



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

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Tuesday, 27 November 2012

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Tuesday, 27 November 2012

MADAM SPEAKER (Mrs Dunne) took the chair at 10 am, made a formal recognition that the Assembly was meeting on the lands of the traditional custodians, and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Petition
Ministerial response

The Clerk: The following response to a petition has been lodged by a minister:

By **Mr Barr**, Minister for Economic Development, dated 12 September 2012, in response to a petition lodged by Mr Smyth on 23 August 2012 concerning block 2 section 590 Chisholm.

The terms of the response will be recorded in *Hansard*.

Planning—Chisholm—petition No 139

The response read as follows:

I am pleased to notify the Assembly that Block 2 Section 590 Chisholm will be retained as a park for the local community.

Ms Isabell Coe
Motion of condolence

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education): I move:

That this Assembly expresses its deep regret at the death of Isabell Coe, a leading figure in the campaign for Indigenous rights, and tenders its profound sympathy to her family, friends and colleagues in their bereavement.

She has been described as a mighty warrior, a powerful speaker and a woman with great spirit, spunk and determination. Isabell Coe was a proud Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal woman, an elder in the Aboriginal community, and someone who dedicated her life to campaigning for Aboriginal rights.

Isabell Coe sadly passed away on Saturday, 10 November after a long illness. Her passing has been felt not only by our community but nationally. She is mourned by both those who knew her and those who did not but who looked up to her as an inspirational leader and a passionate advocate of Aboriginal sovereignty.

Isabell Coe was born at Erambie Mission in Cowra, in Wiradjuri country. Her mother was from Yass and her father was born in Cowra. After leaving school in 1968, she travelled to Sydney, where she enrolled in an art college at Manly. However, she deferred her artistic vocation as her desire to contribute to her community pulled her in a different direction.

She played a key role in setting up many of the Aboriginal organisations in Redfern, including the Redfern Aboriginal Children's Service. Her compassion and desire to help others was also evident in the time she devoted to those experiencing mental illness. But she is perhaps best known for her unrelenting advocacy of Aboriginal sovereignty. Much of her life's focus was with the Aboriginal tent embassy here in Canberra. Her goal was to highlight the injustices suffered by her people.

She was instrumental in the establishment of the embassy and was present when the idea was born to take the protest to Canberra. She was also instrumental in ensuring that the embassy remained in the face of rumours that it would be shut down in the 1990s. In fact, Isabell Coe once described it as her "special obligation" to keep the Aboriginal tent embassy going and said that she would continue to do so until she died. Even as her health declined and she found herself confined to a wheelchair, she could be seen at the tent embassy and at other events advocating for Aboriginal rights.

Isabell Coe was instrumental in shaping the Aboriginal tent embassy and has left a lasting legacy here in the nation's capital. She was a passionate woman who loved her heritage and her people and wanted them to be recognised. Her sometimes controversial ways brought her international prominence. She made headlines around the world when she called for a boycott of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. Earlier this year at the 40th anniversary celebrations of the tent embassy, confined to her wheelchair, she was staunchly defending the rights of Aboriginal protestors who had burnt the Australian flag.

Her passion or dedication to her cause is undeniable. Over several decades she became a recognisable face in the struggle for Aboriginal rights, highlighting what she saw as a major injustice—the lack of recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty. Isabell epitomised the words spoken by the great civil rights campaigner, Martin Luther King: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." And to Isabell, Aboriginal sovereignty was what mattered. She took her fight to the courts, and was the lead litigant in *Isabell Coe v the Commonwealth*, an unsuccessful but important legal challenge which sought to assert the sovereignty of the Wiradjuri nation.

Isabell Coe considered Canberra a part of her traditional country and she will be missed by many in our community. Those who knew her have described her as a dignified, beautiful person who loved helping and giving. She was a caring, sincere and genuine lady. Even as her illness progressed and she was hospitalised, I am told that she was always thinking of others, regularly visiting other patients on her ward to brighten their day and offer friendship and company.

Her kindness and compassion drew people to her. People all over the world called her a friend—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. On Monday last week, Isabell Coe was remembered fondly by family and friends and others who knew her well. She was described as "one of the best voices for Aboriginal sovereignty in Australia". She was not only an elder but a spokeswoman for the Aboriginal community, and a person described as "the mother of the tent embassy".

She will be remembered for her passion and her determination to fight for Aboriginal rights. While there is still a long way to go to close the gap and improve the education and employment outcomes of Aboriginal people, it is through the efforts of women like Isabell Coe that these issues remain high on the national agenda.

MR SESELJA (Brindabella—Leader of the Opposition): On behalf of the Canberra Liberals, I express our condolences to the family and friends of Isabell Coe. The Wiradjuri elder Isabell died on Saturday in Cowra at the age of 61. Isabell Coe was an Aboriginal advocate instrumental in establishing and keeping the tent embassy in Canberra going since 1972. Isabell's work as an activist for the Aboriginal rights struggle has touched many communities across Australia and no doubt inspired many people.

Together with her partner Billy Craigie, Isabell raised her family in Sydney. Her family all became strong advocates of Aboriginal rights and helped to establish Aboriginal community-based services in Redfern.

The Chairperson of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, Stephen Ryan, said:

Many of us fight for Aboriginal rights in boardrooms, or in our workplaces. Isabell Coe chose to fight for our rights at the community level. She led the battle on our streets for many years, and even as her health declined she remained active.

An enduring memory for anyone who spent time around the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, or an important protest where strong Aboriginal leadership is required, will be of Aunty Isabell, still fighting for her people, despite being confined to a wheelchair.

She was on the frontline of protests and it gave her an authenticity. It's because of that authenticity, and her determination to fight with the people and for the people, that Aunty Isabell won so much respect, not just in NSW, but around the nation.

