses in the

territory that account for 95 per cent of all businesses and clearly a very significant proportion of the territory's private sector employment. ACT small businesses deal with government agencies, supply labour and expertise to the construction sector, and provide a range of accommodation, food and retail services. Small business obviously can be started at a very low cost and can typically respond quickly to changes in the marketplace.

The ACT small business sector clearly benefits from the government's sound economic and financial management, the territory's strong demographic base and our very strong economic fundamentals. The government's prudent management of the territory's economy and finances through the global financial crisis, our longstanding AAA credit rating, and the fact that the city is growing and, outside of the minerals boom in Western Australia, is the strongest economy in the country, I think are all important indicators of our credentials.

The government is committed to delivering a range of programs aimed at supporting the growth of business in the territory. We have talked about this in this place before, but just to reiterate, Canberra BusinessPoint, the innovation grants, the Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre and the Exporters Network are but a few that I will mention this morning. In spite of the disparaging comments at the end of his speech by the shadow treasurer, I think it is clear that the small business sector in the ACT has benefited from the fiscal stimulus measures that were put in place. They certainly played an important part in keeping the territory economy strong through the global financial crisis.

I think the government locally—and there is the odd acknowledgement of this from the opposition—certainly needs to be cognisant of the effect on the private sector and particularly small business of the stated policy of the federal opposition in relation to 12,000 public sector job cuts in the territory. It is interesting to note that when a federal Liberal government last did this—

Mr Smyth: No, no. There are no job cuts. You cannot mislead.

MR BARR: No, I am not.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Hargreaves): Order, members! Conversations across the chamber will cease.

MR BARR: Your leader is in fact on the record as acknowledging—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Minister, through the chair, please.

MR BARR: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition is on the record as acknowledging that he is not supportive of the stated policy position of the federal opposition. One need only look back to the 1996-97 period when a similar policy agenda was pursued by the federal government. We saw a 5.2 per cent reduction in private sector employment in the territory. There was certainly a significant impact on small business from that policy agenda. I fear a return to those days.

In the context of payments to suppliers, the government locally processes nearly 300,000 accounts payable invoices annually through the Shared Services Centre. Our analysis shows that almost 50 per cent of the invoices processed for payment are valued at \$500 or less. Payments for these invoices are generated either via electronic payment or cheque, with around 80 per cent of payments made via electronic funds transfer. Ensuring that our processing times are short and that payments are accurate are the top priorities for the Shared Services Centre.

One of the features of our supplier network is its diversity. The government deals with large, medium and small businesses, companies, partnerships and sole traders, commercial firms, not-for-profits and charitable organisations. Our approach to paying suppliers is flexible and we try to comply with payment terms, which vary from immediate through the spectrum to seven days, 14 days and up to the more standard 30-day payment terms.

Generally, invoices are paid in accordance with payment terms. Our most recent quarterly statistics on this matter bear out this fact. These statistics indicate that, on average, around 85 per cent of invoices processed by Shared Services are paid within a 30-day time frame. This is backed by previous data based on 2009 averages, which showed that in that year 83 per cent of invoices were paid within the 30-day period.

That means in the context of the motion we have before us that for 85 per cent of suppliers, the grand policy proposed by the Leader of the Opposition actually makes them worse off, which is an extraordinary misfire for the centrepiece of a major policy announcement to in fact extend the time frame. Is that the best the Leader of the Opposition can do—

Opposition members interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order, members! So far it has been fine. Let us keep it that way.

MR BARR: extend the time frame from 30 days to 45 and claim that as some great victory? Some poor researcher in the Leader of the Opposition's office got that one badly wrong, didn't they? But, Mr Assistant Speaker, let us be clear about—

Mrs Dunne interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne, that will do, thanks.

MR BARR: They are very sensitive on this issue, Mr Assistant Speaker, it would appear.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: That is four out of five.

MR BARR: You always know when you have hit a raw nerve on that side. All of a sudden the interjections start coming at you. Mr Smyth starts bleating away furiously, leaning back in the seat and giving his little commentary—

Mr Smyth interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order, minister! Please stop baiting the opposition. I find it hard to keep them quiet when you bait them. Thank you.

MR BARR: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I digress. The government payments process, for the information of members, is that once invoices are in the system, the payment is made based upon the date of the supplier invoice and the relevant payment terms. I will give a very clear example: an invoice dated 1 October with payment terms of 30 days would be paid on 31 October, assuming it has been properly authorised and entered into the government's financial system prior to that time.

I think it is worth noting, though, that in addition the Building and Construction (Security of Payments) Act provides firms working in the building and construction industry with security that they will be paid in a timely manner for completed work. The security of payments act allows construction entities to seek a determination of payment within 10 days of the issuing of an invoice. The onus is on the territory to ensure that within those 10 days the claim is valid and payable in accordance with the contract.

The Government Procurement Act 2001 makes provision for interest to be paid by the government on a commercial account. Without quoting the various clauses of the act, assuming conditions are met, interest can be paid where the territory is significantly late in making a payment. So it is there within the Government Procurement Act. The government recognises that paying around 85 per cent of invoices on time still means that there is room for improvement in around 15 per cent of cases.

However, as the shadow treasurer acknowledged in his contribution, the reasons for a late payment are many and varied. They must be understood at a detailed level to determine how to improve while still maintaining the territory's interest in only paying properly authorised invoices. A non-comprehensive list of reasons for delay can include disputes on how goods and services are delivered, invoicing errors from suppliers—for example, non-compliant tax invoices or incorrectly addressed invoices—invoices not received from suppliers in a timely manner—ie, the date received is much later than the invoice date—and processing errors, including incorrect coding and inappropriate authorisation.

Having said that, there is no doubt that there is room to improve work processes. The Shared Services area of government, as part of their continuous improvement regime, are engaged in a business review process right now. Directorates will also be engaged in work process improvements, especially in relation to service level standards and specifications.

The government, through the Government Procurement Act 2001, has a series of comprehensive policies embedded in legislation. The act forms the basis of all government purchases of goods and services, including capital works and also governs our approach to payments to suppliers. The act requires that the territory pursues value for money in undertaking any procurement activity, having regard to

things like probity and ethical behaviour, management of risk, open and effective competition and optimising whole-of-life costs. Our policies also require consideration of social procurement opportunities and environmentally sustainable considerations.

All of these factors are balanced within a framework of obligations under international agreements. As I am sure members are aware, the Australian government is signatory to a number of international free trade agreements. Under these free trade agreements, territory entities must not treat a locally established supplier more favourably than any other suppliers on the basis of the degree of foreign affiliation or ownership. Nor may they seek, take into account, impose or enforce offsets, such as pre-qualification criteria, evaluation criteria or a contract award not applicable to all suppliers.

The premises underlying these agreements are openness, fairness and impartiality in relation to our procurement activities. I do not think it is sound policy to apply a blanket requirement to “break up” larger projects into smaller components, although I do note that the shadow treasurer put a qualification in advance of that. I think it would be fair to observe that increasing the number of parties responsible for delivering projects may in fact lead to higher risks, higher costs and fewer satisfactory outcomes for the territory.

Better economic and project management policies will certainly allow for market arrangements in relation to partnering, consortia or subcontracting arrangements where these would deliver value for money. In fact, in some projects, economies of scale can be important for business to achieve a return on investment and to provide for appropriate risk management. In other projects, there may be scope to consider the unbundling, if you like, of work packages into discrete components. However, such decisions need to be made on a case-by-case basis and this is current government policy. So there is nothing new in this.

In closing, the government understand the importance of cash flow to small enterprises. We will continue to strive for the payment of all invoices within 30 days. We believe the 30-day period is appropriate. In the context of the motion that is before us today, the idea of moving from 30 days to 45 days as some great advance is, I think, an extraordinary proposition. I imagine that for the 85 per cent of suppliers who currently receive payment within 30 days, they would in fact see the move to 45 as a retrograde step.

It was, I think with some amusement, that the government and, indeed, the parliamentary leader of the Greens noted this particular anomaly in the policy from the opposition. Of course, I am sure we will hear a stout defence of why they got it wrong from the Leader of the Opposition. He would never, of course, admit a mistake in a policy framework. But given they have had three years to put this one together, they have come up with 45 days. Wow! That is a really significant change, is it not? You go backwards. You go backwards under the Liberal Party policy. You go backwards. It is a fantastic outcome for small business in the territory, Mr Assistant Speaker!

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Did you have an amendment, minister?

MR BARR: Yes. Before I sit down, I have circulated an amendment to Ms Le Couteur's amendment.

Mr Smyth: How can you move an amendment to an amendment that has not been moved?

MR BARR: She has not moved an amendment yet.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Okay, thank you. Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR (Molonglo) (4.37 pm): I move:

Omit all words after "That this Assembly", substitute:

(1) notes:

- (a) the significance of the ACT Government as a purchaser of goods and services from ACT businesses;
- (b) the critical importance of a regular cash flow for the sustainability of smaller businesses in particular;
- (c) the Labor-Greens Parliamentary Agreement item 7.3 that provides for the payment of small business invoices within 30 days with commercial interest on late payments; and
- (d) significant delays in the payment of some invoices by the Government, and the adverse effect late payments have on the capacity of the organisations to maintain their functions;

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) constantly improve in the timeliness of payment of invoices;
- (b) ensure that where appropriate government tenders and contracts are structured to allow small business and social enterprises to compete for government business;
- (c) include in the Annual Report Directions a requirement to publish the number of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt and the number paid in longer than 30 days, together with the average value of overdue invoices in agency annual reports; and
- (d) table a list of the number of current invoices by directorate that have been outstanding for more than 30 days, together with the average value as at 31 October 2011, by Thursday, 17 November 2011; and

(3) requests that the Auditor-General consider conducting compliance audits on the performance of government payments."

I commend my amendment to the Assembly. I note that the first two points in my amendment are exactly the same as Mr Smyth's. It is good that we all agree that the ACT government is significant as a purchaser of goods and services. I think, also, that all three parties here agree that it is of critical importance that small businesses, and even large businesses, have regular cash flows. One of the reasons it is important that large businesses have regular cash flows is that their cash flows often go down to the smaller businesses, and if there is late payment for a large business, that may lead to eventual late payment for a small business. So it is a positive thing this evening that all three parties agree that we need regular cash flow for small businesses and that we support small businesses.

However, I then come to item (c), which is not the same as the Liberal Party's motion. The Liberal Party, for reasons unknown to me—Mr Barr did speculate on them—feels that it would be better to change payment arrangements so that they are 45 days rather than 30 days. One of the items in the agreement between the Labor Party and the Greens when we supported the Labor Party to become the government was payment of small business invoices within 30 days with commercial interest on late payments. We put that in because we did recognise how important this issue was for small business, and that for some small businesses there had been problems with this before the last election. That is why this was in here. It is good to see that the Liberal Party is realising that there have been issues, but its solution to the problem could hardly be described as a solution when it is making the time 50 per cent longer than it was before. What sort of solution is that, Liberal Party, to make the time of payment 50 per cent longer?

Note (d) is similar to Mr Smyth's but not the same. We do note that there are still, unfortunately, significant delays in the payment of some invoices by government and the adverse effect these late payments can have on the capacity of organisations to maintain their functions. I have spoken to a number of small businesspeople who have said that on occasion they do have significant problems in payments of invoices. It seems to be where they put an invoice in and then the government says, "Oh, this thing has to get changed; you didn't get it quite right," or where someone is away and we go backwards and forwards.

The Greens are not going to stand up here and say that there are absolutely no issues in this regard; clearly there are some issues in this regard. But Mr Barr's speech suggested that 85 per cent of all invoices are paid in time, and I have no reason to believe that that statement is not true. Of course, that does leave 15 per cent that are paid late, and for some organisations that could be a significant issue.

We now move to what we call on the government to do. Unlike the Liberal Party, we are not calling on the government to pay invoices more slowly than they do at present. We think that (a) we should call on the government to constantly improve the timeliness of payment of invoices. This is one of the things that government clearly can do better. Eighty-five per cent is good; 100 per cent would not be possible, I am sure, but it is obviously the goal that we should be aiming for.

And then there is (b), which is a combination of part of Mr Smyth's motion and part what we have added to it. We all agree that we should ensure that, where appropriate,

government tenders and contracts are structured to allow small business to compete. What the Greens have added to this is to allow social enterprises to also compete for government business. We think this is an emerging issue. It is very small, emerging from a small base, but it is emerging from a small base in the ACT. It is somewhere where government money can basically do things twice. Government can get the services they need and they can support the social outcome. This can be incredibly good value for money from a government point of view and incredibly good value for money from society's point of view. After all, we are here to govern for the sake of society as a whole, not just the government's convenience.

Part (c) is different from the Liberals' motion. We have said:

... include in the Annual Report Directions a requirement to publish the number of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt and the number paid in longer than 30 days, together with the average value of overdue invoices in agency annual reports ...

The Liberal Party was asking to do this quarterly. I know that the Liberal Party has also been the party that has said that the Greens are going for far too much red tape, reporting, processes, regulations and blah, blah, blah. But that is not necessarily true, Mr Smyth. The Greens are trying to look at what is a reasonable requirement, what would be useful to the Assembly without being too onerous for reporting. We think that annual reporting would make more sense than quarterly reporting. I do not think that quarterly reporting should be necessary.

With (d) we are changing the timing. It says:

... table a list of the number of current invoices by directorate that have been outstanding for more than 30 days, together with the average value as at 31 October 2011, by—

we suggested—

Thursday 17 November 2011 ...

We have to give the government time to do the work. There is simply no point in asking them to do something which they really cannot do. I cannot see how it is going to inconvenience the Assembly significantly if we have to wait until November to get this information. I for one, and the Greens, will look at this information with interest on 17 November and we will not be disadvantaged by waiting for that short time.

The last part of Mr Smyth's motion says:

... the Auditor-General will conduct compliance audits ...

I do not believe that it is appropriate for the Assembly to direct the Auditor-General in what she should do, so I think that point 2(d) is not appropriate. However, given that it is, by the government's figures, only 85 per cent of invoices that are paid on time, I think there is a point in the Assembly requesting that the Auditor-General should consider whether or not a compliance audit on this issue is warranted. So we have suggested a changed to (3) to read as follows:

... requests that the Auditor-General consider conducting compliance audits ...

I note that the Assembly has in previous times passed similar motions. There was one on 23 June 2010 that was passed that requested the Auditor-General to conduct an audit. In this case we are only requesting the Auditor-General to consider conducting a compliance audit. I think that is a quite proper request for the Assembly to make of the Auditor-General; we are not seeking to direct her.

In summary, I would say that this is a particularly silly motion on the part of the Liberal Party. Why they think it is better for small business to have their invoices paid in a 50 per cent longer period than would otherwise be the case is beyond me, and I think it will be beyond all small business as well. I commend my amendments to the Assembly.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Hargreaves): Mr Barr, you get the call. Mr Seselja, if you would just resume your seat, I would like to explain why I have given Mr Barr that call.

Mr Seselja: Because he was on his feet?

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: No. Mr Seselja, please. I wish to explain to the chamber. Procedurally I made an error earlier in the debate when I gave Mr Barr the call ahead of Ms Le Couteur when I misinterpreted the nature of the amendments which were being put before the house. One is consequential on the other. It was my error, and I wish to address that error by asking Mr Barr to take the floor.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation) (4.45): I need to formally move my amendment to Ms Le Couteur's amendment that inserts a new point. It is a new point that notes in the proposed amended motion that 85 per cent of invoices are paid within 30 days. I move my amendment to Ms Le Couteur's amendment:

Insert new subparagraph (1)(ca):

“(ca) around 85 per cent of invoices are paid within 30 days; and”.

MR SESELJA (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (4.46): Mr Assistant Speaker, I am just getting a look at Mr Barr's amendment. I will speak to Ms Le Couteur's amendment. The Greens are again coming to this place and saying, “It is okay because it is in the Labor-Greens agreement.” That is effectively what their amendment is: it is in the Labor-Greens agreement; therefore it is real. The problem is that it is not happening. The problem is that businesses are not being paid and businesses are not being paid interest.

I would be interested to know—Mr Barr would not say in his comments—how many of the businesses who are being paid late are receiving interest payments. How much is being paid out by the government in interest payments? Given that Ms Le Couteur's

amendments will presumably go through, perhaps Mrs Dunne will add an amendment to Ms Le Couteur's motion to make the government outline how much has been paid in interest by the government for late payments. That would be a fascinating figure. I do not think it is happening, Mr Assistant Speaker. I do not think it is happening very often, and that is the problem.