Much of her struggle was with the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. Her goal was to highlight the injustices suffered by our people on the world stage. On that front she was very effective. While our fight for Aboriginal equality goes on, younger Aboriginal people need to remember that the relative advantage they enjoy today is because of the fight in people like Isabell Coe.

Aboriginal Australia was greatly enriched by Aunty Isabell's efforts. She will be deeply missed.

The Mayor of Cowra, Isabell's home town, said:

I think it's sad, very, very sad for the Aboriginal community, and the broader community.

Someone who has committed the amount that she has to both the Aboriginal community and to reconciliation over the years will obviously be very sadly

missed ... Some of the work Isabell did locally was significant, but she covered a much larger area than just her local community, which obviously felt the benefits enormously of her contribution, but also in Sydney and elsewhere to the Aboriginal movement in general.

While the matter of the Aboriginal tent embassy has sometimes been a contentious one, today is not the appropriate time to debate those matters. While we do not agree with some of the actions taken by Ms Coe in her public life, the Canberra Liberals respect the passion and commitment Isabell brought to her community. It is clear from these testimonies that she made a significant contribution to the Aboriginal community.

To Isabell's family and to her friends we offer our deepest condolences.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Ageing): I would like to support and echo the comments of the Chief Minister in expressing her regrets at the sad passing of Isabell Coe on 10 November. I join with Australians, both here in Canberra and across the nation, to mourn the loss of the influential Indigenous rights activist.

Auntie Isabell, as she was known to people around the Aboriginal tent embassy, was a remarkable woman for all the reasons the Chief Minister has already mentioned. On behalf of the ACT Greens and as the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, I would like to pass on my condolences to Auntie Isabell's family and community on the sad news of her death.

As well as the personal sadness for her direct family and community, the loss of Auntie Isabell will also be felt more widely across the broader tent embassy and activist community. Auntie Isabell spent a significant amount of time over the past four decades bringing her voice, and the voice of her community, to Canberra as the nation's capital to call for sovereignty for Aboriginal people.

As one of the founders of the tent embassy, and a regular and continuing presence at the embassy across the years, especially on significant days such as Australia Day, which was at the embassy first called invasion day and now sovereignty day, Auntie Isabell has contributed immensely to many lively and relevant discussions around Aboriginal democracy and sovereignty.

Auntie Isabell was both an inspiration and a rock for many of the people who spent time at the tent embassy with her over the decades. The time she dedicated to the embassy allowed many people to hear her stories and learn more about her culture. Her work at the embassy certainly inspired and influenced many ACT Greens members and activists.

As the Chief Minister noted, Auntie Isabell was a proud Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal woman, an elder in the Aboriginal community, and a woman who spent her life campaigning for Indigenous rights. She knew firsthand the injustices suffered by Aboriginal people and the impact this had on their lives.

Isabell Coe was influential, yet dignified. At times she was never far from controversy and made headlines around the world because she was a woman who spoke with passion. Isabell Coe led the battle for her people and was not afraid to do so. She showed strength and courage to fight for the cause, and she was still fighting for her people even as her health declined.

This is a sad and difficult time for the Indigenous rights community, but I hope that Auntie Isabell's family take some joy from the understanding that she has left a legacy which will carry on, and the number of messages of support and condolence are an indication of the many lives that Auntie Isabell touched.

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra): I also pay my respects to Isabell Coe, a proud Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal woman who fought for the respect and the rights of all Aboriginal people throughout her life. She was especially known in Canberra as one of the stalwarts who kept the Aboriginal tent embassy going over its 40-year history of campaigning for Aboriginal sovereignty.

The embassy has been a beacon for Aboriginal people's struggles since its establishment in 1972. It is a rallying point for and an ongoing reminder of the unfinished business of sovereignty, reconciliation and issues such as the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian constitution. My condolences go out to her family, her friends and her supporters.

Question resolved in the affirmative, members standing in their places.

Paper

Assistant Speakers—appointment

MADAM SPEAKER: For the information of members and pursuant to standing order 8, I nominate Mr Doszpot and Mr Gentleman as Assistant Speakers and present the warrant of nomination.

Visitor

MADAM SPEAKER: We are going to move on to inaugural speeches, but before we do, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of a former Speaker, Mr Berry, who is welcomed back into the chamber. I am sure he will savour today's inaugural speeches.

Inaugural speeches

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call Ms Berry, I remind members that it is traditional that inaugural speeches be heard in silence.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra), by leave: Firstly, I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking today on the land of the traditional custodians, the Ngunnawal people, and I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and future. As well I would like to acknowledge and extend my respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who are here today.

I would like to thank the Assembly for the opportunity to speak today, and to thank the people of Ginninderra in Belconnen and west Gungahlin who have granted me the honour of representing them in the ACT Legislative Assembly. It is a challenge that I am proud to accept.

Before I begin, I would also like to thank the officers and staff of the Legislative Assembly for assisting in my transition in the Assembly. Your help, patience and good humour have been greatly appreciated, and I look forward to working with you over the next four years. Thank you, also, to Sue and Anna, who have helped me get settled in.

I want to acknowledge and thank all of my union colleagues, my fellow Labor Party members and my friends, all of whom have given me strength and confidence. I also thank them for sharing this occasion with me. I thank my children, Archer and Sienna, whom I hope with the family friendly workplace that the Legislative Assembly has become will only be affected in positive ways by their mother's choice to enter politics. I promise you both we will have that trip away really soon.