The Greens again say, "It is in our agreement." But the problem is that it is not being implemented. The problem is that businesses are not being paid on time. If we want to look at examples, we only have to go to the document that was tabled by Ms Burch. Ms Burch was forced to table this document. We only have to look at how many entities are being paid late—in some cases, 600 days late. That is what is happening under the Labor-Greens agreement. How many days since the Labor-Greens agreement was signed? Maybe about 1,000? We have had about 1,000 days since the Labor-Greens agreement was signed.

We do not know what is happening in other directorates, but we assume that if it is happening in the Community Services Directorate—many of these entities are not-for-profits. One would think that the government would be even keener to pay not-for-profits, some of whom may not be able to look after vulnerable children if they are not paid on time. We can judge the success of the Labor-Greens agreement, which we are being asked to support in Ms Le Couteur's motion, just by looking through this list. We can look through the list.

Let me go through the list. How many days overdue? It is 204 days overdue, 169 days overdue, 191 days overdue, 200 days overdue, 223 days overdue, 130 days overdue, 597 days overdue, 147 days overdue and 119 days overdue. That is what is happening under the Labor-Greens agreement. The government now needs to say how much interest has been paid out to those entities who have not been paid, in some cases for well over 100 days and in some cases for around 600 days—almost two years. That is pushing two years that they have not been paid.

How much interest is being paid? That is the point. That is the point that the opposition makes. We do need to implement it. We need to bring it back from the 200 days and the 100 days that people are waiting. Of course they will be paid within 30 days, but the interest will apply. The interest will apply and be applied where the payments have not been made in 45 days. That is a situation that is not happening at the moment.

Because we value small business, we believe in putting in place policies that will be delivered and that are delivered. The record of this government, despite the weasel words that are in the Labor-Greens agreement, is that they do not pay them. How do we know? We know because Ms Burch has told us so. She has told us so by her own reckoning. We have seen one organisation having payments of well over \$100,000—

Mrs Dunne: And they are not on that list.

MR SESELJA: In fact, they are not on that list. They are not on that list, Mrs Dunne reminds me. We know of late payments that have now partly been made, we understand, as a result of public pressure on the government, and they are not on this

list. How comprehensive is this list that tells us that some organisations are waiting 597 days? What was the amount of that outstanding invoice, Mrs Dunne?

Mrs Dunne: \$200,000.

MR SESELJA: \$200,000.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order, Mr Seselja! Through the chair, please.

MR SESELJA: \$200,000—through you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I thank Mrs Dunne for that information. A \$200,000 invoice—it is not here. Either Ms Burch has given us just part of the story or they are not seen as overdue. How many other organisations are not deemed by this government to be overdue? How many of them are receiving interest? Did that organisation receive interest in this case? I do not believe that they did. I do not believe that they did, but perhaps the minister can enlighten us.

This is about saying that these types of lists, as incomplete as they are—as potentially misleading as they may be, as presented to the Assembly—provide the evidence of what is happening at the moment. They provide the evidence of what is happening at the moment; we are saying that we can do better. We have to do better.

I commend Mr Smyth for bringing this motion forward. It is about putting forward real commitments to paying businesses on time. Where that does stretch out over 45 days, which is significantly less than for most of these organisations now, interest will apply. That will ensure that directorates pay on time.

The Greens cannot pretend that, simply because they wrote it down in their agreement, it is existing. Clearly it is not. The evidence says that it is not. It is like saying, “Because they put in their agreement that there is going to be 10 per cent public housing, that is happening.” It is not happening, because the government told us it would cost \$1 billion. They said it would cost \$1 billion to get it done, so it is not happening.

Just writing it down and putting it in a signed agreement—that agreement is not worth the paper it is written on. We know that. It has been shown time and time again. We are all looking forward to our 15-minute bus services to all the suburbs. I am sure the people of Canberra are waiting with bated breath for that part of the agreement to be delivered on.

On the issue of payments, we believe that small businesses should be paid within the 30 days. We believe that the interest will apply, and should apply, and is currently not applying. That is why we have put forward a reasonable time frame in which interest will apply. I would have thought that the government would want to support that. The only rationale the government could have for not supporting it is if they are telling us that every business, every entity, that is not paid within 30 days at the moment is being paid interest.

Mr Barr or one of the Greens can get up, hand on their heart, and say that. We would like to see the evidence. We know that it is not true. It is not happening. That is why

we need to improve the situation. Mr Smyth's motion would improve the situation. Ms Le Couteur's amendment is simply pretending that it is happening. It is the amendment that says: "Don't believe what is actually happening. Don't believe the list that is given to you by Ms Burch in relation to the directorate. Just let's assume that, because it is in the Labor-Greens agreement, it is happening." It is not happening. It is a fiction. It is a fiction that we are being asked to accept. That is why we will not be supporting Ms Le Couteur's amendment.

I commend Mr Smyth for his commitment to small business, I commend Mr Smyth for his commitment to improving governance and I think that this motion will go a long way towards that.

MS HUNTER (Ginninderra—Parliamentary Leader, ACT Greens) (4.56): I would like to pick up on that point just made by the Leader of the Opposition. He was talking about how much interest has been paid on those invoices that have been paid after more than 30 days. It is really important in all of this to remember that it first of all depends on who was in the wrong. We have to look at why some of these invoices were late. Some of the reasons may be quite legitimate as to why they have not been paid within the 30 days. It may just be that the company was in the wrong. It may be that the wrong product was delivered. It may be that it was faulty. There could be a range of reasons, and it is important that they be checked out.

We expect that proper process is followed and that there is careful scrutiny of the work compared to the invoices to make sure that there is a match before they are paid. This is taxpayers' money. I am alarmed, because what the Leader of the Opposition has said is: "Don't check whether the product's been delivered. Don't check whether the service has been delivered. Don't check if it was the right one. If anything goes over your 45 days or, in the case of the 30 days currently, just pay it. Just pay it, and if it is late, we're just going to give them interest." It might be that we should not even be paying them, but now we are also going to pay them interest. That is a nonsense position to put forward. It is quite alarming what he is putting forward actually.

Certainly, if the fault lies with the government, they should pay interest, and certainly the government could be doing more to prevent late payments. I do not think anyone has denied that. It is put quite clearly in Ms Le Couteur's amendment about the importance of paying on time. She has also included calling on the government to make sure it goes into annual report directions so we can see in those annual reports whether invoices are being paid within the 30 days, how many might be over that time, the average value of overdue invoices and so forth. We would then be able to track what was going on.

But, as I said, I am concerned about the amount of late payments. The answer to that though is not to make the period longer; it is surely to do more to make sure that those invoices are paid. I really cannot follow the logic of saying: "Look, there's something like 25 per cent of invoices not being paid on time. Let's sort through to find out how much of that 25 per cent is legitimate and how much is legitimately renegotiated or being disputed."

We need to be looking at where we might be going with this and get down to those figures. This idea that somehow, by making it 45 days, that is going to fix it all and

improve it—by making businesses wait 50 per cent longer and then by changing the number it is suddenly going to make it right—is just illogical. I just do not understand how Mr Smyth sees this operating and how he cannot see that it is to the detriment of many businesses that would have to wait 50 per cent longer to get paid. It is a nonsense.

Ms Le Couteur's amendment is very sensible and says, yes, there is a concern about the late payment and there are a percentage that obviously should not have had to wait for their payment. She has then put down quite clearly how we can track and scrutinise what is happening. The rule at the moment is that if it is an invoice that has been put in for 30 days, it should be paid within that 30 days, unless, of course, there is a legitimate dispute.

But, as Mr Barr also pointed out, it depends on what is being paid for; it depends on the invoice. Some invoices are for seven days, some are for 14 days. This idea that the Liberal Party is putting forward—"Small business, don't you worry. We'll get the government to pay your invoices in 44 days"—I just do not get. I do not understand it, and I cannot see how this is a good outcome for small business. It is a very hard one to follow.

This motion raises a number of issues. No-one here doubts the importance of prompt payment to small business. Of course it is vital for businesses, particularly small businesses with more limited cash flow, to have their invoices paid as soon as possible. The Greens have significant amendments to the motion, but, on the broader question of the issue of the payment of invoices by the government, we need to be vigilant to ensure that we are consistently pushing the envelope and trying to better help those businesses to provide goods and services to government.

The ACT government is, of course, a very important participant in our local economy. For a number of small businesses it is a very large part of their customer base. As I have said on many occasions, we need to be aware of how government spending can be used to assist the local economy and achieve a range of outcomes beyond just the procurement of goods and services to fulfil government functions. This, of course, is particularly relevant in assisting social enterprises. We have discussed this issue at length in a motion that I proposed and that was passed by the Assembly a few months ago. More generally, the government is vital for a number of small businesses, particularly local businesses, that provide employment to so many Canberrans.

I will go to the issue of community services briefly. Recent incidents have revealed that there have been problems in the payment of some invoices within the directorate. A primary example of this problem is considered in the Public Advocate's report. I do not propose to re-litigate that issue here today; suffice to say that the failure of CSD to pay the invoices in question in that incident made life very difficult for the organisation concerned. I am pleased that, as I understand it—I have been contacted by the organisation involved—the matter has been resolved and the outstanding amounts paid.

I am concerned about the systems in place to prevent these types of incidents where amounts are disputed and a protracted dispute follows. It is important to ensure that,

when the government enters into contracts, the costs, expectations and standards are readily identifiable to avoid disputes arising. Some of the payment practices and contractual structures are concerning. I hope that, in light of the coming reviews, improved mechanisms can be found to prevent these issues and ultimately provide better services at the best value.

Returning to the broader issue of invoice payment, there will, of course, sometimes be that balance, as I said earlier, in ensuring economy, value for money and prompt payment for businesses. There will be times when the government, as I said, should rightly challenge invoices and delay payment while discussions are undertaken. At times this will involve a discretion that could be exercised either way, and we understand this will always be the case. But, of course we should aim to pay as quickly as possible.

As we know, it is in the Labor-Greens agreement and it is current government policy that there is 30 days payment. I note Mr Barr's amendment that talks about 85 per cent of invoices being paid within 30 days. That is okay, but we can do better. As the amendment notes, the government should be working to improve this figure. As we have heard, there are particular issues within the Community Services Directorate, and Ms Le Couteur's amendment requires each directorate to table a list of outstanding invoices to the Assembly.

More needs to be done, and the amendment requires this issue to be dealt with in the annual reports process. That is a constructive way to ensure that the issue is always monitored and problems can be dealt with accordingly. We have also included a request, as Ms Le Couteur pointed out, to the Auditor-General to consider whether this is an issue that she should investigate so that we have a more detailed picture of the current practice across government.

I must say that I am still quite surprised that the Liberal Party would want to make the process of payment to small business 50 per cent slower than the current period set out in the Labor-Greens agreement. I just do not quite understand that. That is not in the best interests of small business, and I think that small business understand that the Greens are looking after their interests. I commend Ms Le Couteur's amendment.

Mr Barr's amendment to Ms Le Couteur's proposed amendment agreed to.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (5.07): I move the following amendment:

Insert new subparagraph (2)(e):

“(e) table information on how much interest has been paid to entities, which have not been paid on time during the last and the current financial year;”.

It was very interesting to listen to the debate. Is that the best that you can do? The Treasurer has got his little lines running out, and Ms Le Couteur and Ms Hunter are starting to believe their own rhetoric. It is interesting that, as we get closer to the election and the Greens get more desperate about their underperformance, we are actually starting to see the desperation in the faces of the Greens when you go through all the things they criticised everybody else for doing for the past three years.

The propensity now to delete all words after “that” and substitute your own words is fair enough, but when you delete all of Mr Smyth’s words after “that” and then put most of them back, you show that you are desperate and you cannot really get your act together. Ms Le Couteur could have legitimately made amendments to Mr Smyth’s motion in a much more respectful way, but she chose not to do it, because the Greens are desperate.

The only thing that they have to say is, “How can you possibly do this because this has been in the Labor-Greens agreement at paragraph 7.3 for all this time?” Well, what did it do for northern bridging services? They were not paid in a timely manner by the Community Services Directorate. At paragraph 7.3 in the Labor-Greens agreement there is something that says everything should be paid on time. That really worked for northern bridging services! To be owed in excess of \$200,000 when you are a community organisation and to be almost forced into insolvency by a government agency who contracted you to provide services and then would not pay you is absolutely and utterly reprehensible. Nothing at paragraph 7.3 of the Labor-Greens agreement did a thing to help northern bridging services. The thing that helped northern bridging services was the fact that the community advocate looked into the matter and the community advocate recommended that they be paid promptly.

How did we get to the fact that the community advocate was looking into the matter? Minister Burch said that she knew that something was going on way back in June, but she really did not do anything until 15 September, because on 9 and 12 September the Liberals wrote to her and said, “Minister, you’ve got a problem.” And she knew that she was smoked. After six weeks she did something. After six weeks we had an inquiry, and one of the results of that inquiry was, as of last week, northern bridging services were paid most—and I emphasise, most—of what they asked for, and they were not paid interest.

The real, practical current example we have before us of how ineffective the Greens have been has been the late payments to northern bridging services. And it is not chump change—it is in excess of \$200,000. It is not a little invoice. I suspect that it is not on that list that Mr Seselja has. I pointed out to the minister that northern bridging services are not on that list, and I suspect they are not on that list because the agency just put against their invoices, “Do not pay.” It is pretty easy not to get on your aged creditors’ list if you just mark it, “Do not pay.” It does not even make it to the list. That is what happened to the invoices for northern bridging services until the community advocate called on the minister’s directorate to pay them properly.

We have seen in the debate today Mr Barr, Ms Le Couteur and Ms Hunter saying: “The terrible Liberals. They’re actually making it worse for small business. They’re actually increasing”—they all used the same term—“by 50 per cent the time necessary to pay bills.” That is not the case. That is the confection that makes them feel comfortable, that makes them feel virtuous about their own position. Our position is that bills should be paid on time, and the usual rule of thumb is 30 days. We are not saying that if you do not pay in 30 days then you accrue interest. We are actually giving some free board for those issues like disputes and, “Did we actually get what we paid for? What is it delivered on time,” all of those sorts of things. But if all those

things are dealt with and it is still not paid after 45 days then the interest starts kicking in.

That brings me to the amendment I have moved today. It is quite clear that Ms Le Couteur's amendment is going to get up, and I seek the support of members of the Assembly to have the government provide information to the Assembly about the amount of interest that has been paid to people who have outstanding accounts over this financial year and the last financial year. It should not be overly onerous; it should not be difficult. These things should be generated by electronic reports, and Ms Le Couteur, with her business experience, would know these things. This amendment would enhance Ms Le Couteur's amendment by drawing to the attention of the Assembly just how often interest is paid under the Labor-Greens agreement. Just how often does the Gallagher-Hunter government ensure that people who are owed money for long periods of time are not substantially out of pocket and that they receive their payments plus interest?

I would like to see how many other organisations around the place have been waiting 600 days and whether organisations and businesses that wait that long receive interest. It would be very revealing for the members of the business community and members of this Assembly. It was very interesting to listen to the Treasurer's comments, because he skirted around the issue. He said, "Well, it's possible the Financial Management Act allows us to do it," but he would not actually provide information to the Assembly. This will be a test for the Greens and a test for the government—are they prepared to put that information on the table? I challenge the Greens and the government to do just that.

MR BARR: (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation) (5.15): I have no problem with agreeing to this amendment, Madam Deputy Speaker. In the context of the information that will be reported and in the context of Ms Le Couteur's amendment, I think the direction is for greater transparency in relation to the publication of these matters, and I do not have a problem with that at all.

MS LE COUTEUR (Molonglo) (5.15): Likewise, the Greens have absolutely no problem with the idea of publishing information about interest paid. I think it is an excellent idea, Mrs Dunne.

Mrs Dunne's amendment to **Ms Le Couteur's** proposed amendment, as amended, agreed to.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (5.16): I might speak and close a most interesting debate this afternoon. I think the spin that both the Greens and the government have come in with—"We have extended the period to 45 days and that means that everybody's bills are now going to be paid 50 per cent later"—is just bunkum. No-one has suggested that we would slow down the process. We have said, "We will extend the period to 45 days." That allows those bills that might be contentious to be handled in that period of time and then, if necessary, after the 45 days interest will be paid.

The minister jumps up and says, “But, of course, we have got that facility now.” But what he did not tell this place and what the Greens could not tell this place was: how many bills have not been paid and have attracted interest and how much interest has been paid? You would have thought a Treasurer on his game would have had that data to hand so that he could dazzle the Assembly. They have had notice of this since yesterday.

Surely some reports are available to the government, and you could print them out on the computers, which could tell you the position for a period—for the last month, for the last quarter, for the last year, for however long you want to search. That is not a figure that would be hard to come by. But the minister does not do that. I suspect they have probably paid very little interest at all, and that is why this policy is good policy and that is why my motion should go through unamended.

Admin and procedures might need to look at this notion of “deleting all words after”. If you do not like the motion, vote against the motion. Have the integrity to vote against it and say, “You’re wrong.” A lot of Ms Le Couteur’s amendment is simply plagiarism. Paragraphs (1)(a) and (1)(b) in the amendment are the same as 1(a) and 1(b) in the motion. It goes on. It is simply plagiarism. If you like it, leave it there. So do not pretend you have rewritten the whole motion. I think it is sad that we get to that stage. In the main, Ms Le Couteur agreed with our motion.

Mr Barr: I think it’s sad that you think that’s an issue, actually.

MR SMYTH: If you do not think that plagiarism is an issue, that is fine. That reflects more on you than it does on us, Mr Barr. The problem is that it is basically our motion. But the Greens just could not bring themselves to vote for a Liberal motion. That is the problem here.

We heard from Ms Hunter. She obviously did not listen to my speech. I said there is a requirement for some leeway in some cases, and that is why it is going out to 45 days. But Ms Hunter could not point out where we have said that we will delay all payments until 45 days. Indeed, Mr Barr and Ms Le Couteur could not point out anywhere in the policy or in the motion where we have said “delay the payments by the 50 per cent” and they start to quote. And they are mute now because they know it is not true. It is a good bit of spin; it is a good bit of fluff. When you have got no substance, you just make up an allegation and you keep saying it in the hope that somebody will believe you. But it is simply not true.

Much of what Ms Hunter said about there being cases where you do pay late makes our case. If Ms Hunter had bothered to listen to the speech, she would have understood. If you are in a business that is in the 15 per cent and you are struggling, I can assure you that being in the 15 per cent is not okay. Indeed, you would have thought Ms Hunter, who claims in, whatever it is, section 7.3 of the Greens-Labor agreement, that they are already doing it would have ensured they are doing it or at least armed herself with the knowledge of how many payments of interest had been made under this new arrangement. Ms Hunter could not bring that information down and enlighten all of us because she does not know. As I have said, I suspect there have not been any.

Mrs Dunne's amendment is good. Table the information. Perhaps the minister will take it on notice and table it tomorrow. It cannot be that hard to come by. Somebody in the government must know. Any period you choose, Mr Barr. Choose a period—last month, last three months.

Mr Barr: Any period? All right, okay.

MR SMYTH: For this initial one. Pick a period and tell us how much interest you have paid on overdue bills.

Mr Barr: Pick a period. Okay, in the last 12 hours?

MR SMYTH: You can treat it with that sort of disdain. I will tell every business I run across that Mr Barr will go and find out what payments have been made in the last couple of hours. It is an important issue if you have got a small business and you are not getting your payments. It is a very important issue if you have staff to pay. It is a very important issue.

I know of businesses in the ACT that have gone broke because somebody has not paid them and they have not been able to pay somebody else. There is a domino effect here. And when you have got a big part of the ACT economy that is the ACT government's budget, it is important that the bills are paid on time because that domino effect in small business can be fatal to more than just one business and it can be fatal to the jobs of employees. Without very much effort, it can bring down a small business that is trading at the margins.

Remember, common to a lot of misconceptions, most small business people are not rich. It is a lifestyle that they choose or it is something that they are intensely interested in that they choose to make a living out of. It does not make them rich. It does make them live, in many cases, near the edge. That is why this policy is important, that is why this motion should be supported, and that is why we will not be supporting the pat, self-congratulatory sort of amendment that the Greens have put forward today.

Question put:

That **Ms Le Couteur's** amendment, as amended, be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 11

Noes 6

Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves	Mr Coe	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Hunter	Mr Doszpot	
Ms Bresnan	Ms Le Couteur	Mrs Dunne	
Ms Burch	Ms Porter	Mr Hanson	
Mr Corbell	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Seselja	
Ms Gallagher			

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question put:

That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 11

Noes 6

Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves	Mr Coe	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Hunter	Mr Doszpot	
Ms Bresnan	Ms Le Couteur	Mrs Dunne	
Ms Burch	Ms Porter	Mr Hanson	
Mr Corbell	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Seselja	
Ms Gallagher			

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Planning—Civic

MS LE COUTEUR (Molonglo) (5.28): I move the motion standing in my name on the notice paper:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that there is an increasing number of empty shopfronts in Civic, especially in the City Walk area;
- (b) the increasing dominance of the Canberra Centre, including a development proposal for a further 11,000m² of retail space;
- (c) the centre's design enables people to park and visit all wings without having to go outside of the mall;
- (d) the anecdotal understanding that Canberra Centre owner, QIC, has been purchasing further retail space in the block bounded by Garema Place, City Walk and Petrie Plaza;
- (e) public concern that an expanded Canberra Centre will take business away from shops outside the mall;
- (f) that the only Master Plans for Civic are those for City West, and for the QIC precinct, not for the whole of Civic;
- (g) current small business impact assessment is inadequate in assessing impacts on small businesses, especially given that the proponent appoints the assessment consultant;

- (h) ACT Planning and Land Authority's (ACTPLA) requirement for active frontages is having a positive effect, through an increase in pavement activity;
 - (i) businesses in Civic would benefit from improved integrated transport options, waste services and other public amenities;
 - (j) the CBD Ltd Board, established through the City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy, does not formally include tenants as representatives; and
 - (k) CBD Ltd is exploring the possibility of a Renew Canberra program; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) ensure that small business impact assessment for large commercial developments is undertaken by an independent consultant, appointed by ACTPLA and paid for by the proponent;
 - (b) explore options to minimise land and retail dominance in planning, land sale or other decisions, including through discussions with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission;
 - (c) develop improved business impact modelling options;
 - (d) review development conditions in the light of current market conditions whenever a development application's approval time needs renewal;
 - (e) enforce lease conditions for the Centrepont building, and establish the owner's support for Renew Canberra;
 - (f) develop a Master Plan for Civic, and require QIC's Master Plan to be updated to reflect current retail circumstances;
 - (g) calculate, maintain and regularly publish an inventory of current retail space in the ACT – including the Canberra airport;
 - (h) ensure that the CBD Ltd Board has tenants' representation – both for inside and outside the mall;
 - (i) improve the amenity of Civic by providing adequate public toilets, public seats and tables, commercial waste coordination – including for organics, and commit to the Civic Cycle Loop and publish a timetable for its rollout;
 - (j) encourage more outdoor cafe activity in Canberra, through reducing the complexity of the application process; and
 - (k) report back on these issues to the Assembly in March 2012.

I put forward this motion today because over the past few years I have had feedback from many people, including small businesses and shoppers in Civic, who are concerned about the direction that Civic is going in.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just a moment, Ms Le Couteur. Can you stop the clock for a minute? Members, if you are going to have conversations, will you please leave the room, otherwise will you please sit down and remain silent? Thank you. Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: Thank you. There are certainly many positive aspects to the changes in Civic, but the increasing number of empty shopfronts, combined with the increasing mallification of Civic, is a clear problem. I have been surveying some of the businesses in Civic to see what kinds of issues they have. Some of the small business owners asked me to establish an inquiry into the increasing domination of QIC in Civic. As it was only last month that we established an inquiry into the supermarket competition issues it seems that another inquiry would possibly be excessive. But I note there is scope within that inquiry to look at some of these issues and I hope that will happen.

There is an increasing number of empty shopfronts in Civic, especially in the City Walk area and, ironically, the building called Centrepont may well be near the geographic centre of retail Civic but it also houses the highest proportion of empty shops in Civic, making visitors to Civic feel that they are in a derelict part of the city.

These are interesting times for Civic, which currently has the highest office vacancy rate in the country, at 14.2 per cent. This has resulted in a Civic which has whole empty buildings such as the AFP building just north of Veterans Park, which gives a distinctly under-loved look to the area. Section 63 has also not yet been developed as they have not found a tenant, despite having paid \$92 million for the site in 2007. We obviously need incentives, which the government has committed to through remissions to the lease variation charge, to encourage building owners of low grade empty offices to convert them to residential, in turn increasing the number of residents in the area.

Also of note are the blocks on the corner of Northbourne Avenue and London Circuit opposite the Sydney and Melbourne buildings which were put to auction last year but failed to sell. How much this is due to the general global financial situation and how much is due more specifically to the state of Civic and the current oversupply of both office and retail space is unclear but, either way, it does not seem to be the right time to be approving an increase in such real estate.

One point I have had fairly unanimous feedback on through my survey is that businesses, and the public generally, are very keen to see an increase in residential space in Civic. It will be better for the vibrancy of Civic, business turnover in Civic and community safety and it will enable more people to easily walk and catch buses to work.

Despite the increasing number of empty shops, the Canberra Centre operators currently have a development proposal with ACTPLA for a further 11,000 square metres of retail space, as well as a residential tower and an office tower. It does not make sense to me that we are increasing our overall retail space while at the same time allowing buildings to have a growing number of empty spaces in neighbouring blocks and tenancies.

The ACT Greens have been concerned about the increasing dominance of the Canberra Centre and its influence on ACT planning decisions for many years now. I think that this remains a significant concern. ACTPLA's requirement for active frontages in Civic is, however, having a bit of a positive effect through an increase in pavement activity. The new bits of the Canberra Centre on Bunda Street are prime examples, but the land bridges above them work in the opposite way. The centre's design enables people to park and visit all the wings in the centre without once having to go outside the mall.

I need to raise here the anecdotal understanding by most business owners it seems in Civic that the Canberra Centre's owner, QIC, has been purchasing further retail space in the block bounded by Garema Place, City Walk and Petrie Plaza. The existing Canberra Centre features a balcony that has no obvious purpose apart from planning for a future pedestrian overpass to an adjoining building right where the block in question currently stands.

I have noted in my motion public concern that an expanded Canberra Centre will take business away from shops outside the mall. Today's *Canberra Times* online poll asked people whether they thought expanding the Canberra Centre would make or break the city. Fifty-three per cent of people said, "Break it—small business is already struggling, and this could be the final nail in the coffin," 34 per cent said, "Make it—the expansion would attract more people and more business to Civic," and 12 per cent were "not sure".

The Greens want to see a Civic with a diversity of shops and services. I am sure this is what most people who come to our city centre would like to see too. I am concerned about the future of Civic as independent businesses leave shopfronts empty and their potential customers get lost in the homogenised experience of yet another shopping centre.

In terms of how to improve the look and feel of Civic and those sad empty shopfronts, I would like to mention the Renew Newcastle movement where some very community-minded people undertook the coordination of fledgling businesses and artists to use empty shop spaces on an ongoing but temporary basis. This resulted in the revival of an unused area of Newcastle and its becoming vibrant again. I would quickly like to flag that CBD Ltd are exploring the possibility of establishing a renew Canberra program and I look forward to their progress in this.

As for active frontages, one thing the government could do is encourage more outdoor cafe activity in Canberra, most easily by relaxing some of the regulations around outdoor cafes and reducing the complexity of the application process. For example, the government's draft outdoor cafe policy last year suggested that only certain types of tables and chairs should be allowed. We opposed this over-regulation. We think that the relaxing of cafe furniture standards which are not health or safety related will allow a more diverse cafe scene to evolve in Canberra. Generally, we need regulations and infrastructure which support small businesses, entrepreneurs, creativity and retail diversity, rather than hinder them.

My motion calls for the government to explore options to minimise the dominance of land ownership and retail interests in planning, land sales or other decisions, including through discussions with the ACCC. I realise this is a difficult task. However, it is key to ensuring that the government is in control of our city centres, not the developers.

I am concerned that there could be serious competition issues when a single landlord controls such a large holding of the available space in a given shopping precinct, such as is the case within the city, within Civic. This not only restricts options and can create unfair market power for landlords when retailers are negotiating rents but, once inside a shopping centre, there are issues for retailers in terms of lack of competition for security services, waste and recycling management and other service providers, as these are generally centrally controlled. Discussions with the ACCC could explore how the QIC domination of Civic compares to mall domination and one-landlord domination in other cities in Australia, and what kinds of measures it is appropriate for governments to take in order to limit individual companies' dominance.

The current process for small business impact assessment for large commercial developments does not seem to be appropriate, especially given that the proponents appoint the assessment consultant. The Greens have heard of a number of proposals to improve on this process, largely which incorporate the impact assessment being undertaken by an independent consultant, which is appointed by ACTPLA and paid for by the proponent. This would generally save money for all parties.

In the Giralang supermarket case, the proponent commissioned a consultant to undertake an economic impact assessment as required by ACTPLA. When the case was appealed in ACAT, the government commissioned its own economic impact assessment, as well as needing to pay fees for the company to give legal advice to back it up. This case was never actually heard in ACAT.

In terms of the general process of small business impact assessment, third party appeals are not an option for the city and town centres, but the principle remains that it would be better for an independent consultant to be appointed from a panel so the government can trust those figures rather than paying for its own additional independent advice.

I noticed in the newspaper today that the Council of Small Business of Australia did, in fact, have similar concerns about the QIC small business impact statement, about it being more of a promotional document for QIC and the mall rather than an independent assessment. The problem of the statements being produced by a company of the proponent's choice and not by the government is problematic in itself.

Although the government say they verify the data within the statements, it is hard to believe they would be able to really do this, given that they presumably have not been able to access the original data for commercial-in-confidence reasons. Certainly, in the spirit of open government, there is no way that the public or other businesses will have been able to access this data. It would be preferable if the government was able to have access to the consultant's source data, if possible.

We do understand that ACTPLA tries to validate the suggested impacts in the assessment submitted with the DA, but this information is always kept as commercial-in-confidence. There is little or no transparency in this process—certainly no open government—and thus the public and affected businesses are unable to scrutinise the assumptions therein. This leaves other affected businesses unable to object or appeal with the full range of information available.

One of the issues not dealt with in any meaningful way in the statement is the fact that the Canberra Centre has the majority of short stay parking spaces in city east, meaning that customers and pedestrian traffic to the city are largely funnelled through the Canberra Centre one way or another. This is simply just not addressed in the study, but it should be more independently addressed in future studies. There are other ways of assessing business impacts through various modelling options used in other jurisdictions and other countries and I believe that these should be further investigated by the government.

I note that the government is currently undergoing a review of its commercial zones codes in the territory plan. This is a very important process for businesses in the ACT. It is an opportunity to ensure that the retail hierarchy is working and to adjust codes as necessary. A key part of the retail hierarchy is ensuring that Civic is the centrepiece of Canberra's commercial zones.

The ACT has very high per capita retail GFA compared to other cities and, if you take the retail GFA at the airport into account, this is a real problem for ACT retailers. The number of empty shops and lost jobs from businesses going broke seem to indicate that we already have an adequate supply of retail space in Civic without a Canberra Centre extension.

I understand that the government does maintain figures on current retail space in the ACT, but these figures are only published every five years. In the meanwhile, businesses wanting to start up new outlets or expand existing ones or even commit to extending their tenancy cannot be sure how much retail space already exists in different areas, which makes it very hard for them to put their financial plans together. In the spirit of open government, my motion therefore calls on the government to calculate, maintain and regularly publish an inventory of current retail space in the ACT, including the Canberra airport.

I have called for a master plan for Civic to be developed and I know that the government will say that they already have one—I assume they will. However, I think that what they are thinking about is just a TAMS work action plan, largely improving paving, which includes some substantial changes but without any real strategies or incentives to facilitate private investment in areas we want. The only proper existing master plans for Civic are those for city west and for the QIC precinct and not for the whole of Civic. That is what we need.

Another opportunity for the government to review the impact of the Canberra Centre's development is at the point when they apply to ACTPLA for an extension of the allowed development period. This, of course, can also be applied to all developers

who do not develop within their allowed period, as conditions do change over time and there could well be reasons that development conditions might need to be adjusted. This seriously was an opportunity that appears to have been lost by the government very recently. The QIC's DA has only come in recently. I would urge the government to look very seriously at the retail issues in Civic before they approve it.