There are some individuals who have made an impact on my life that I would like to mention. To Lyndal Ryan, Branch Secretary of United Voice, for all of your leadership, your vision and mateship over the last 17 years: thank you, my sister in arms. I would like to thank all of the branches of United Voice across the country and particularly the ACT branch of United Voice, its executive council, members and officials for sharing your stories with me and allowing me to be part of your lives.

To my campaign team, Matt, Osmond, Libby, Ben, Courtney, Jared and, of course, Michael, thank you all for the personal sacrifices each of you made in participating in my campaign.

To my wonderful team of dedicated volunteer community organisers, both from the ACT and those who travelled interstate to join our campaign—together we visited thousands of homes, made hundreds of phone calls and held meet and greets all over the electorate—we made history and we really did put our community first. Thank you.

Thank you to my friends for allowing me to continue to be part of your and your families' lives. I am lucky to have such wonderful people who play such an important part in mine and my family's. Thank you Robina, Graham and Doug for being here today; it means a lot that you are here.

To my family for putting up with my occasional campaign meltdown moments, for being my mates and your continued honesty about whether I am being an embarrassing fool or cool, thank you, and I will try not to be too much of a dag.

And finally, thanks to my basketball team for continuing to allow me to take to the court each week.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank the union movement in Canberra for their support throughout my campaign. I would especially like to thank the members and organisers of the CPSU, the CFMEU and the TWU who contributed a lot of their personal time to campaign with me. The union movement in Canberra is a vibrant and fundamental part of our city, encouraging working people to have voices in their workplaces, in their government and in their community. I am a proud union member, and I encourage all Canberrans to be active in their unions.

I have lived my whole life in the electorate of Ginninderra. I currently live in Dunlop with Archer and Sienna and our dog, Elkie. I grew up in the suburb of Holt and I attended my local schools—Holt primary and Ginninderra high—and completed my formal education at Hawker College. I loved growing up in this part of Canberra, exploring Ginninderra creek with my brother, Clinton, and my sister, Donna, and riding horses through what is now west Macgregor and Dunlop.

Many of you will know my father, Wayne Berry, who represented the seat of Ginninderra for 20 years until his retirement in 2008. Dad was a union official with the firefighters union in the 70s before becoming a member of the Legislative Assembly. Growing up with a father as a firefighter meant that in our home we were especially conscious of fire safety. Dad would often come home after his shifts where he had experienced the death or injury of a person in our community as a result of faulty fire plugs or electric blankets. As kids we all found it a bit annoying, but we did not know what he and firefighters experienced during their workday.

My memories of dad and the firies were positive ones. The annual firies family picnic was a particular highlight for us kids. As we got older in our teenage years we were, of course, enormously embarrassed to see our dad on TV when he became the union secretary. Little did we know then of the almost nightly appearances he would make as an MLA. Well, we soon got used to that.

My mum stayed home while we were in primary school until she etched out a career for herself as an occupational health and safety officer. Mum studied while working full time and being the wife of an MLA. Mum is the only one in our family with a tertiary education. We are all very proud of what she has achieved as a mum with three young children who worked full time and studied part time to gain her degree, all the while making sure we got fed, clothed, kept the house clean and made dad look good at official functions. She got very little help from us kids. She is here today to make sure that my chair and desk is ergonomically set. Just so the rest of you know, you might want to straighten up.

My parents gave me and my brother and sister a great foundation on which to build our lives, instilling in us the values of justice, fairness, hard work and respect and, dare I say it, a healthy scepticism of authority. These are the values which we carry with us throughout our lives. I particularly wish to thank my parents for their tireless work in helping looking after Archer and Sienna and all their work in the campaign—standing on stalls, visiting voters, leafleting houses and, of course, dad's amazing work looking after my placards and signs. Thanks, mum and dad.

Growing up in a Labor household, it was not too surprising to end up working in the labour movement for United Voice and putting my values into practice. My work with people engaged in the range of industries covered by United Voice has brought me face to face with the disadvantage and vulnerability faced by Canberrans in these occupations. Canberra on the surface looks like the epitome of middle-class paradise with our high wages, high levels of education and wonderful material wealth. What most Canberrans do not see, however, are the people doing it tough; people like our cleaners and aged-care workers, our security workers and early childhood educators, our bar workers and kitchen staff. They are some of the hardest working members of our community, yet they are some of the lowest paid and least secure in their employment.

Working in a small branch of the union means that you work closely with your members, and I have learnt so much from the members of United Voice over the last 17 years. There is nothing more inspiring than seeing a group of people come together and win achievements in their livelihoods. When we ran the clean start campaign—the campaign for a living wage and decent conditions in the cleaning industry—we brought together people from across the country and the world, some with little English, many with little education. This campaign empowered these people, mainly women, and gave them the skills to fight for dignity in their work. Chris Wagland, one of the great United Voice delegates and now vice-president of the branch, said that when she got involved in the clean start campaign she had been cleaning for 20 years and now, as a 40-year-old woman, she did not feel like she had to apologise when she asked for fair wages.

My last campaign with United Voice was leading the big steps campaign for professional recognition and professional wages. Early childhood educators play a vitally important role in the development of our children. These are the first people who parents entrust the care of their children with and they are responsible for helping children to learn to play with others, interact in new environments and build their characters that will last with them for the rest of their lives. You would think that these people, with such responsibility, would be rewarded with the professional wages that they deserve. Yet throughout the campaign I met educators who could only afford to live in garages, who had to work multiple jobs in order to make ends meet and who could not afford to have their own children in education and care. I know that the campaign is not over yet, and I cannot wait for the day that early childhood educators get the recognition that they deserve.

In the big steps campaign I worked closely with a woman who inspired me to take this next step and enter politics. Di Terrance has been working with children in the early childhood sector for 20 years. Di and the team at Spence Children's Cottage provided the love, care and education for both my own children and I will be forever grateful that my children had access to such high quality care and education. Our relationship with the cottage family has continued, and we will always consider them part of our family.