Workers, shoppers and businesses in Civic would all benefit from improved integrated transport options, waste services and other public amenities. A broad range of issues relating to these areas has been raised through responses to surveys and by constituents. My motion listed public toilets, public seats and tables, as well as the rollout of commercial waste coordination, including for organics, and committing to the Civic cycle loop. There is a lot more detail which I will not really have time for right now.

One of the main things I want to say is that what this motion is really about is a fair go for business in Civic—a fair go for big businesses and a fair go for small businesses. Big business is probably managing to have a fair go. We have to put a bit more emphasis into looking after small business and diversity. The ACCC has looked at this and different issues. There are well-known issues with having one entity having a significant market power. If you think of yourself as a small business trying to negotiate a lease with a large landlord who is basically the only shop in town, you can understand the significant market power issues and the significant issues here.

My motion also notes that the CBD board—and we do support the role of CBD Ltd in coordinating Civic's landlords and improving the amenity of Civic—does not formally have tenant representatives as part of its board. We note that, as the tenants are the people most in touch with Civic, that could be a good way forward. In conclusion, I commend my motion to the Assembly.

MR SESELJA (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (5.43): It seems that it is another day and another Greens' motion where they are going to suddenly call on the government to do all sorts of things that the Greens have not bothered to get done for the last three years. Every time we read one of these motions that are coming out more and more as we approach the election, there is this increasing sense of desperation from the Greens. They are trying to show the community that they have actually done something but every time we read through these motions—we have the Greens calling on the government to do this and calling on the government to do that—they read as a litany of Greens failure. They read as a litany of Greens-Labor failure.

The Greens have been part of this coalition for three years. They have not managed to get any of these things done. If they were so committed to these changes you would think that they would have been able to negotiate something by now, that they would have been able to negotiate it. You would think that when they agreed to support each budget they would have got some of these things done. But they have not. They have not because they have not been committed to it. I think this is going to be what we see every sitting from the Greens. This has to be done and it has to be done now.

I think we will increasingly see that these motions will not get up, and they will not get up because the Greens have not done the work. They are not really committed to it.

Everyone knows that they are part of a coalition here. If they wanted to get it done, it would be done by now. They have been effectively partners in government for the last three years. The community would be asking themselves the question, "What have we got as a result?"

I think the Greens are awake to the fact that the community is asking that question, because we see this desperate rush. We see this last minute rush to say: "No, no, really we are committed. We are achieving things, even if we are leaving them to the last minute. No, this is really, actually, very, very important to us." It is very difficult to take the Greens seriously on this. It is very difficult for business or anyone in the community to take the Greens seriously on this.

I could go through any number of the actual elements of this motion. I would start with what we heard from Ms Le Couteur this morning. I think her words in relation to the motion this morning were that the Assembly should not be involved in the nitty-gritty of planning. That was her position this morning. The Assembly should not be involved in the nitty-gritty of planning, and then she comes back with a 22-paragraph motion doing just that. Nitty-gritty is bad if it is the Liberal Party calling for it, but if it is the Greens, it is the good nitty-gritty. It is the good nitty-gritty of planning.

Of course, I would say to Ms Le Couteur that if she wanted to do the nitty-gritty of planning, she could have used her position as a coalition partner to get this stuff done. We would not have to debate it in the Assembly. They could have said: "If you want your budget passed, if you want to stay in government, we have got a few demands. Here they are and they are going to be done. If not, you will not have your budget passed. You will not have supply. You will not be in government anymore."

But they did not. They did not because the Greens rolled over. For the last three years they have been rolling over. Now they are suddenly saying to themselves: "We need to start standing up to our coalition partners. We need to start demanding some things from them." How they do that is to come into the Assembly with ill thought out motions. That is what we have here today.

I would like to touch on a couple of the areas where I think there is particular hypocrisy from the Greens in this motion. One is on the issue of outdoor cafes. We know that Mrs Dunne has been the person who has been highlighting the position of and fighting for the cafe owners in Canberra who have been subjected to outrageous requirements by this government, outrageous micromanagement of their businesses by this government. Of course, she has received no support for that position from the Greens. In fact, if she had received support we actually could have seen significant changes to some of those regulations.

Let us have a look at some of what the government was doing. I will read from Mrs Dunne's press release. It states:

Mrs Dunne said the 25 page draft policy document puts up so many barriers, creates so many intricate rules and exposes cafe owners to such a burdensome regime of bureaucratic inspections and interpretations that it will make it difficult to understand what will and will not be allowed, much less comply with them.

Measurements come down to millimetres, advertising is limited, permitted structures vary and language is vague.

For example, furniture must 'create an interesting, lively appearance'. I can just imagine what a bureaucratic inspector might consider 'interesting and lively'.

On one hand, furniture must not allow advertising to dominate. On the other, indeed in the very next line, sponsored advertising is permitted.

It is that kind of over-bureaucracy that has crept in and does affect these businesses. It does affect these businesses. I also wonder what the Greens' policy, as stated by Ms Le Couteur, of banning outdoor heaters might do for outdoor cafes in Canberra. I wonder if the Greens told the small businesses and the cafe owners about their plans to ban outdoor heaters. Ms Le Couteur, of course, has been reported in the *Canberra Times* as saying that.

Indeed, we have seen, I think, Greens-dominated councils actually do that in some parts. We have actually seen them do that in parts. That is a classic Greens policy. It is the stated intention of the Greens' planning spokesperson. It is the stated intention to ban outdoor heaters. Indeed, we have seen it in the Yarra council. They have imposed a \$105 fee on restaurants and cafe owners who use outdoor heaters, suggesting that these businesses provide blankets instead. Ms Le Couteur, of course, wants them banned, going even further than the Greens-led council in Yarra.

Let us just consider what that might do for outdoor cafes in Canberra. How many cafes would rely on them for at least six months of the year? If you were doing breakfast in Canberra, we know that it can be cold in the morning at almost any time of the year. In fact, many of us would know that just last night—late October—was a very cool evening.

If you were at an outdoor cafe last night, you would have wanted an outdoor heater. Again we have the hypocrisy of the Greens. They have supported the government in everything they have done. They have not bothered to get this stuff done. Now they are saying to the Assembly that this urgently needs to be done, yet their very policy statements work actively against what they claim to be representing.

I look forward to when the Greens do talk to some of those cafe owners that they tell them about their plans to ban outdoor heaters. What will that do for businesses all around Canberra in the freezing temperatures of Canberra where they are able, through the outdoor heaters, to ensure people can enjoy a cup of coffee outside, can enjoy a breakfast outside at their local cafe in the city, in Manuka or somewhere else?

I wonder what the Greens-Labor policy of a \$50,000 unit tax is doing for these businesses. I wonder what a Greens-Labor policy of a \$50,000 unit tax is doing. If you want a lively city area, if you want to underpin these small businesses, I would have thought that one of the ways would be to encourage more people to live in the city. The Labor Party and the Greens have decided that they will levy a \$50,000 per unit tax. That \$50,000 per unit tax will hurt, because it will stop development of units in parts of Civic. It will mean that there are less than there otherwise would have been. That means there will be less trade for these small businesses.

The policies that are pursued by the Labor Party and the Greens are going in the direct opposite direction of what the Greens are claiming they want to achieve through this motion. They have no credibility on this, and they have no credibility because they have been part of a coalition now for three years. They are saying to the community: “Don’t look at what we’ve done for the last three years. Look at what we’re putting in our motions now.”

Ignore the fact that they have had the balance of power. Ignore the fact that they have controlled and had significant influence over this government and they have chosen not to use it. They have chosen not to use it to achieve virtually any of the significant commitments in their parliamentary agreement. They certainly have not done it to improve the lives of small businesses or to improve the businesses of cafe owners and others in Civic.

They stand condemned for their record, and they will be judged on their record, along with the Labor Party. They will be judged as to what this alliance has achieved for the people of the ACT. From what we can see from these motions, I think they are now starting to read as a litany of the things they have not got done—a litany of failure from the Greens and the Labor Party. But the Greens have to take their share of responsibility, because they are the ones who are part of this coalition. They are the ones who are keeping the Labor Party in government and they are the ones who have done nothing about these things that have been put forward in the motion. Mr Speaker, the Liberal Party will not be supporting Ms Le Couteur’s motion today.

MR CORBELL: (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.55): Mr Speaker, the recently released draft ACT planning strategy emphasised the importance of urban intensification for all of Canberra’s town centres and their inter-town transport corridors. It also reinforces the city as the pre-eminent commercial centre for Canberra. Indeed, the city is where the national, regional and municipal roles of Canberra coalesce. It is one of the community’s most important meeting places. It must not only be a place that reflects our values as a community. It must also continue to be a place where people are encouraged to participate in all aspects of our city’s cultural, commercial and community life.

The city has experienced a number of cycles of development, including a period of growth led by the investment from the Queensland Investment Corporation into the Canberra Centre. The city is, Mr Speaker, experiencing another cycle and one that is, I am sure, reflective of the broader national economy.

It is important that we take this time to refresh all of the government’s activities in the city and ensure that we maintain a truly coordinated approach. As has been flagged by the government’s draft planning strategy, Canberra has a unique metropolitan structure that, if we play to its strength, can make Canberra one of the most sustainable and liveable cities in the world.

There is no doubt that the growth of the Canberra Centre has made a strong and timely contribution to the development of the city. The introduction of new offices

has reinforced employment in the city centre, and outdoor cafes and areas such as the northern area of Bunda Street have been of great benefit to the city and enlivened areas of the city that previously were very dead.

The Canberra Centre has also had impact, perhaps, on some original smaller retail outlets. However, the essential argument provided in the impact assessment supporting the development application for expansion of the Canberra Centre is that it is to the benefit of all retailers to attract greater custom to the city as a whole.

It is important, I think, to note that currently these proposals are before the ACT Planning and Land Authority. The authority requires, as part of its statutory planning responsibilities, proponents to submit small business impact assessments for large commercial developments. Such reports are assessed for adequacy as part of the DA assessment process. To have independent consultants undertake an impact assessment for large developments such as the Canberra Centre would require a change of the existing impact assessment cost recovery provisions in chapter 8 of the Planning and Development Act so that such provisions also relate to merit track development applications.

Mr Speaker, looking at the issues raised in Ms Le Couteur's motion, it is very clear to me that Ms Le Couteur, and I think the Greens as a whole, need to start to be a bit more focused in what they are presenting to the Assembly. We heard Ms Le Couteur mention earlier in the day that she believed it was not appropriate for the Assembly to get into the nitty-gritty of planning and development assessment matters. Regrettably, that is exactly what Ms Le Couteur has done in her motion today.

This motion seeks to get the government to address an enormously broad range of issues—everything from master planning at a whole-of-city level through to the membership of the CBD board, through to getting the owners of buildings to support particular programs, through to issues around toilets, encouraging more outdoor cafe activity and so on. It is an enormous grab bag of items. It is very much, I think, the classic lucky dip motion: let us put our hand into the bucket and just see what we can grab and get some commitment from the government.

The government is already doing a broad range of activities in relation to the city. If Ms Le Couteur and the Greens are so concerned about these matters, the government would be very happy to provide a detailed briefing on the broad range of activities that are occurring in the city centre. Regrettably, we have not seen that from Ms Le Couteur and the Greens to any significant degree to date.

Let me address a couple of the issues raised in her motion. First of all, she asks the government to consider whether the interests of tenants can be reflected in the membership of the Canberra CBD Ltd board. The CBD Ltd board is established to represent the interests of those people and entities that pay the CBD levy.

At 6 pm, in accordance with standing order 34, the motion for the adjournment of the Assembly was put and negatived.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 pm.

MR CORBELL: Before the dinner break I was outlining the government's concerns in relation to the motion proposed by Ms Le Couteur. I think, primarily, the concern with the motion is that it has such varied requests that it is very difficult to identify those matters which Ms Le Couteur thinks need action and those which she believes are simply worth restating. But I will endeavour to reply to the motion in the most effective way that I can.

To that end, I have circulated an amendment to Ms Le Couteur's motion, which I think tries to recognise what steps the government has already taken in these areas, as well as recognising and restating how matters such as any possible expansion of the Canberra Centre would be managed. I now move:

Omit all words after "That this Assembly", substitute:

"(1) notes:

- (a) that the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) requires, as part of the statutory planning responsibilities, proponents to submit small business impact assessment reports for large commercial developments and that such reports are assessed for adequacy as part of the ACTPLA development application processes;
- (b) the QIC Master Plan is being reviewed in relation to the proposals for Precinct D of the QIC Canberra Centre development;
- (c) that the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate maintains an inventory of current retail space in the ACT, so as to assess supply and demand in the retail sector;
- (d) the Government's comprehensive program to improve the amenity of Civic by upgrading the public realm, including paving, street furniture, lighting and toilet amenities, as well as to improve commercial waste management and upgrade cycling facilities and infrastructure (including its commitment to the Civic Cycle Loop); and
- (e) the success of the Government's policies in encouraging higher levels of outdoor cafe activity in the City Centre."

This amendment is designed to reflect the fact that currently, as part of its statutory planning responsibilities, ACTPLA requires development proponents to submit small business impact assessments for large commercial developments such as the proposal for the Canberra Centre, which is currently going through the development assessment process. It is also important to state that there is a master plan for the precinct in which the Canberra Centre is located and that this is being reviewed in relation to the proposals from QIC in relation to their development proposal.

It is also worth making the point that the government does maintain an inventory of current retail space in the territory so that we are able to properly assess supply and demand in the retail sector and that these inventories are used by our planning officials in having regard to whether or not proposals for expansion of commercial activities such as retail activities are appropriate.

Finally, in (d) and (e), it is important to restate the work the government is undertaking to improve the amenity of Civic, as it is known, by upgrading the public realm, including upgrades to paving, such as those which members can see directly outside this building, on London Circuit, improvements to street furniture and street lighting and improvements to toilet amenities, all of which are currently ongoing in the city area, as well as improvements to waste management, such as the commercial waste recycling activities being promoted by the ACTSmart range of programs, and our commitment to improving cycling facilities and infrastructure, including the government's restated commitment to the development of the Civic cycle loop.

So there are a range of activities where the government is actively working, investigating and putting in place funding to deliver a range of very important improvements to amenity in the city infrastructure. I think this is a sensible restating of what is actually occurring in the city centre and what the processes are for dealing with large-scale commercial development proposals.

The government will not be supporting the motion in the form proposed by Ms Le Couteur. Instead, we propose the amendment, which seeks to address these issues in a logical, consistent manner and which reflects the processes and activities that are currently in place and underway.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (7.34): I rise tonight to speak in support of Ms Le Couteur's motion. I think it is a valuable motion that Ms Le Couteur has brought forward, because I certainly share her concern about some of the issues facing the city centre. I am concerned about the closure of businesses in the area. We see throughout the city at the moment a number of vacant shopfronts and I think the anecdotal discussion that goes around suggests that there are significant issues with ownership of buildings in the city. I think it is worth this Assembly taking the time to discuss that issue, to canvass it and to work out whether we in fact can play a role—and I think we can—in seeking to overcome some of those issues that are facing the city.

I do not think it is good enough for us to simply sit back and hope that the problem sorts itself out. Certainly people that I speak to do have concerns about the state of the city and they recognise some of these issues. They recognise the increasing dominance of the Canberra Centre and they certainly intuitively understand the impact that that has on the rest of the city. So I think the fact that Ms Le Couteur has brought this forward is welcome.

What I think is disappointing is the lack of seriousness with which Mr Seselja took this motion when he stood up to speak today. I do not actually recall Mr Seselja discussing the issue at hand. He spent his entire speech denigrating Ms Le Couteur and the motion she had put forward and attacking the Greens and our record over the last couple of years. There is going to be a time and a place for that, but it is somewhat disappointing that Mr Seselja was not able to actually bring himself to discuss the issues that affect our city centre. In the 10 or whatever minutes he spoke for, I do not recall him touching on it at all and that is a real shame.

It is clear that Mr Seselja seems not to care about the empty shops in Civic. He did not seem to care at all about the increasingly monopolistic influence that the Canberra Centre has and the increasing rents that leaseholders in the city or prospective leaseholders are facing. All of these issues were the substance of the motion and were the sorts of things that Ms Le Couteur raised earlier today. Unfortunately Mr Seselja did not see fit to touch on any of those, and that is a real shame because I think that many Canberrans do recognise that this is a substantive issue, one that warrants a discussion.

At least Mr Corbell did speak on the issues and he sought to set out some things the government are doing. We do not entirely agree with that analysis, obviously. I think that more can be done and that is where Ms Le Couteur, far from lacking focus or putting varied requests, has actually sought to constructively put forward a range of suggestions derived from talking with stakeholders. People are actually talking to us about these issues and Ms Le Couteur in her motion has sought to capture some of those ideas and actually bring them to this Assembly. So what reflects the sheer volume of the motion is the fact that there are many ideas around about what could possibly be done and I think Ms Le Couteur has done a great job of picking up some of those ideas and some of those concerns and bringing them to the Assembly in her motion.

I note Mr Corbell's amendment. He notes the government's commitment to the Civic cycle loop. It is a commitment to the idea. I think we need some commitment to action. It is time that this project, which has been around for a number of years now, is actually progressed in a substantive way. I know that last year on Ride to Work Day, Mr Corbell turned up with his bike and went around the loop. Presumably he appreciated the quality of the idea, but the fact is that it is now some time later—and this idea has been around for quite some time now—and it is not actually progressing in a sort of concrete way, literally and figuratively. This reflects on the style of commitment that the government is showing here. It is a commitment to the concept but not a commitment to doing something.

Ms Le Couteur is seeking to bring some attention and bring some focus to some of these matters and get some real action as opposed to fine words and future promises. So I applaud Ms Le Couteur for bringing this forward. I would like to see the Assembly take it more seriously and I think that there are important issues to be resolved here that Ms Le Couteur has sought to bring some positive dialogue to. I commend Ms Le Couteur for bringing the motion forward.

MR HANSON (Molonglo) (7.39): I was not intending to speak to this motion but, in response to Mr Rattenbury's five-minute speech there, I think it is worth making a few points to show the irony of it. He got up to criticise Mr Seselja, complaining that Mr Seselja's 10-minute speech lacked a detailed analysis of the substance of the motion and was more of a critique of the Greens. But Mr Rattenbury spent much of his five minutes criticising Mr Seselja. Actually, the very crime that he accused Mr Seselja of, which was not focusing on the substance of the motion and simply talking about the relative merits of a different party, is exactly what Mr Rattenbury did. It was a real case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Other than criticising Mr Seselja, telling Mr Corbell to get on his bike and go for a ride and trying to defend Ms Le Couteur, Mr Rattenbury did not focus on any substance. So I just make the point that if you are going to get up in this place and criticise a member of another party, it is probably best not to then commit the same crime by doing so yourself.

MS LE COUTEUR (Molonglo) (7.41): Speaking to the amendment, I thank Mr Corbell for focusing on Civic, but I do not totally agree with the amendment. I note that the Greens will not be supporting the amendment. As to his first point, yes, we are well aware that ACTPLA requires as part of the statutory planning responsibilities proponents to submit a small business impact statement. Part of my motion is about the adequacy or otherwise, and I note that that is one of the as yet unresolved issues in the Greens-Labor agreement. I have argued in my motion that the current process is not adequate.

In paragraph (b) he notes that the QIC master plan is being reviewed, and I think this is good. I have been calling for it to be reviewed in the context of the current economic situation, not that of when it was developed in the order of 10 years ago. Paragraph (c) states that the ESD directorate maintains an inventory of current retail space in the ACT so as to assess supply and demand in the retail sector. I am glad to hear this. I am sure it is true. My point is not that it does not maintain it; my point is that it does not publish it. Particularly given that this government is making a point of open government, it would be useful to the business community if it did publish it.

Paragraph (d) is about the comprehensive programs to improve the amenity of Civic. I am very pleased that the government is working on improving the amenity of Civic. I just think more could be done. My colleague Mr Rattenbury talked about the commitment to the Civic cycle loop. We would really like to see an actual commitment, some work on the ground, some action rather than saying, “Yeah, it’s one of the priorities.

Paragraph (e) is the most ironic—the success of the government’s policies in encouraging higher levels of outdoor cafe activities in the city centre, particularly, I assume, the closed ones, like Red Herring, which I understand could not manage to get a licence, Pelagic and Della Piazza. I have some other things to say in closing, but as I—

Mr Hanson: Are you supporting the amendment?

MS LE COUTEUR: No, the Greens are not supporting the amendment. So this is just on the amendment, and I will close when appropriate, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr Corbell’s amendment negated.

MS LE COUTEUR (Molonglo) (7:44): In closing, I will echo some of my colleague Mr Rattenbury’s comments about the Leader of the Opposition’s comments. We are members of the Assembly and it is totally appropriate that we continue to move motions and use all our time as Assembly members. I am not quite sure what the

opposition thinks we should be doing. I cannot see why it is a mark of failure that there are still things to do in the Assembly. But I am probably on a different planet from the Liberal Party here.

Mr Seselja: We would all agree on that.

MS LE COUTEUR: That might be the one thing that we can all agree on! Mr Seselja spent a lot of time talking about the inadequacies of the Greens, and I will not go any further into those because I think his arguments were entirely spurious. But on the one area he talked about—outdoor cafes—unfortunately he got it wrong. It would appear that he probably has seen the fact that the Greens put in a submission on the outdoor cafe policy. The Greens are very concerned about outdoor cafes. We actually think they are a great thing, and we were concerned about some of the excessive red tape involved, particularly in terms of some of the visual appearance rules, which appeared to be simply a desire to kill creativity. We pointed out a number of cafes which, under these rules, probably could not operate. I am very pleased that these rules do not appear to be enforced, because some of these cafes are still operating. I largely agree with the comments that Mr Seselja made, attributed to Mrs Dunne, about some of the red tape around outdoor cafes.

We put a submission to the government in June last year on this subject. Unfortunately, Mr Seselja did not read our submission very well, or he would have understood what the Greens actually said about outdoor heaters. The Greens recommend that they should only be allowed in semi-enclosed spaces which have reflective surfaces on ceilings to ensure the best use of the heat produced. We note that outdoor heaters have already been completely banned by the European Commission. One solution may be that adopted by Tosolini's, which is to provide blankets for the customers wishing to sit outside. This has been a popular solution applied in many European cities also.

It may be that members of the opposition do not often go to cafes, particularly at night in winter, but if they do, they would notice that the cafe owners of Canberra are not stupid. The cafe owners of Canberra, where they are heating outside, have all done some degree of enclosing. Generally speaking, they have reflective roofs, because gas costs a lot of money and some of them also have considerable environmental concerns. The Liberal Party has misrepresented the Greens' views.

The other major problem that the Liberal and the Labor parties seem to have with my motion is that it is comprehensive. It is totally bizarre that the Liberal and Labor parties think it is a problem that I am trying not to have a one-line, simplistic solution to the issue, that it is just too much for them to deal with. We are professional legislators. Our job is to look at motions and be prepared to deal with a degree of complexity. I am not going for complexity for complexity's sake. This motion was an awful lot longer at the beginning. At one stage I said: "Look, I'm not going to bother with the speech. I'll just read out the motion. That will take the 15 minutes."

We cannot say that just because something takes a few lines means it is wrong. Civic is a complicated situation. As I have been saying to people, if there was a simple, one-line solution, I actually think the government would have done it. There is not a

simple, one-line solution. There are some significant issues around ownership, where Civic sits in the retail hierarchy, the amenity of Civic, the role of the Canberra Centre and giving a fair go to small businesses. Some of these issues I would have liked to have been better looked at in terms of the inquiry we have just established—the supermarket competition inquiry. My original terms of reference for that inquiry were a bit wider and would have covered more of these issues, because they are substantive issues.

They are issues which people are talking a lot about to the Greens, and me in particular. They are asking: “Why does Civic look like it is dying? Why is the Canberra Centre taking over Civic? What is wrong? Is this how we want our centre to be?” And they are saying, no, it is not. They are saying they want a fair go for small business. They are saying they want a vibrant, diverse Civic. They are saying they want Civic to be at the top of our retail hierarchy, the centre, the heart of Canberra and a heart with life, not what is happening at present where a significant part of it does not have life, where we have a dead heart.

I commend my motion to the Assembly, although I appreciate that, unfortunately, it will not be voted for.

Question put:

That **Ms Le Couteur’s** motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 3

Ms Hunter
Ms Le Couteur

Mr Rattenbury

Noes 11

Mr Barr
Dr Bourke
Ms Burch
Mr Coe
Mr Corbell
Mrs Dunne

Mr Hanson
Mr Hargreaves
Ms Porter
Mr Seselja
Mr Smyth

Question so resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Transport—Gungahlin

MR COE (Ginninderra) (7.54): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the transport infrastructure needs of Gungahlin have not been met, including inadequacies in:

- (i) parking;
 - (ii) roads;
 - (iii) traffic management;
 - (iv) arterial roads;
 - (v) public transport;
 - (vi) footpaths; and
 - (vii) bike paths; and
- (b) the following problems:
- (i) the congestion caused by car, pedestrians and bus traffic at Hibberson Street;
 - (ii) the major bus stops impede traffic and visibility at Hibberson Street;
 - (iii) the pedestrian crossings cause significant delays for car and bus traffic at Hibberson Street.
 - (iv) park and ride users are occupying prime private underground car parks built for retail shoppers; and
 - (v) a severe shortage of car spaces for businesses at Yerrabi; and
- (2) calls on the government to:
- (a) investigate alternative arrangements for bus traffic in the town centre;
 - (b) develop a plan to provide park and ride users with car parking away from prime retail parking;
 - (c) consider additional on-street car parking at Gungahlin Place; and
 - (d) provide additional car parking at Yerrabi.

Today I rise to speak about the need for infrastructure improvements in Gungahlin. For too long I believe Gungahlin residents have received a raw deal from ACT Labor. It seems that this government only pays attention to Canberra's fastest growing region in election years, and even then it is only lip-service.

Whilst this government has failed all Canberrans when it comes to managing and building infrastructure, it is especially apparent in Gungahlin with regard to roads and paths. It is extremely disappointing that in spite of the ability to carefully plan for the needs of up to 100,000 people in Gungahlin, this government has been playing catch-up with the needs for 10 years and there are few to no signs of any changes or improvements on the horizon.

Of course, the flagship disaster, the iconic failure, the headline waste of this government, has been the total mismanagement of the Gungahlin Drive extension. We know that the road was promised 10 years ago at a cost of \$53 million. Now, 10 years on, it is near completion at a cost of almost \$200 million. As I said in comments in the media last month, how can it be that the GDE took longer to construct than the span of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, Melbourne's CityLink or the M7 freeway?

Let us take a look at those comparisons. Sydney's Westlink M7 started in 2003 and finished in 2005; it was 40 kilometres long with 38 underpasses and overpasses. The GDE was nine kilometres. The Sydney Harbour Tunnel started in 1988 and finished in 1992. It was a distance of 2.8 kilometres, with a tunnel underneath Sydney Harbour. What about the span of the Sydney Harbour Bridge? It started in 1928 and finished in 1932—again, faster than the Gungahlin Drive extension. What about Melbourne CityLink? It started in 1996 and finished in 2000, with a distance of some 22 kilometres, much of it elevated. In the ACT, we have a road that took longer than each of those projects and is only nine kilometres long.

However, the problems with infrastructure extend far beyond the Gungahlin Drive extension. They extend to many transport issues in the town centre and elsewhere in Gungahlin. As I note in (1)(a) of the motion, the problems extend to parking, roads, traffic management, arterial roads, public transport, footpaths and bike paths. When it comes down to it, there is no part of Gungahlin transport infrastructure that this government has delivered or is delivering well. When we have a suburban area that is located on the city limits with no major employment, the transport links to other parts of the city and internally need to be able to cater for the high demand. Instead, the absolute opposite has occurred.

As I said in my maiden speech in December 2008 with regard to roads in our newer suburbs:

Furthermore; in our new suburbs, we have roads that are so narrow that they bear greater resemblance to an English country lane developed 500 years before the invention of the car than they do to roads that can have one car pass another without side-swiping the pedestrian on the footpath which was never built.

Early in 2009, one of the first letters I wrote to the government on behalf of the Gungahlin community was in response to representations from the business community of the Gungahlin town centre. The concerns they raised with me then centred on safety for both road users and pedestrians. One of their most significant concerns related to a lack of pedestrian crossings at the public library, the family and childcare centre, and Gungahlin Place West. They were also concerned about other poorly marked pedestrian crossings and a poorly placed pedestrian crossing outside the G. I am pleased to say that this letter did prompt some action, albeit very minor, and it did contain an acknowledgement from the former Chief Minister and Minister for Territory and Municipal Services that the current conditions did not factor in in the future growth of the town centre. Mr Stanhope said:

I anticipate that the number of pedestrians and vehicles will increase in the future as developments expand in Gungahlin. I have therefore asked Roads ACT to monitor this location and review these conditions when warranted.

What we have is another bandaid approach to a poorly delivered town centre by this ACT Labor government. They have ill thought out the infrastructure needs of this community.

In addition to this, the bus links are very poor. A couple of years ago, the government spoke of the Redex service as if it was the answer to all of Gungahlin's traffic problems, even if it was just a rebranded route 5 service. However, the government failed to develop a strategy for how people will get from the Gungahlin suburbs to the town centre to get on this so-called rapid express service.

On buses, my motion discusses the problems that occur at present with the bus stops located on Hibberson Street. The government needs to consider whether this road is the best place for all such traffic. It is already heavily congested, and plans to make it a shared place will create major safety issues and potentially bring the buses to a standstill, as it is currently constituted. In addition to this, when the buses are stopped or parked at the stop nearest to Gozzard Street they create a barrier for retail stores behind. This is not best practice, and given that retailers all across Canberra, but especially in Gungahlin, are already doing it tough they do not need further impediments to trade. In addition to this, I have concerns that the proposed bus shelter will also create a barrier for traders and the potential linking of retail space on either side of Hibberson Street. I am by no means against providing bus shelters; they simply have to be designed wisely and in the right location.

On 20 November 2009, I raised concerns about the potential for the Redex to be used as a park-and-ride facility without adequate parking. I said:

So it seems to me that we have got a park and ride but with no park, because the only parking spaces that are available in Gungahlin at the moment are pretty much in the G shopping centre or in the Marketplace shopping centre.

I went on to say:

Those people—

that is people who are using it as a park and ride—

might never spend a dollar at the Gungahlin Marketplace or at the G shopping centre, yet those businesses would be providing the parking—and they would be losing money because for the rest of the day all the parking spots right next to the door would be taken up by commuters. Park and ride is a good concept, but why should these businesses have to cop it?

Given the bus bunching, traffic, parking and safety concerns, the government should look at whether there are any other preferred options for bus traffic. It is yet another example of this government not considering the infrastructure needs of Gungahlin.

In 2008 when the ACT Labor government called for submissions and comments on the Gungahlin town centre planning study, the same issues that I am raising today in this motion were raised by many residents, business owners and other stakeholders. In fact, in the summary of submissions to that study, when it came to traffic and parking on Hibberson Street, we can see that the majority of comments centred on concerns of excessive traffic on Hibberson Street, arguments for diverted traffic arrangements on Hibberson Street, arguments for additional parking spaces in general, arguments for additional undercover parking spaces and an overall general unhappiness with existing parking arrangements.

Now we must remember that this was in 2008, when the population of Gungahlin was around 35,000, nearly 10,000 less than the approximately 45,000 residents who live there at the moment.

The Property Council response to the 2008 study identified issues such as the following:

There is also a need for a plan to resolve the traffic arrangements for the Town Centre.

And:

There is a need for the updated Structure Plan to resolve the future car parking and integrated transport needs for the Town Centre.

On the question of whether through-traffic should be inhibited on Hibberson Street, the Property Council had this to say:

Hibberson Street should be a slow speed, low traffic environment. Ernest Cavanagh, East Street and Flemington Road (within the town centre) should become low speed high traffic to provide access to the car parking that is available. The Valley and Anthony Rolfe Avenues should be higher speed routes to encourage the through traffic to use them.

When it came to the question of parking options, this is how the Property Council responded then:

It should be recognized that the appropriate combination of surface and basement parking will change over time. Areas of surface parking are appropriate while the town centre is being established and the land is available. More than one level of basement parking will not be economic in the short term.

I do not necessarily agree with all those comments of the Property Council, but it certainly is evident that the government have been receiving ideas from many people for a long time. Yet they are simply not taking these ideas on board.

In addition to that, we must remember that all those were in 2008. These issues were well and truly out in the open, with three years for this government to do something, three years to address issues that not only were visible then but were obviously only going to get worse—much, much worse—in the years to come.