The people who work in the industries that United Voice represent are the working foundations of our city. They are the people who I had the privilege to work with over the past 17 years, and I will continue to represent them in this government.

Obviously, Madam Speaker, my work and experiences at United Voice informed my decision to run for the Legislative Assembly, but it was also my desire to bring a local voice from my community to government. My team and I visited thousands of homes during the campaign, having wonderful conversations about the state of politics in the city and the country, how we needed to improve internet access in Dunlop, how important our recreational parks and playgrounds are to our community and how we can continue to build on our great health and education system.

It is a funny experience, putting yourself out there in your community and asking them to vote for you, but I believe there is nothing more democratic than the act of connecting with your community, building a relationship with them and empowering them by involving them in the activities of government. I strongly believe that consultation is more than inviting submissions after a course of action has been decided. It must be genuine and it must form part of the initiative, not something that is just tacked on at the end.

Madam Speaker, I am the newest Labor member in this Assembly, and I recognise all of those Labor members who have come before me. It is a privilege to represent Australia's oldest continuing political party in the ACT. Labor has been active in Canberra since the 1930s, and since self-government Labor has had a proud history of making Canberra the fair, progressive and prosperous place that it is. Achievements such as the decriminalisation of abortion, the first Human Rights Act in Australia, portable long service leave, and our nation-leading commitments to cutting emissions and investing in renewable energy show that ACT Labor remains the voice for progressive and working people in Canberra.

Whether it is helping working people understand that they have strength in their collective actions or working with a community to help them solve their problems, I strongly believe in the power of community organising to have a positive impact on people's lives in the best practices of the Labor tradition, and I intend on bringing this philosophy with me as I embark on this term.

MR WALL (Brindabella), by leave: I am delighted to be elected as a representative of the electorate of Brindabella, as well as a representative of the Liberal Party. On 20 October the residents of Brindabella voted for change. They voted for lower costs of living. They voted for better municipal services, like a green bin. They voted for better funding of schools. They voted for a plan to deliver better local services.

It is now my role to hold the members opposite to account. They will need to account to the people of Brindabella for every decision they make that fails to deliver what they overwhelmingly voted for—good local government.

Madam Speaker, it is customary on this occasion to acknowledge my family, my upbringing and what brings me to this place. I was born in Canberra. When I came into this world, my parents, Peter and Barbara, were in the midst of moving into a newly built home in Stirling. Dad operated a local hardware store and mum was a legal secretary, soon to be a stay-at-home mum. I was also blessed to have my grandmother living with us at the time. I was now part of a typical Canberra family. Four years later, my sister Melissa arrived on the scene, completing our family.

At about the time I started primary school, everything at home was about to change. The family business fell victim to the “recession we had to have”, the result being that my parents lost the business, the family home—everything. This left my family’s only stable income being my grandmother’s pension. Everything mum and dad had worked so hard for was now gone.

In the years following, mum and dad did what they had to do. They started again. They saved for a deposit to buy a house and worked hard to provide as best they could for my sister and me.

They believed in the value of a good education and sacrificed much to put me through a Catholic primary school and later allowed me to follow my friends to Marist College. Whilst I was not always a model student, I do truly value the education I received, and firmly believe in supporting the non-government sector to allow more families choice when it comes to education for their children.

My parents were always open with me when it came to financial matters in our home, even from a young age. I guess it was their way of trying to explain why there were things that we sometimes just could not afford. This has taught both my sister and me to be very good with our money, to live within our means and to treasure every dollar—principles that I believe governments must follow.

As soon as I was old enough, like many teenagers, I applied for a job at McDonald’s. The work that youth employers such as McDonald’s do is often misunderstood. My confidence, communication skills and work ethic are all derived from my time cooking and selling hamburgers.

I have been privileged enough over the past six years to have worked in the family business. It has allowed me to view firsthand many of the issues that are concerning local business owners. There has been, over the past years, a significant increase in the amount of red tape that businesses need to deal with in order to operate. This simply inhibits them from getting on with their core business, stifles growth and prevents new jobs from being created.

It was from my time in the family business that I began to notice the direct impact that government policy has on the way in which the business sector operates, and the detrimental effect bad government policy has on businesses, their staff and families.

I believed in a better way of things being done, and decided to get involved by joining the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party promotes the philosophy of the innate worth of the individual and the need to encourage initiative and personal responsibility. It promotes family as the primary institution for fostering the values on which a cohesive society is built. It believes in the creation of wealth, competitive enterprise, consumer choice and reward for effort. We as Liberals also believe in equality of opportunity. This philosophy rings true with my personal experiences, and I will strive to promote this through my work as a member in this place.

Coming from a small business to be a member of this Assembly, I have the opportunity to shape the future of Canberra. The ACT economy is all too reliant on the federal government. In recent years we have seen the federal Labor government impose funding cuts to its public service and many local institutions.

The effect this has on local business runs deep. It sees many employed in the government sector become pessimistic in their outlook on the economy and consumer confidence is quickly eroded. The direct flow-on effect is that local businesses struggle. Many have been forced to lay off staff and some have had to close their doors.

If the territory is to function independent of the federal government then the economy needs to diversify. I strongly support the announcement yesterday of our newly created shadow portfolio for economic diversification, for it is only with a diverse economy that Canberra as a city will flourish. However, we will struggle for this to ever be achieved so long as there is a culture of over-regulation and a restrictive tax system in place.

An all-too-common Australian past-time is “Canberra bashing”—that is, the perception that Canberra is nothing more than a place full of politicians and roundabouts. Many people choose to settle in Canberra because of the employment opportunities that exist here. However, if we are to grow Canberra into a vibrant city, we need to disprove this stigma and make Canberra a city people aspire to live in, not the city that they have to live in.

One of the most common issues raised with me during the course of the campaign by constituents is the sentiment that members of the government spend too much time addressing issues that are more appropriately dealt with in the federal parliament. Instead the people of Brindabella want a government that will look at the local issues that affect them daily. They want quality roads to travel on. They want to be able to find a car park at their local shopping centre. They want a choice as to where their children go to school. And they are willing to pay a reasonable amount for the provision of services so long as they can see value for money.

For too long Tuggeranong has suffered from underinvestment. The district has grown and matured past the nappy valley namesake. However, local governments have failed to keep pace with the evolving needs of the community and, in turn, let residents down. Local sporting fields are looking tired. Many footpaths are in disrepair and in need of maintenance and the need for local facilities such as a swimming pool in Lanyon has been ignored. Parts of the road network are operating over capacity, and the result of poor planning will hinder the future growth of parts of the electorate.

I believe that it is my primary responsibility as a representative of Brindabella to focus on issues that residents expect to be managed well; that is, the three Rs—roads, rates and rubbish.

Madam Speaker, may I say that I am most honoured to be given the opportunity by the people of Brindabella. The number of well wishes and kind words I received from the community in the days leading up to the election were just inspiring.

The work that goes into running an election campaign is astounding, as all members would agree. I would like to pay special thanks to some of those that made a significant contribution, particularly Phil Lingard, Anne and Tony Daniels, Robert Solecki, Sean and Katharine Carling, Rob Lovett and Pam Berriman. You all contributed much of your time over many months, and I am very thankful.

I say to members of the southern electorate branch, who have given me the opportunity to represent you as a candidate and now as a member, that I look forward to working with you all over the coming term.

I would like to pay tribute to the work of the central campaign team who helped to deliver the best result the party has ever had. Your experience and willingness to coach me through the finer points of campaigning are much appreciated. Your work ethic and belief in bettering Canberra are inspiring.

I feel it is only fitting to also pay tribute to the candidates that took part in the election process, particularly those that were unsuccessful. You and your teams all gave up a significant amount of time and money in order to participate. Democracy in Canberra is much stronger because of your contribution and sacrifice. The electoral process is a testament to the freedoms that we all have in Australia.

To my colleagues at Patioworld, I say thank you for your understanding over the past year as I focused my efforts towards new aspirations. I make a special mention of Darren Broaden, who has carried much of the extra burden in workload in my absence.

To James Daniels, your views, contributions and dedication to my campaign are a testament to your character. You shared the role of campaign manager well, and I am thankful for your support.

Choosing to enter public life is both selfless and at times a selfish act. The challenges it places on family are all too often overlooked. I would not be standing here today if it were not for my family.

I am lucky enough to have married my best friend, Christine. You are the strongest person I know, and your determination is inspiring. What you have achieved is nothing short of amazing, and I am privileged to share your journey. My love for you is limitless.

To my sister, Melissa, I admire your caring nature and determination. Just remember that you can achieve anything if you imagine it.

To my parents, Peter and Barbara, I say thank you for all the sacrifices you have made and support you have given me. Although I have often chosen the road less travelled, you are always supportive of my decision.

I pay one final tribute to the countless others that have had a part in getting me to this place. I am thankful for your help and support. I hope to serve you and the people of Brindabella effectively over the coming years, and I am honoured to be entrusted with such a responsibility.

MRS JONES (Molonglo), by leave: Canberra is a city of migrants in a nation of migrants. Like so many of my fellow Canberrans, I was not born in the ACT but moved here for work reasons. I fell in love with this city, its beauty and its opportunity and I am now proud to call Canberra home.

My grandmother, Nicolina, was born in Naples in the 1930s to an Italian peasant family. Her own mother died in childbirth. Nonna Nicolina grew up waiting tables and cooking in the family trattoria. She had a strong sense of values. She loved her family and her country. She worked hard and had an unshakable faith in God.

As a young woman, my grandmother married the love of her life, a dashing young naval officer cadet, Giuseppe. The Second World War and its effects on Italy left them living in a single rented room with little means to survive. Looking to the future, Giuseppe and Nicolina grasped the opportunity for a better life here in Australia. Leaving his wife and daughter, Nonno emigrated first, arriving in Australia in 1953.

Like many of his generation of immigrants, he worked hard, saved enough money and bought a house, outright. Three long years after he arrived, he sent for my grandmother and his daughter to join him. As new Australians they asked nothing more from the government than the opportunity to work hard and build a future, which they did. They did not seek a free ride.

Over time they worked even harder, bought a larger house and sent their children to good schools and my mother to university. As a child myself, I used to sit in the kitchen with Nonna Nicolina and listen to her stories of life in Italy and life as a migrant. I learnt the importance of hard work, self-reliance, loyalty and of traditional family values.

My paternal grandmother, Isabelle, was a high achieving woman for her day. She attended the University of Tasmania. She was one of few women at that time completing a degree and went on to be a career educator herself. The pinnacle of her career was her appointment as the head of migrant English for the Tasmanian education department. Her life was a full one; she carried six babies to term. In a tragedy few women in Australia face today, her very first baby, dear Margaret, died of a hole in the heart, a condition easily curable today. I am very grateful to live in a society where we have achieved medical development to a point that women and their babies are normally well cared for. It is not so long ago when every family knew a woman who had died or lost a child at birth.