The Gungahlin Community Council have, for many years, raised their concerns about the inadequacies in road, parking and transport infrastructure in and around Gungahlin town centre and Yerrabi. The council has also given a voice to residents, conducted numerous forums and navigated as best they could through the maze of countless government studies and proposals regarding traffic and parking in the town centre.

Further to all these issues, the saga about employment opportunities has been dragging on for way too long. The Canberra Liberals think that Gungahlin needs more employment at the town centre and it is disappointing that the government is so unwilling to push this issue along. At the time of the 2008 town centre planning study, this issue of increasing employment opportunities at Gungahlin town centre was at the forefront of items on the residents' wish list, yet we have seen very little from this government in response.

My motion also talks about the chronic shortage of car parking at Yerrabi. This part of the Gungahlin district is a prime location for boutique or specialised businesses, yet trade there is hampered by a lack of parking. The area also features considerable medium-density housing, but the housing does not have adequate parking, nor is there a reasonable bus service for the residents.

I think we need to give those who take business risks in Canberra every chance for success by not restricting their growth by a lack of infrastructure which could reasonably be expected. Yerrabi needs more parking, and I hope the government is able to look at ways of constructing more parks, perhaps through on-street parallel or angle parking.

In conclusion, I would urge the government to take heed of this motion and stop just paying lip-service to the population of Gungahlin. I ask the government to investigate alternative arrangements for bus traffic in the town centre; develop a plan to provide park-and-ride users with car parking away from prime retail parking; consider additional on-street car parking at Gungahlin Place; and provide additional car parking at Yerrabi.

I urge all members to stand up for the Gungahlin residents left behind by this government.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (8.05): The government has been working actively to further improve transport options for Gungahlin residents, particularly around the Gungahlin town centre. Public transport improvements at Gungahlin town centre are important to support the growth and economic vitality of Gungahlin. A feasibility study is currently nearing completion to upgrade the bus stations in Gungahlin town centre and to improve transport flow, access and amenity in the town centre.

Community input, along with technical studies, has been used to develop options to be considered for improvement. Options for bus stops that provide more effective

coverage for passengers in bus terminal facilities were on display for public comment in August 2011. Feedback from the public and from businesses is currently being considered to finalise the arrangements for public transport within the Gungahlin town centre. The government has already provided funding to construct improved public transport facilities, including better bus stations, in the 2011-12 financial year. The information on this project is provided on the Transport for Canberra website and I would draw Mr Coe's attention to it. This will be further updated once the feasibility is completed later in 2011.

Mr Coe raised in his motion the issue of park and ride. The draft transport for Canberra policy which was released earlier this month includes a proposed park-and-ride policy. This policy focuses on locating new park-and-ride facilities on Rapid transport corridors, like the Red and Blue Rapid routes, but away from town centres and areas where park and ride may compete with the short-stay parking needs of local businesses. It is, of course, important for them to provide facilities for their customers. The government has already committed \$4.2 million in previous budgets to expand the network of park-and-ride facilities across the city.

A study was conducted in 2010-11 which found that sites at Well Station Drive-Flemington Road and Flemington Road near Exhibition Park would be the most suitable and viable locations for park-and-ride facilities for Gungahlin residents. The EPIC park and ride is now under construction and is expected to be completed in December this year. These park and rides will become even more important as the government considers further strengthening rapid transit options through its current investigation of light rail and bus rapid transit options between Gungahlin town centre and the city.

Turning to the issue of managing parking at the town centre, parking management within the town centre needs to be consistent with the ACT's draft transport strategy, which focuses on managing parking demand rather than the old style of predict and provide on the assumption that most trips will be by car. For an active, vibrant town centre, spaces need to be created for people to shop and move around. This is one of the most important principles behind the design of the Gungahlin town centre and its master plan, which was created in consultation with the community and local businesses.

Short-stay on-street parking may still be required for specific businesses such as the medical centre. However, the traffic planning for Gungahlin and the principle of places for people means that retail parking will increasingly be provided as off-street facilities in the town centre. Indeed, that has been the direction of the town centre as it has gone through its various stages of development. The government will manage the premium nature of on-street spaces of the town centre and prioritise them for taxis, loading zones, disabled parking and short-stay parking.

To further manage the parking needs of the town centre, draft variations to the territory plan DV 300 identified four sites in the north-west, north-east and south of the town centre where temporary parking could be provided. Two of these sites, south of the existing retail developments on Hibberson Street in the town centre, are located either side of Gungahlin Place and are within comfortable walking distance of the

retail and other facilities in the town centre. The draft variation to the territory plan DV 300 incorporated the feedback from public consultation. In order to meet the current parking needs, the Economic Development Directorate provided additional temporary parking on another site east of the retail developments in the town centre.

Mr Coe raises the issue of parking demand at Yerrabi in his motion. In response to this, the management of parking is an important consideration in local centres such as Yerrabi. While parking demand in the vicinity of the Yerrabi centre is high, there are generally parking spaces available within the distances set out in the parking and vehicular access general code under the territory plan. Part of the parking demand management approach envisaged in *Transport for Canberra* means changing our attitudes about how far away our destination will be to where we are able to park and looking at a reasonable walking distance from centres depending on the best and highest value use of land.

The parking code allows for short-stay parking for visitors and customers to be made available within 100 metres of a site and, for employees and business owners, long-stay parking should be provided up to 200 metres from a site. Based on assessments to date, there is generally sufficient parking within those distances to meet parking demand at Yerrabi. However, the government would be happy to work further with local businesses experiencing any problems with parking availability for their customers to identify any other further solutions.

As you can see, Mr Speaker, the government is undertaking a comprehensive approach to addressing the issues raised in Mr Coe's motion. The government has invested in transport for Gungahlin, including services like the introduction of Red Rapid buses, the temporary parking I have already noted at the town centre and the overall Gungahlin master plan approach, including our planning and consultation on future public transport facilities. These studies are close to completion and we will soon commence construction to improve the amenity, people-friendly nature and transport and community functions of the Gungahlin town centre. The government is committed to investing in our communities through revitalising town centres like Gungahlin and will continue to put our planning studies into action by delivering high quality, people-focused transport projects for Gungahlin.

Given the comments I have made and the fact that I have been able to demonstrate the government's comprehensive response to the issues raised by Mr Coe in his motion, I have prepared an amendment that reflects my comments. I now move the amendment circulated in my name:

Omit all words after "That this Assembly", substitute:

"(1) notes:

- (a) that a feasibility study, which has had community input, to upgrade the bus stations in the Gungahlin Town Centre and to improve transport flow, access and amenity in the Town Centre is nearing completion;
- (b) that the Government has, as detailed in *Transport for Canberra*, already provided funding to construct the improved public transport facilities, including better bus stations;

(c) that:

- (i) the *Transport for Canberra* strategy focuses on locating new park and ride facilities on Rapid (bus) transport corridors (such as the Red and Blue Rapid), away from town centres and areas where park and ride may compete with the short stay parking needs of local businesses; and;
 - (ii) the Government's park and ride study in 2010-2011 found that sites at Well Station Drive/Flemington Road and Flemington Road near Exhibition Park would be viable locations for park and ride facilities for Gungahlin residents, and the EPIC park and ride will be completed by December this year; and
- (d) that the management of parking is an important consideration in local centres, such as Yerrabi, and that the Government would be happy to work with any businesses experiencing problems with parking availability for customers.”.

MS LE COUTEUR (Molonglo) (8.12): I foreshadow that I will also be moving an amendment. My amendment does not amend Mr Corbell's, so I will not move it at this point. I guess you could say that Mr Corbell's amendment is reasonable but inadequate. What Mr Corbell is saying is that, in his opinion, the government is doing a good job and nothing more needs to be done in Gungahlin. I would agree with Mr Coe that that is not the case. There are inadequacies in Gungahlin and more needs to be done. There are many improvements needed in Gungahlin as far as transport infrastructure is concerned.

As Mr Coe mentioned, probably the most major improvement required in Gungahlin is in the employment infrastructure. It has been a failure from a federal point of view under both Liberal and Labor governments. Gungahlin desperately needs a decent size government department out there to provide employment growth. Had that happened then a lot of the transport issues in Gungahlin would not exist because people would be located fairly close to their place of work. That is a major failure of planning in Canberra. I am pleased to see in this regard that the government has recently decided to put 500 ACT public servants out there. I regret that it took quite a few years—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MS LE COUTEUR: It has not yet happened, but they have at least said they are going to. What I do regret is that it took quite a few years of Mr Stanhope being asked question after question and him saying that, no, he would not do it. Finally, the government has decided to do that.

Another issue in Gungahlin is the transport of electrons. I am talking here about broadband. This is an area which, again, hopefully will be fixed shortly with the NBN, but it has not been fixed as yet. It is particularly frustrating for those people who moved out to the first suburbs of Gungahlin. I can remember the ads. It was going to be the town of the future. It was going to be the best connected part of Canberra. Those people must feel so frustrated.

I cannot really agree with Mr Corbell's motion that basically everything is fine. I do not disagree with him that there has been a feasibility study which has had community input. This is good. In transport for Canberra, the government has provided some funding to improve public transport facilities and better bus stations.

Mr Coe talks about rapid transport. That is something the Greens are particularly pleased about. The Redex, which is now the 200 from Gungahlin out to Fyshwick—it is actually a bus I catch fairly often—is one of the things which Ms Bresnan in particular has worked very hard to achieve. It was part of the Greens-Labor agreement to have better bus transport and we are very pleased with that.

Another thing that Mr Corbell mentions as an achievement is also the result of the Labor-Greens agreement, and that is the park and ride at EPIC. This should be finished soon and should make life considerably easier for Gungahlin residents who will be able to drive a comparatively short distance to the park and ride and then catch a bus.

The next thing that is needed is for Northbourne Avenue to be fixed so that there is some bus priority. I very much look forward to the government finally releasing the Northbourne Avenue study. I must say that I am very frustrated by this, particularly as the SMEC study in 2005 or 2006 which went through the various options for fixing the problems in Northbourne Avenue does, in fact, have light rail as part of its preferred outcome. Why we could not have done that five or six years ago is beyond me.

On Yerrabi, the last point, I understand that the government, in the guise of Tony Gill, is already working on doing something about fixing that by turning the central median part of Nellie Hamilton into a surface car park. That is, I understand, happening. I have more to say but I will say it, hopefully, when we are speaking to my amendment.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (8.17): It would be no surprise to members of the Assembly that the Canberra Liberals will not be supporting Mr Corbell's amendment. Mr Corbell's amendment I think is delusional at best, or really quite disingenuous to the 45,000 people in Gungahlin who get such a raw deal under this government. To that end, the Canberra Liberals will not be supporting the amendment.

MR HANSON (Molonglo) (8.18): I rise tonight in support of my Canberra Liberals colleague Alistair Coe and I commend him for bringing this motion before the Assembly to highlight the poor planning and foresight this Labor government has given to the development of Gungahlin.

Mr Coe has been very active in Gungahlin. It is great to see that parts of the electorate of Molonglo which will be moving to Ginninderra will lose nothing in their representation in this place by virtue of the fact that it is a smaller electorate. I know that concerns are raised from time to time about Gungahlin, that given the size of the electorate sometimes they miss out, but those people in Crace, Palmerston and Nicholls will certainly be well represented by Mr Coe.

Gungahlin is one of the fastest growing areas in Canberra. In the last eight years, over half the land in this town centre has been developed or is committed to being developed. In the Gungahlin suburb of Nicholls the population is growing at a rate of 10 per cent a year, an extraordinary growth rate, and this government has failed to plan for it. Forty-five thousand people now live in Gungahlin, a significant proportion of the Canberra population. But the Labor government has given scant regard to the liveability of the area.

Gungahlin is an area of families. The average household has three members and we know that for many young families the area presents the opportunity, as hard as it is in the current climate, to join the property market. However, whilst this may be where they can afford to buy, the ability to carve out a sustainable lifestyle in the area is difficult. It is well documented that there is a lack of government workplaces in the Gungahlin area, a point made by Ms Le Couteur. In a city such as Canberra, where the public service is a large employer, the oversight in not ensuring that there is a sustained public service in that area is yet another example of the Labor government failing to address the real issues for Canberra families.

The ACT government argue that they are doing what they can, that they put money in the last budget for a feasibility study. But the government have already undertaken a study with Ernest & Young on this issue, so why are we having another study? Once again the government would rather talk about it than take any action.

There is a lack of foresight in the majority of actions that this government takes in regard to Gungahlin. You only need to listen to the morning radio shows to know that congestion on Horse Park Drive is an ongoing issue, and the Amaroo group centre will shortly be developed to further add congestion on that road.

Let us go back to the familiar issue for a moment. Let us revisit the Gungahlin Drive extension—a road that took longer to build than the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Mr Coe has given some fine examples of comparisons between the GDE and other major infrastructure programs. It is another example of where the government decided to keep putting pressure on an already congested road but failed to address the expanding capacity.

It was only after a promise made by the Canberra Liberals at the last election—we well remember ACT Labor stealing that project, stealing the election promise in a most deceitful way—and the continued pressure by the Liberals that this road was even duplicated. Countless years have been spent by the Canberra Liberals on trying to get the government to finish the road, but bungle after mistake after mishap have come, and still the commuters from Gungahlin struggle to get out of the slow lane and make it in to work in a timely manner.

The government then had the audacity to advertise that they were opening the road early. Even the most illogical person could not rationalise how a road that was so late could be opened a couple of months early. Even Simon Corbell's maths cannot imagine that that is correct. It is no wonder that the government cannot balance their budget. It reminds me of the opening of the Alexander Maconochie Centre. That

example, as well as the spin that they are trying to put on the GDE, is why the people of Canberra, particularly people up in Gungahlin, have very little faith in anything said by this government, and in particular by Simon Corbell, when it comes to finishing dates for projects.

The government argues that we should not be caring about cars anyway, that it is pushing us towards public transport. If only this public transport talk was supported by actions. Complaints about the public transport system from Gungahlin to other town centres are numerous. The services are infrequent; that is, if they turn up. Multiple services depart from the same area within minutes of each other and then commuters are faced with hour-long waits for the next service. Many of the services that go along Horse Park Drive are congested so that commuters face uncomfortable rides or are not able to board the bus at all. The plan for buses to travel through the town centre is poorly thought out, with buses building up during peak times and causing traffic congestion for other users and safety issues for pedestrians.

The issue of the town centre is an important one for Gungahlin residents. An online poll conducted by Gungahlin.net shows that 4,000 people cared enough to vote on whether Hibberson Street should be closed to traffic. From my many hours spent standing outside the Gungahlin Marketplace talking to constituents, I know that the local residents want to support their local businesses. However, it is difficult for them to do so when traffic congestion and problems with parking mean that it can take more time and be more inconvenient to visit their local town centre than to travel to the nearby Belconnen shopping centre.

In January this year the *Canberra Times* highlighted a 1973 project undertaken by the Australian National University. This project, which engaged young people in a think-in to develop ideas on what an ideal town centre would look like, created the concept of a utopia to be called Gungahlin. This idea looked at the issues of childcare, public transport, building a community and building a society that embraced our senior citizens. One of the young students in this group later became a town planner and now lives in Gungahlin. The *Canberra Times* had this to say about his experience:

... he now lives in Gungahlin and says that he is consistently disappointed with the way it turned out, confronted as he is every day by what he sees as the abandonment of sound planning principles.

He goes on to detail exactly what he feels is lacking:

He points out that many of the houses face the wrong way, the street names are not legible from a distance, and many of the streetscapes lack the definition of trees above the roofline. Could this be considered a 'utopia' for today's Canberra residents? Some would say no.

Ed Wensing, the planner quoted in this article, makes simple suggestions to improve the visible make-up of the area and also enhance the community spirit. However, this government has lacked the foresight and planning to see that small details can have a large impact on the sense of community and liveability of such an area.

The government may argue that they are supporting local Gungahlin residents through the provision of community facilities. After all, planning is underway on a 50-metre

pool. In the lead-up to the 2008 election the Labor government promised a \$20 million aquatic centre for Gungahlin. Unsurprisingly, the people of Gungahlin continue to wait for this pool that they were promised, and only late last year they learnt that they may still get a pool but certainly not the one they were promised. The government tried to tell the young families of Gungahlin for whom swimming lessons for their children was a vital issue that they did not need a 50-metre pool. But the Canberra Liberals did not agree, and after passionate lobbying by Gungahlin residents and a Liberals' motion in the Assembly, which I note was not supported by either of the other parties, the government were forced to back down. The Gungahlin residents have now been told that they will receive a 50-metre pool after all. However, given this government's record on actually completing infrastructure projects, the residents should not be holding their breath that it will happen any time soon.