When people have asked me how I ran an election campaign with four children, I realised that I had reached back into my family and learnt the skills of blending children and career from Grandma Issy, and I have shamelessly copied many of her ideas of how to have both a family and pursue broader work. To achieve in this country, women do not have to throw the baby out with the bathwater! We can have multifaceted lives. There is no such thing as a super mum, only a mum with a super team. Every team a mum builds around her is different. So much of our achievement comes down to creative solutions and the sharing of ideas and networks.

Both Nonna Nicolina and Grandma Issy were able to have very full lives as mothers precisely because they were supported by their very committed and hardworking husbands, who asked little for themselves and went to work every day to support their families. My grandmothers, two very different women, taught me the value of marriage and the very great value to a woman of a committed and supportive husband.

My mother raised five children with the loving support of my father and has worked as a teacher and the director of a tertiary English language centre. She taught me that a traditional family and a career can work very well hand in hand for those who want it. My mother imbued in me an understanding that life was not going to be easy but that achievement of a great deal is possible with hard work and perseverance. I stand here today because of the legacy of the strong women of my family.

Now, Madam Speaker, being a Tasmanian-born woman with political interests, it was perhaps inevitable that I would find inspiration in Dame Enid Lyons, the first woman ever elected to the House of Representatives in 1943. Enid Burnell was born in a remote logging community in the north-west of Tasmania. Her mother was widowed at an early age and ensured, by hook or by crook, that Enid received a good education. Marrying Joseph Lyons as a teenage bride, she supported him through his remarkable political career, including his anguished decision to follow his conscience out of the Labor Party during the split of 1931. He became Prime Minister the following year, dying in office just prior to the outbreak of war.

It was perhaps fitting that Dame Enid was breaking new ground as an Australian woman during this war which saw so many changes for Australian women, both socially and professionally. During these years of great change, Dame Enid provided inspiration to a new generation of women, and she did so as a conservative woman and later a founding member of the Liberal Party of Australia.

Dame Enid remains a beacon for conservative women, not only because she cut a new furrow for women but because her mother, her husband and the men and women of the United Australia Party and her electorate saw in her talent, passion and integrity. She benefited from genuine grassroots networks and support, not a top-down bureaucratic initiative to get women and men on a fifty-fifty footing in the parliament.

I came from a hardworking family and I grew up as a co-carer for my grandmother. I got my first official job at Kmart when I was 15. This led to my working for the SDA from a young age, both as an organiser and a national office employee. The most valuable lesson I learnt from this organisation was the impact of legislation on the lives of some of the most marginal people in our society and how important the strength of the family unit is to the health of the society.

Ultimately, I chose to join the Liberal Party, my beloved party of freedom and of conscience. I was very blessed to work on the election campaign of a hardworking small businessman in the Northern Territory. He taught me about life on the other side of the fence, trying to make a business run and the huge personal toll on his family of the essential service he provided to the community in supplying it with petrol. I learnt

that successful people are those who work the hardest and problem solve the best and I applied myself to improving in these areas. Thank you, Anthony; I learnt a great deal from you.

Madam Speaker, as a member of the Liberal Party I learnt from the women of our movement that there was no need to give up on the conservative vision of home and family to be a success. As a confident, aspirational woman with strong traditional family values, I see myself as part of a growing group of modern conservative women—modern because we embrace the opportunities of today and conservative because we do not consider ourselves better than all the generations who have come before us. Though thoroughly pro-woman, I do not feel enslaved to the feminist movement and I certainly fight against the idea that I am in any way a victim.

I am glad to have had the chance to have my children and to be committed to a loving man for life. I know my life is far better than my grandmother's and I reject the constant nagging of an older-style feminist public debate which tries to make women feel bad for not achieving something that they want for our lives. I believe that to shape the future for our daughters is important, that modern society has its problems, but that it is not the fault of the men we love and associate with every day. Humanity has its flaws. Some of the systems that have naturally developed over time need to be changed, but we can work on that.

There are all sorts of natural desires for family and home that should somehow be able to coexist with desires for financial strength and career progression. I feel free to want a white picket fence, and not just a fence but a climbing rose over the fence, a nice house, partly bought by my earning power, and an equal say in all aspects of life. However, even today, I have had my moments of realisation that life is not all quite as simple as it first seemed.

But that is where modern conservative women are a little different. We respond to adversity with creativity. Rather than rejecting femininity, we embrace it. One of the great insights of conservatism is that neither the individual nor society is perfectible but that we must work with the crooked timber of humanity. Far from a glum realism, however, conservatism is an optimistic creed. It is all about the possible. It can be tough to blend work and family aspirations and it can be daunting, but I have learnt that it can also be a formative process of great development for those who have the courage to go through it. After all, it is under immense pressure that diamonds are formed.

Conservatism has never been revolutionary, it is more evolutionary, and I am here to claim we are creating more of a white picket evolution, so to speak. This evolution embraces women's desires to have children and have a love of home life while mixing it with work and study. We do not have to have it all immediately. Over a decade or two we hope to achieve much. Modern women know it can be too late to have children but that it can also be too late to start a career and acquire a substantial work history.

We face adversity boldly. There are serious structural difficulties coming in and out of a workforce little adapted to the tasks associated with women's multifaceted feminine

lives. We will in some cases make it into the top echelons of the boardroom and the parliament and in some cases we will not. This is not a failure but a victory of personal choices mixed with life circumstances. It means that sometimes one of our many priorities has won out against another. It is no-one's fault; it is okay, it is a product of our freedom. What we want is the ability to choose our lives, not a guilt trip about the choices that we make. More often we need to hear "well done" instead of "not good enough".

Feminism has changed. Feminist fighters of older generations have had great successes and now we are building on them in a different, more natural way—with that change, embracing men and the equal but different attributes we bring to solving the life matrix. So looking at the generations of women in my family, I have drawn inspiration from them but I am also profoundly grateful to live beyond 2000 and I am full of hope in the future.

Madam Speaker, after three election campaigns I have a number of acknowledgements to make. I pay tribute to my husband, Bernard, who, as an Army officer, has served his country in Indonesia, Iraq and Afghanistan and has tirelessly served our family throughout my years of hard work to be elected to this place. My election to the Assembly is Bernard's victory as much as it is mine.

I extend heartfelt thanks to my campaign advisers across three campaigns whose unstinting efforts, innovative strategy and unshakable belief in my ability to win helped propel me to victory. Of course, no political campaign can exist without the legions of workers whose unflagging support made everything possible. To the scores and scores of supporters who came from all over Canberra, and especially those who worked the early, early morning shift, and from all over the country to help me, thank you from the bottom of my heart. I pledge myself here today to prove worthy of your faith and your support as a member of this Assembly.

To the people of the mighty electorate of Molonglo who have shown confidence in me by electing me to this Assembly, to all those I spoke with at shopping centres, at community meetings, at my campaign office and on your front doorsteps, I give a solemn undertaking that I will do my utmost to represent your wishes and best interests in this place.

Madam Speaker, I am also here to represent the forgotten Canberrans—the decent, law-abiding, rate-paying families using all they have to fund a mortgage or saving for a house deposit, the hardworking public servants and business people who strive every day to make our city run and the retired Canberrans who deserve to enjoy their retirement in peace and safety. For their sake we must protect a society that rewards effort with prosperity.

Walter Burley Griffin envisaged a safe, well-run national model city. However, if we are not vigilant the society that our parents and our grandparents benefited from will no longer exist. We cannot take for granted the freedom to live our own lives and raise our children according to the dictates of our own consciences, because good intentions do not always make good policies.

The purpose of government and taxation is to provide for the household that which they cannot provide for themselves, but we must ward against a government that takes more than its fair share. For every time a government takes a higher proportion of our income and uses it to make decisions for us, our freedom is decreased. I believe Canberra can be the first in the nation, but not the guinea pigs of the nation, being used for experimental policies driven by extreme ideology. Instead we should have a high benchmark and best practice services and amenities, fit for a national capital.

I have sought election to help to build the future, a future that is worthy of those who came before us—the bush capital of the great Sir Robert Menzies and the inspirational Dame Enid Lyons. As a mother of 12, she was a woman with a deep understanding of human nature and she sums up the Liberal Party's vision for the role of government very well. She said:

I believe that government should help those who cheerfully shoulder their own burdens, instead of taking all responsibility from people who seem to be less and less willing to rely on their own efforts. I am 'all out' to help the men and women who are having their families today in spite of the difficulties they have met.

Human effort is the basis of all human progress, the source of all economic value. The only means of providing proper living standards. Let us help and protect the weak; that is surely the duty of every people. But let us not discourage the strong lest they too lose their vigour and with their decline bring about the weakening of a whole nation.

Today, as then, her warning stands. I believe in reward for individual effort, in the right to personal freedom and the need for individual responsibility, in the basic right to be able to live our lives without interference of social engineers, in the intrinsic value of human life at every age and in the ultimate aristocracy of human conscience. I also believe in government which does not interfere with these rights.

Let us see instead for Canberra first-class services, accessible health care, an outstanding education system, a return to strong and effective law and order, ample supplies of homes for young couples on reasonably sized housing blocks, a local shop and a park for our kids to play in.

My vision is of an efficient, cost-effective, responsible government—of lower rates and charges and benchmarked best practice services—a government that takes its obligations to the people of Canberra not as an opportunity for social experiment but as a solemn duty. My goal is a return to the Canberra envisaged by our city's architect, Walter Burley Griffin, a beautiful art deco styled showcase of our achievements as a people and our aspirations as a country. This is the nation's capital and this is my home.

Standing orders—amendments

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (10.52), by leave: I move:

That the following amendments be made to the standing orders:

(1) Standing order 16

Omit paragraph (a)(iii), substitute:

“(iii) arrange the order of private Members’ business, Assembly business and Executive Members’ business;”.

(2) Standing order 69(g)

Omit standing order 69(g), substitute:

“69(g) Matter of public importance (under standing order 79)

Whole debate	45 minutes
Proposer	15 minutes
Any other Member	10 minutes”.

(3) Standing order 74

(a) Omit “2 pm”, substitute “2.30 pm”.

(b) After paragraph “(b)”, insert the following paragraph:

“provided further that, in relation to ministerial statements, copies shall be provided to the Speaker for circulation to all Members by 12 noon on the sitting at which the statement is proposed to be made or, when statements are proposed to be made at a different time to that specified in the routine of business, at least 2 hours prior to the statement being made.”.

(4) Standing order 77

(a) Insert new paragraph (ba):

“(ba) on sitting Thursdays, Executive Members’ business shall have precedence over Executive business in the ordinary routine of business for 1 hour from the conclusion of Assembly business;”.

(b) Omit paragraph (e), substitute:

“(e) when the time for precedence to Assembly business or Executive Members’ business expires, any Member may move that the time allotted to that business be extended by 30 minutes and the question on such motion shall be put forthwith without amendment or debate; and”.

(c) In paragraph (f), after “Assembly business”, insert “or Executive Members’ business” wherever occurring.

(d) Add new paragraph:

“For the purpose of this standing order and standing order 16, Executive Members’ business is business which has been introduced by a crossbench member of the Executive.”.

(5) New standing order 178A

Insert new standing order 178A:

“Amendments to be circulated

178A If there are amendments to be moved at the detail stage, copies of those amendments shall be delivered to the Clerk’s office for circulation 24 hours prior to the sitting day at which the amendments are proposed to be moved.”.