The sentiment of the Gungahlin residents can be best summed up in an email that was sent to Minister Barr in October 2010. A copy was provided to us and it states:

People living in Gungahlin have no high speed broadband, the roads are narrow, digging up trees to expand the road is routine business. There is no strategy in place to accommodate the expansion of the population. Gungahlin is an excellent example to demonstrate the lack of planning by the current Government, ranging from the infrastructure to the telecommunications to the swimming pool.

I am extremely disappointed at the Labor Government's performance in this area, I don't think you deserve another chance.

I commend Alistair Coe for bringing this issue to the Assembly. It is high time that this government took action on Gungahlin.

Question put:

That **Mr Corbell's** amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 6

Noes 8

Mr Barr
Dr Bourke
Ms Burch
Mr Corbell

Mr Hargreaves
Ms Porter

Mr Coe
Mr Doszpot
Mrs Dunne
Ms Hunter

Ms Le Couteur
Mr Rattenbury
Mr Seselja
Mr Smyth

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

MS LE COUTEUR (Molonglo) (8.30): I seek leave to move my amendment, which is in three parts.

Leave granted.

MS LE COUTEUR: I move:

(1) Insert new subparagraph (1)(b)(vi):

“(vi) difficulty and danger for pedestrians and cyclists using Hibberson Street;”.

(2) Omit subparagraph (2)(b), substitute:

“(b) investigate developing a plan to provide park and ride users with car parking away from prime retail parking;”.

(3) Omit subparagraph (2)(d), substitute:

“(d) consider additional car parking at Yerrabi;”.

(4) Add:

“(e) investigate opportunities to divert through-traffic from Hibberson Street and to convert the street into ‘shared space’, and report to the Assembly on this by 6 December 2012.”.

My amendment seeks to make a few small changes to Mr Coe’s motion—I think some small improvements—and I will speak to both my amendment and Mr Coe’s substantive motion at the same time because, as I said, the changes, while important, are not overwhelming.

As we mentioned at the beginning, Gungahlin certainly has quite a number of transport infrastructure needs which have not yet been met. I am not going to go through all of these in detail, because Mr Coe and Mr Hanson have done that at some length, but, as I have said before, employment is the number one thing lacking, and the lack of employment has caused a lot of the transport issues.

Public transport is a particular concern of the Greens. Earlier I did mention how the Greens have achieved what was the Redex, which is now the 200 bus, and very soon we will have a park and ride at EPIC. These have been achieved as part of the Labor-Greens agreement. We do not think, of course, that that is enough in terms of public transport for Gungahlin. What we would like to see is light rail going from Civic all the way out to Gungahlin. In remembering the history of the GDE, as part of that history we should remember the original proposals to put light rail out to Gungahlin. If that planning had happened, it would have solved a lot of the problems Gungahlin has now.

I also note that this motion includes footpaths and bike paths, and I think it is very unfortunate that I have to agree with Mr Coe that we do not have as many footpaths and bike paths as we could have in some parts of Gungahlin. Some of the older parts of Gungahlin have footpaths in very poor condition. As someone who does a bit of letterboxing at times, I have walked a number of footpaths in Gungahlin. And Gungahlin is certainly an area that needs more bike paths. Given the increases in

petrol prices, given our need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it is crazy to develop a new area of Canberra without sufficient footpaths and bike paths.

In paragraph (1)(b) of Mr Coe's motion he talks about the congestion and issues with Hibberson Street. Hibberson Street is clearly a major issue. I remember that in the 2008 election a Labor candidate whose name I cannot remember—I do very much apologise for that—was there every Saturday. She had a petition for people to sign, basically to do something about Hibberson Street. Everyone who went past signed her petition. Clearly, given the votes, they did not vote for her, but the people of Gungahlin are very clear that Hibberson Street is an issue.

I would like to be clear that what I am saying is that there is an issue in Hibberson Street. I am not agreeing with Mr Coe that all of these things are problems. The pedestrian crossings do cause significant delays for car and bus traffic on Hibberson Street; however, I do not think that is necessarily a problem. In fact, the pedestrian crossings are probably the things that slow the cars down enough so that Hibberson Street has a degree of safety. Without them, whatever you may feel about pedestrian crossings, there would be a lot more accidents in Hibberson Street.

In terms of the major bus stops impeding traffic and visibility at Hibberson Street, the government needs to do a lot more long-term thinking about how we do our bus transport in Hibberson Street. It is an issue of degree rather than an absolute issue. There is an amount of bus traffic which is simply too much for a retail precinct and there is an amount which is not. You could say “unfortunately” from a public transport point of view, but at present the amount of bus traffic in Hibberson Street is not the major issue for Hibberson Street. I will talk more about the major issues for Hibberson Street in point (e) at the end of my amendments, so I will just park that one for a minute.

The park-and-ride users are occupying prime private underground car parks built for retail shoppers. This is an issue. However, it is not something that the government needs to solve. The solution to that is in the hands of private enterprise.

I will continue in order. One of my amendments is to add in “difficulty and danger for pedestrians and cyclists using Hibberson Street”. When crossing Hibberson Street, even on the pedestrian crossing, you sometimes feel that you are taking your life into your hands because there is just so much traffic there. And the cyclists—the only way they survive is because there are so many pedestrian crossings slowing things down. This is a longstanding issue.

So in terms of calling upon the government, I totally agree with Mr Coe that we need to investigate alternative arrangements for bus traffic in the town centre. I do not think the current level of bus traffic is enough to be causing a significant problem, but I sincerely hope—I do more than hope—that there will be more bus traffic in the town centre. Given that this is going to happen, we need to look at whether Hibberson Street is the best place in the long term, particularly given that there needs to be a bus interchange.

Presumably we are going to have express buses—or potentially, in the future, light rail—coming into Gungahlin town centre and then a network of suburban buses going

out. We need to look at where there is going to be enough space for that, whether it be Anthony Rolfe or Ernest Cavanagh Street. I know that Mr Corbell raised in his amendment the point that the government is nearing completion of the feasibility study on this, and this is a good thing.

I am glad to see that the government is going to be doing what this motion is calling upon it to do. But there is more to consider, not just bus stations. And light rail is a significant one. If light rail went down Hibberson Street, this would alleviate the problems which some people are seeing from having public transport in Hibberson Street, but it would still mean that we would need a position for an interchange. It would be an interchange where people swapped between light rail and suburban buses. I think that light rail can coexist very well with a shared zone in Hibberson Street, and I would like to commend light rail very much as the solution.

The suggestion to investigate a plan to provide park-and-ride users with car parking away from prime retail parking is certainly worth investigating. Clearly the park and ride will be happening soon. This is something also that the private owners of the prime retail parking need to look at. They can institute timed parking if they wish to; it is well within their bailiwick. They can very cheaply say that you can only park, say, for a maximum of three or four hours. That would not impact on shoppers, but it would impact on all-day parkers.

The next thing was to consider additional on-street car parking at Gungahlin Place. While I am happy for the government to consider this, I would like to put on the record that I have some issues with building more on-street parking in Gungahlin Place. Where are the car parks going to go? Is it going to make Gungahlin Place something attractive and useable, which is something the Gungahlin council has been looking for? It could be an extension of the shared zone, but we need to look at whether this is a good idea. I am not confident that it is. As I said with the additional car parking at Yerrabi, my understanding is that the government is already working on this.

In the few seconds I have left, I will talk about my last amendment:

... investigate opportunities to divert through-traffic from Hibberson Street and to convert the street into 'shared space', and report to the Assembly on this by 6 December 2012 ...

The Gungahlin Community Council has been talking about this for years. What we need to do is not simply put up signs about 40 kilometres; we need to actually construct the roads so that traffic does not go through Hibberson Street but is diverted around. This will produce a great shared space. This is what is needed to really lift Gungahlin town centre. Hopefully, it will be addressed as part of the draft territory plan variation.

MR SESELJA (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (8.41): I do thank Mr Coe for bringing this forward. I think it is an excellent example of the hard work that Mr Coe does in his electorate in understanding the needs of his electorate and it is part of the Canberra Liberals' commitment to ensuring that the government focuses on the things

that it needs to be focusing on—that is, the delivery of local services and local infrastructure. That is very much what this motion is about. It is about saying to the government, to the Assembly and to the community that we value those local services and local infrastructure, in this case, particularly for the people of Gungahlin.

If we look at the first part of the motion, there is no doubt that the transport infrastructure needs of Gungahlin have not been met. We could look at any number of areas. We have said a lot about the way the people of Gungahlin have been treated by the Labor government over 10 years, particularly with things like the GDE. Going back before that to earlier Labor governments, I think the people of Gungahlin have always been treated as a bit of an experiment where the government, the Labor Party, seems to think that they can deliver them substandard services and substandard infrastructure. That has unfortunately been the pattern that has been experienced by the people of Gungahlin. When it comes to these issues of parking, roads, traffic management, arterial roads, public transport, footpaths and bike paths, there has not been the kind of investment that we would want to see and the people of Gungahlin have been let down.

In relation to some of the problems that have been identified, I think Mr Coe has covered them fairly well, but I think that this is a positive motion which, whilst highlighting those failures, sets out where some of those basic, local priorities for the people of Gungahlin should be. And the Canberra Liberals are committed to these.

Looking at alternative arrangements for bus traffic in the town centre, a plan to provide park-and-ride users with car parking away from prime retail parking is important. It is important that we balance the needs of commuters and traders and I think that is what this part of the motion seeks to do.

Additional on-street car parking at Gungahlin Place, I think, is a very sensible measure. If you talk to the businesses at Gungahlin, they will tell you that it is very hard to get some of that short-term, on-street car parking. It fills up very quickly and it is difficult to find. There is not enough of it. So I think that would be a positive for the area, as would providing additional car parking at Yerrabi.

I note that the Greens are amending it somewhat. I think that some of the amendments are not improvements, but I think the Canberra Liberals are prepared to live with those amendments. I think the government should be looking at providing additional car parking at Yerrabi. I do not know that there is a great need to further consider the matter, but sometimes in order to get most of a good motion up, some allowances need to be made.

In conclusion, the Canberra Liberals remain committed to better outcomes for all Canberrans in their local areas. The people of Gungahlin, I think, are a part of the ACT that has not been well served. They deserve better than what they are getting. The Canberra Liberals are committed to providing that. We will work very hard in opposition and we look forward to the opportunity to hopefully work very hard in government to deliver on the real priorities and the real needs of the people of Gungahlin.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (8.45): I think the government's ongoing concern with this motion is that it fails to recognise the very significant work the government has been undertaking and continues to undertake in the delivery of additional transport services and transport infrastructure to improve support to the people of Gungahlin. And that investment is a significant one. Whether it is investment in more rapid transit bus services, whether it is in the development and construction now underway of park-and-ride facilities, whether it is the very extensive consultation and assessment studies that are close to finalisation in relation to the new bus station facilities at Gungahlin, whether it is the additional parking that has already been provided at the Gungahlin town centre, whether it is the investment in park and ride and in bike-and-ride facilities, the government has been investing significantly in transport infrastructure for the Gungahlin region. There is no doubt about that whatsoever.

The government always accepts that there is always more that can be done, but our concern with the approach being adopted by the Greens and by the Liberal Party is that there is no preparedness to recognise the work that has been done in relation to the delivery of transport infrastructure, in particular public transport and infrastructure and infrastructure in relation to car parking.

The government does not have any particular objection to the proposal put forward by Ms Le Couteur, except that it fails to recognise—and Ms Le Couteur has already rejected the government's amendment which seeks to recognise—the work that we are doing in the Gungahlin town centre. So the government will not be objecting to this amendment, but I think it is important to put on the record again the very significant investment the government is undertaking in the Gungahlin town centre, because these things should be recognised in the record of this debate and it should be recognised that the Labor government has made significant investments in improving public transport and other transport infrastructure in Gungahlin.

Public transport infrastructure improvements include the close-to-completed feasibility study on the upgrade of bus stations in the Gungahlin town centre, community input along with technical studies that have been used to develop these options for consideration and the fact that we undertook consultation directly with the community in August this year. The government has already provided funding to construct these improved public transport facilities in the 2011-12 financial year.

In relation to park and ride, the government has already completed detailed analysis of options for park and ride in Gungahlin and is already constructing a park-and-ride facility on Flemington Road near Exhibition Park in Canberra.

The government has provided additional parking within the Gungahlin town centre. The government has provided two sites south of the existing retail developments on Hibberson Street in the town centre which are located on either side of Gungahlin Place and are within comfortable walking distance of the retail and other facilities in the town centre. The government has also provided temporary car parking on another site east of the retail developments in the town centre.

In relation to car parking at Yerrabi, the government has already indicated that whilst the requirements for car parking at Yerrabi appear to be consistent with the parking code, the government is happy to work further with local businesses who may be experiencing problems with parking availability for their customers. I already stated that in my earlier speech.

The government of course has put in place improvements in bus services, including the Red Rapid service, which is one of the busiest public transport corridors and services in the city.

So I think it is more what the amendments from the Liberals and the Greens fail to mention which is of concern to the government rather than what they do mention and it is important that the government's activities are put on the public record so that members of the public understand fully the work the government has undertaken and continues to undertake to improve transport infrastructure in the Gungahlin region.

MR DOSZPOT (Brindabella) (8.49): It gives me great pleasure to speak on this motion, and I note that it is a fairly consistent theme that we are debating in this chamber today. Earlier today the Liberals raised the issue of poor planning, lack of consultation and ignoring the views and opinions of local residents in the Tuggeranong area. And without any surprise, despite all the rhetoric and photo opportunities that Ms Bresnan has had in respect of Calwell, she had no hesitation in siding with the government to vote against the wishes of her own constituents.

This afternoon we move north and we are debating similar issues replicated in Gungahlin. Mr Coe has already outlined very eloquently and precisely the issues that impact significantly on his constituents. Gungahlin town centre is, by any measure, a great place to live around and to shop at. It has a number of new developments and is expanding at a great rate. In fact, it has a good combination of specialist and chain store businesses. My staff tell me Canberra's best hummus and fresh Turkish bread can be purchased there, and the area is increasingly becoming home to more and more Canberra families and singles.

The new Gungahlin college is very impressive by any standards, and of course we all hope we do not have to wait another decade for the leisure centre to be delivered to enhance the living experience of the residents.

But already Gungahlin is being choked by its own success. As Mr Coe's motion highlights, there are problems with roads, parking, traffic management. Simply put, there is a lack of transport infrastructure planning, a common theme all over Canberra after 10 years of hard Labor.

I am sure when the town planners first developed the area, it was sensible to have everyone and everything going down Hibberson Street, the main thoroughfare. There was not much else there to start with. However, with the expansion of shops and shopping malls down both sides, a myriad of on-street, short-term and business parking, bus stops, with more bus routes planned, and pedestrian crossings, is it any wonder that traffic is a nightmare during peak shopping periods and weekends and increasingly in between times too?

The businesses that have outdoor seating must also worry as to the ambience of the Hibberson streetscape. One has to wonder how this government plans development in our city.

We currently have a transport planning exhibition in the Assembly first floor reception area. One of the brochures on transport and mobility says:

People value that Canberra is easy to get around and want to keep this in the future.

It goes on to say:

Transport planning has to be well integrated with land use planning.

Put that with the Gungahlin town centre planning report published in November 2010, which also highlights the need for traffic planning, particularly in improving the way traffic and shoppers mix on Hibberson Street, and you wonder why it is not happening and why it did not happen when Gungahlin was first planned. It was, after all, designed to cater for 100,000 people; yet it is choking at 45,000.

But then I note that the last full review of traffic planning of the Gungahlin town centre was in the 1990s. Is it any wonder, then, that we have the problems today, to the extent we have? It seems to be a policy of "Let us wait and see how critical things get before we call for a review or another plan". An ACTPLA Gungahlin planning study in 2008 also highlighted a number of shortcomings. That was three years ago, Mr Corbell.

Close to the Gungahlin town centre is another serious transport traffic issue that I would like to highlight, and it is one that is getting worse and appears to be without solution. Again, it is perhaps a case of too little vision, too little planning, and all too late. I refer to traffic issues at the Valley campus of the Burgmann Anglican school. There has been a considerable amount of media on this issue, and the school principal, Steven Bowers, is on record as saying that children attending the school are at serious risk of being hit by a car. There is always an accident waiting to happen. The school is located on the corner of The Valley Avenue and Gungahlin Drive, two very busy roads.

Put into that picture parents dropping children off at school and you know you have a problem. Anyone who has been tasked with collecting a child from school will know it is a nightmare and frankly brings out the very worst in most drivers. Congestion cannot be avoided. But throw into the mix commercial traffic accessing an industrial area like Mitchell and it is chaos. Not only is there heavy traffic due to growth in the area as a result of the increase in student numbers, a 50-space car park across the road from the school is soon to be closed. When the school started in 1999 it had 24 students. It has now grown to 1,000 students.

The government has spent money on installing traffic lights. ACTPLA has approved a 13-space car park near the scout hall but longer term I trust there are better traffic solutions in hand. However, given what I have heard today, given this government's

propensity to run the review, produce the brochure and think that their job is done, I am not confident an early solution is likely. I would urge the government to do more than just produce the paper and run consultation. Start thinking of what Canberra may need in the future, in 20 or 30 years time, not just next week, not just next election. We will need transport, public and private, and we must avoid the congestion and lack of planning that is the hallmark of our early colonial, settled cities. We have no excuse for such poor planning. I therefore commend Mr Coe's motion to the Assembly this evening.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (8.55): The Canberra Liberals will be supporting Ms Le Couteur's amendments. As Mr Seselja said, we do have some slight concerns with the amendments but by and large we do not think they change the substantive nature of the motion, which is of course that the residents of Gungahlin have drawn a short straw when it comes to infrastructure delivery by this ACT Labor government.

I would like to flag that whilst the shared space on Hibberson Street does have some potential and it is certainly worth investigating that option, we do have some other concerns about that. It is not to say that they cannot be overcome but we do need to have a discussion about whether that is the best way forward. I think what is absolutely vital is that we do keep the vehicular traffic going down Hibberson Street. I think we need that for the traders, we need that for the shoppers, we need that for the security and passive surveillance that it does provide. So whatever happens, I would be very disappointed if I saw that Hibberson Street was actually cut off to road traffic.

I do not necessarily think that the insertion of the word "consider" with regard to additional car parking at Yerrabi is warranted but, again, it by no means changes the substantive nature of the motion.

I thank the crossbench for their support of my motion. I am disappointed that the ACT Labor government still have their head in the sand when it comes to the 45,000 residents who get a raw deal from this government and I hope that this motion passing the Assembly today will give a clear message to the ACT government that they have been substandard with their delivery of infrastructure. They need to pick up their game.

Amendments agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Belconnen Salvation Army Fusion Canberra

MR COE (Ginninderra) (8.58): This evening I would like to acknowledge the organisers of the Belconnen Salvation Army annual spring fair that was held on

Saturday, 22 October. The corps officers at the Belconnen Salvation Army have worked tirelessly to ensure that the day was a great success. I know that envoys Roz Edwards and Angela Czoban would like me to acknowledge the generosity of a number of ACT businesses and individuals whose contribution has greatly enhanced the ability of the Belconnen Salvos to continue their work and ministry in the Belconnen community. In addition to church services, the Belconnen Salvation Army provides an extensive range of recreational and support activities for all age groups. The organisation and in particular Belconnen Salvation Army certainly punch well above their weight.

I would like to acknowledge the following for their contribution and generosity at Saturday's spring fair: the RAAF hot air balloon; ACT Policing for the appearance of Kenny Koala, who is always a favourite with young and old alike; Prime Possum and Prime TV; Kestine from Love Your Style; the Tuggeranong and Queanbeyan Salvation Army Corps; Andante Andante choir; the Murrumbidgee bush band; bush poet Lorraine McCrimmon; the Hawker primary school band; Southern Cross early childhood school choir; Kingsford Smith school choir; sirens cheerleading; Katherine for the pony rides; Bunnings Belconnen; That's Cool; Audio Solutions; Event Hire; Northside Community Services; Dickson Salvation Army Welfare; Community CPS Credit Union; Care Traffic Services; Sydney SAES; Aussie Farmers; Canberra Milk; Coca-Cola Amatil; Gloria Jean's; Rodney's of Pialligo; The Garden; Yowani golf club; Club Lime; Mogo Zoo; Solartint; Brumbies; Merimbula Beach Resort; Kidszone; Westpac; Smith's Snackfoods; Commonwealth Park; Tradies club; McDonalds; Magpies Football Club; Canberra Recovery Services; and, finally, Brendan Smyth for his compering skills on the day.

This is also a great opportunity to put in a plug for the upcoming carols on the lawn. It is a Salvation Army event which will be taking place on 11 December at the Belconnen Salvation Army headquarters in Scullin. It will feature the Salvation Army brass band. I encourage everyone to attend.

This evening, I would also like to talk about the wonderful work of Fusion Canberra. I had the great pleasure of attending the Friends of Fusion fundraising dinner last night. Fusion is an international youth and community organisation with three part-time paid staff but 50 volunteers giving of their time on a weekly basis. With between 150 and 200 other volunteers involved throughout the year, the organisation manages 20 different projects and programs.

Fusion works to give disadvantaged and marginalised young people a purpose in the community and gives them the resilience to deal with adversity. This work includes breakfast clubs in schools, chaplains in two high schools, Wombat Wardrobe quality second hand clothing and book stores, sustainable living education, youth programs at schools, youth adventure day trips, and Aboriginal reconciliation work focused on an annual pilgrimage to Uluru for high school children from across Australia.

Co-located with their hub at the Carleton Street shops in Kambah is their largest initiative, their social enterprise called Wombat Wardrobe. This social enterprise, opened in May 2010 by Senator Gary Humphries with Steve Doszpot MLA present, has quickly become a community hub for Canberrans. With a great story in last

week's *Canberra Weekly Magazine*, it is no longer a well-kept secret. All proceeds from the enterprise go directly to support Fusion's valuable and community work in Canberra, the Northern Territory and Africa.

Fusion successfully ran for 17 years a horticulture and gardening project at the Lions Youth Haven property in Kambah. This supported the unemployed, refugees, mentally handicapped, disabled and youth. While there they developed innovative food production techniques and successfully trialled a new exciting technology called aquaponics that grows plants and fish in a closed organic system which has very low water use.

Key staff of the organisation that I would like to acknowledge this evening are team leader Brenton Reimann; high school chaplains Alissa Holden, Nigel Doecke and Ben Davis; other staff Sarah Peel, John Brummell, Alf Blasch, John Mann, Kristel Wood, Jimmy Cheng, Claire Reimann, Lydia Sewell, Greg Ashford, Rick Oates, Sarah Oates, Marilyn MacArthur, Gillian Uhle, Jessica He, Mike Ashford, Sandy Schumacher, Lyn Waldron, Inta Gollasch, Louise Garrett, Trevor Schumacher; the Wombat Shop assistants Indi, Keira, Katie, Colleen, Liliias, Esther and Tracy; the breakfast club volunteers Florine, Sue, Debra, Hassa, Rachael, Bec, Amanda and Phil; and their peer leaders Mike Loberger and Isabelle Del Perez.

The following businesses also work in partnership with Fusion: Southside Lighting, a gold partner; Office Partners, Mitchell, a silver partner; Milestone Financial Services, Deakin, a bronze partner; Capital Chilled Foods, Fyshwick; Insitec, Fyshwick; and A1 Signs.

Churches and organisations that work with Fusion include: ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Unity College, Canberra; St George's Anglican Church, Pearce; Immanuel Woden Valley Lutheran Church, Lyons; Chinese Methodist Church, Lyons; St Marys in the Valley Anglican Church, Calwell; Capital Edge Community Church, Erindale; Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade, ACT; 1Way FM Christian radio station; Canberra Chinese Christian Church; Youth with a Mission, Canberra; Ainslie Church of Christ, Anglican youth department of the diocese of Canberra and Goulburn; Scripture Union ACT; Tuggeranong United Football Club; and the Canberra Organic Growers Society.

I offer my congratulations to all involved and commend Fusion Canberra for the great work they do in our community.

Gungahlin Lions Club Organ donations

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (9.04): Yesterday I had the pleasure of opening the Lions district convention hosted by the Gungahlin Lions Club. The Gungahlin club was chartered in 2003 and has grown to become a large and active club with 49 dedicated Lions. This is the first time the Gungahlin club has hosted the district convention. Lions actively work to improve the lives of everyone in the district and also to support the global projects of Lions International such as eradicating blindness through SightFirst and other large-scale humanitarian projects.

The special theme of the convention this year was the important need for organ and tissue donation. My key message today is: tell your families. Australia is a world leader in transplantation medicine. Unfortunately, the number of organ and tissue donations in Australia is low by global standards. Around 1,700 people are on Australian organ transplant waiting lists at any one time. One of the key tools to increase organ donation is to encourage awareness and discussion amongst family members. Many family members do not know the donation wishes of their loved ones. They do not know that they have to give consent to the donation of a family member's organs and tissues.

The Australian government has established a national reform program—its name is DonateLife—to facilitate organ and tissue donations and in so doing to transform and save more Australian lives. Registration is easy. Anyone over 16 may register their decision online, by calling the hotline or just by filling out a form at any Medicare office or GP surgery. Registration is the first step. You also need to discuss your decision with your family because, even if you are on the Australian organ donor register, donation will not proceed without your family's consent.

The Australian organ donor register was established in November 2000. It is the only national register for organ and/or tissue donation for transplantation. The donor register keeps a record of your donation decision and of the organ and tissue you agree to donate. The donor register ensures that your donation decision can be verified 24 hours a day seven days a week by authorised medical personnel anywhere in Australia. In the event of your death, information about your donation decision may be accessed from the donor register by authorised medical personnel and provided to your family.

Since 1965 more than 30,000 Australians have received transplants. Improved survival rates now mean that most organ and/or transplant recipients enjoy many years of high-quality life after their transplant. Lions clubs and other community organisations are well placed to encourage discussion in the broader community on organ and tissue donation. This is an important discussion. I commend the Lions clubs for encouraging it; I urge you to talk and I urge you all to tell your families.

ACTSport awards

MR DOSZPOT (Brindabella) (9.07): In my capacity as shadow minister for sport, I had the pleasure of attending last Friday night the ACTSport sportstar of the year awards gala dinner and industry celebrations at the Canberra Southern Cross Club in Woden, along with you, Mr Speaker, and a few other luminaries of our fair city. The ACTSport sportstar of the year award has a great history over the past 28 years, with proud Canberrans Rob de Castella, Lauren Jackson, David Campese, Bradley Clyde and Caroline Buchanan just some of the previous winners over the past 28 years. It was also great to see that ClubsACT have again become the naming right sponsors for ACTSport and it was good to see Jeff House, the chief executive of ClubsACT, and president, Max Mercer, lending their support to the evening's activities.

I would like to congratulate Jim Roberts, the president of ACTSport, and all of his staff on the organisation of yet another very enjoyable and professional evening that

highlighted, for the sporting community perhaps, the pinnacle social event of the year, as it has been for quite a number of years. With around 400 guests in attendance, everyone had a great night. Jim Roberts thanked a lot of the organisations who took part in the planning of the evening, sponsors, as well as various supporters of the organisation, ACTSport, in order to enable all of the awards to be made.

I will come to the winners in a few moments, but first off congratulations to ClubsACT, Sportsmans Warehouse, Schweppes, Chamberlains Law Firm, Mix 106.3, Konica Minolta, Southern Cross Ten, *Canberra Times*, Canberra Southern Cross Club, Nova Multimedia, Trophylink, Craig Noble, Stefan Wronski, Jeff House, Louize Gleeson, Rebecca Dent, Phil Lynch, Ron Burns, Fiona Nelson, Jeremy Flynn, Nick Hunter, Rebecca Kelly and Pip Genge, Greg Thomson, David Polkinghorne, Pete Foley and Bob Smith—all great contributors to the success of the evening.

For the Trophylink volunteer of the year award, which was presented by Bob Smith, the nominees were Angelique Clyde-Smith for ice skating, Mary Anne Simpson for females in training, Gerard Ryan for athletics, John Logue for football, Ray Hadge for cricket and David Calvert for football. There were lots of other nominees as well. The eventual winner in that category was Angelique Clyde-Smith for ice skating.

Some of the other awards included the Nova official of the year award, presented by Peter Foley. The nominees were Phong Toan Nguyen for volleyball, Geoff Northam for rowing, Ian Colquhoun for athletics and Richard Naumovski for football. The winner was Geoff Northam for rowing.

In all, there were quite a lot of areas. I will not be able to go through all of the categories due to lack of time but I would like to touch upon the main awards. The ClubsACT main sportstar of the year award went to Susan Powell from cycling. Susan was also the Schweppes female sportstar of the year. The *Canberra Times* male sportstar of the year was Andrew Kirkpatrick for softball. The Sportsmans Warehouse junior sportstar of the year was Alison Rice for cycling. The Mix 106.3 coach of the year was Bob Harrow for softball. The Konica Minolta team of the year was the Ice Dragons dragon boat club. The ACTSport AIS sportstar of the year was Alicia Coutts for swimming. The Southern Cross Ten community sports award went to Robbie Cheshire for lawn bowls. The Nova Multimedia official of the year, as has been said before, was Geoff Northam. The Trophylink volunteer of the year was Angelique Clyde-Smith for ice skating.

So all in all, it was a fantastic night, recognising some great sports people across a whole host of sports. My congratulations go to all concerned: Jim Roberts, the project events and professional development program's Emma Eaton and all of the people concerned with ACTSport. I look forward to next year's range of winners that we will be able to meet. So congratulations once again to ACTSport, the board and Jim Roberts.

CanTeen national bandanna day

MS HUNTER (Ginninderra—Parliamentary Leader, ACT Greens) (9.11): I bring the attention of the Assembly to CanTeen's National Bandanna Day, which is on Friday,

28 October. As all of us know, CanTeen is the Australian organisation for young people living with cancer, and bandanna day is part of their annual fundraising events.

CanTeen works with young people who have been diagnosed with cancer. They also include young people who have an immediate family member—a brother, sister, parent or primary carer—who has been diagnosed with cancer and young people who have had an immediate family member die from cancer.

The work of CanTeen is varied, because their aim is to support, develop and empower young people living with cancer. Each year 1,000 new cases of cancer are diagnosed in the 12 to 25 year age group. This equates to three young people per day facing the trauma associated with diagnosis, subsequent treatment and impacts on their social-emotional health.

“It is terrific to have people who understand,” and this is a quote that rings true for me. Like so many other issues, it is not until you live the experience that you truly understand how it really feels. It is brilliant that CanTeen offers these young people the time, space and opportunities to come together to share, develop a better understanding of and knowledge and information about the disease.

There is an opportunity at camps and groups to make friends, share hot tips and, most importantly, to laugh with people who understand and therefore develop a personal sense of power over their future. Although CanTeen holds national bandanna day every year, there are a range of other ways to help, such as running an event to raise money, donating your old mobile phone for recycling, collecting around the workplace to make a donation and celebration donations—requesting that your guests make a donation to CanTeen in lieu of receiving gifts at your wedding, birthday, anniversary, or, in fact, any celebration.

From medical to event volunteers, help is always needed and enthusiastically accepted. You can assist on camps and programs or volunteer in the local CanTeen office. CanTeen hold regular information evenings, or a member of CanTeen can visit your office to let you know about CanTeen’s corporate volunteer program.

I commend the work done by CanTeen. I believe it is really important that young people and those around them know that they are not alone and that the Canberra community supports their efforts in the support they give to so many.

I encourage you all to buy a bandanna and to wear it proudly this coming Friday, 28 October to show you care. For many years as part of Youth Week there was a coinciding with bandanna day at one point, so we used to sell them. Over the years we took on selling bandannas, and it was a great way to be able to support this fantastic organisation.

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MS HUNTER: I am not sure what Mr Doszpot is talking about. It was fantastic to be able to sell those bandannas and to pass that money on. I know that Team Green got together this morning. All members of the Assembly would have received your

bandannas, I am sure, and Team Green got together for a photo with our bandannas. I encourage all other members of the Assembly to do the same. I must congratulate the Speaker on the particularly jaunty angle at which he wore his bandanna.

It is a great way to get involved and to be able to donate money to a fantastic organisation. It really supports those young people who may find themselves having a diagnosis of cancer or another family member—it could be their brother or their sister, mum or dad—and they just need that support. They need someone to be able to talk to, their peers. They also need people to hang out with and just have some fun and a bit of a laugh. Just to remind members again, Friday 28 October—this Friday—CanTeen’s national bandanna day, please get involved.

The Assembly adjourned at 9.16 pm.