(6) Standing order 182

Omit (b), substitute:

“(b) copies of the amendment have been circulated to Members.”.

Madam Speaker and members, I have circulated a series of proposed amendments to the Assembly standing orders that will implement a range of matters that have been agreed or discussed amongst members since the election. I will briefly address each of the proposed changes.

My amendment No (1) provides for executive members’ business. This is a provision in the standing orders that was last utilised when Mr Moore was a member of the Carnell Liberal government and participated in debates in the Assembly both as a minister and as a private member. This provision allows for the arrangement of the order of private members’ business, Assembly business and executive members’ business to be undertaken by the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure.

Amendment No (2) provides for changes in relation to the duration of debates or discussions of matters of public importance. The proposed change is for the whole debate to be limited to 45 minutes, with the proposer speaking for 15 minutes and any other member for 10 minutes.

Amendment No (3) provides for question time to commence at 2.30 pm rather than, as occurred in the last Assembly, at 2 pm. It further provides that, in relation to ministerial statements made by members, copies of such statements shall be provided to the Speaker for circulation to all members by 12 noon on the sitting on which the statement is proposed to be made or, if the statement is proposed to be made prior to 12 noon, at least two hours prior to that statement being made.

My amendment No (4) provides for the establishment of the executive members’ business matter. This provides that executive members’ business will occur following Assembly business on a sitting Thursday for a period of one hour. The period is the

same as the amount of time allocated for Assembly business and may be extended by 30 minutes by resolution of the Assembly. The purpose of executive members' business is to provide a forum for Mr Rattenbury to participate in his role as a crossbench member as well as the role he performs in this place as a minister.

Finally, amendment No (5) provides for a new standing order to deal with amendments to bills. Members will be aware that there have been some circumstances where amendments have been proposed to bills before the Assembly for debate which have not been given to other members in adequate time for their consequence and impact to be properly considered. Therefore, this new standing order, 178A, provides that amendments to a bill proposed to be moved during the detail stage must be delivered to the Clerk's office for circulation to members 24 hours prior to the sitting day on which the amendments are to be moved. This ensures that members are given prior notice of proposed amendments to a bill in advance of the bill being brought on for debate.

These changes put in place a range of improvements to the conduct and business of the Assembly, and I commend the motion to members.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (10.56): The amendments Mr Corbell has moved today to the standing orders are indicative of the partisan agreement the Labor Party has with the Greens. They are indicative of a government that wants to do less work and be less accountable to the ACT, and they are also indicative of a government that does not understand the workings of this place and, indeed, will push much of the debate which happens here under the table. It will, in effect, push debate into the back room rather than the transparency of the chamber floor.

In particular, the concerns the ACT opposition have relate to the change to standing order 69(g) whereby the MPI will be reduced to just 45 minutes. The matter of public importance is just that—it is a matter of public importance for the Assembly on the given day. That reflects an opportunity for primarily non-executive members to chat about and discuss the issues that are pertinent to their electorates. The government is scuttling that opportunity to just 45 minutes. We will not be supporting that change.

The government are also proposing to delay the commencement of question time to 2.30 to therefore have a two-hour lunch. We do not think this is appropriate. We have a government that want to sit fewer weeks and now sit fewer hours on any given day. That is inappropriate, but it is indicative of a government that do not want to be held to account by the ACT people or by the opposition. It makes a mockery of the claim that they need more members and more ministers if, in effect, they think they can get the work of this place done in fewer weeks and in fewer hours on any given day.

The Canberra Liberals will not be supporting new standing order 178A, which mandates that amendments shall be delivered to the Clerk's office for circulation 24 hours prior to the sitting day on which amendments are proposed to be moved. We do not think this is reasonable and we do not think it is possible. I think we have all seen in this place many occasions where amendments are brought on closer than 24 hours to the discussion of the relevant issue. However, that is for good reason. In effect, rather than having debates on this chamber floor, the government want to have

debates, they want to have discussions, they want to have deals done in the back room rather than in the transparency of this place. That is what this amendment does—it pushes more deals into the back room rather than having a debate on this chamber floor. The Canberra Liberals will not be supporting the government.

If this amendment gets up, we will not be readily granting leave to the government to suspend standing orders because this is unworkable. If the government want to move this amendment to the standing orders, the government must be held to account and the government must live by those rules. We will not as a matter of course be granting suspensions simply because the amendments they are proposing today are not workable. And, deep down—or perhaps not that deep down—I think those opposite know this standing order is not going to be workable.

Finally, standing order 182 is, in effect, consequential, and we will not be supporting that.

In summary, the amendments the government has moved to the standing orders are indicative of a government that wants to work less and be less accountable to the people that elected it.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.01): I will be supporting these amendments today to the standing orders. I think they are designed in a number of places to improve the running of the Assembly. I turn particularly to amendment (5) around the new standing order on amendments. Mr Coe just made a number of points about this, and I have quite a different take on this provision. I think it will improve the transparency of the amendment process. Those members who were here last term will recall a number of occasions where we debated bills on the floor of the chamber that, frankly, got quite confused. Certainly as the Speaker there were a number of times where I vacated the chair to allow members to catch up on the amendments that were being done so quickly. I think we are going to see in the next few days a couple of bills where we are to go back and repair work from last term where things were perhaps done a little hastily.

Certainly, in my mind I see this playing out very differently from how Mr Coe just described it. Rather than being about, as he put it, deals in the back room, this will increase transparency. What will happen now is that all members will receive amendments 24 hours before the debate. They will have an opportunity to look at them and consider them and to discuss them with their colleagues, in fact, if they so wish. I think this improves both the transparency and the governance of the territory because amendments will not be done on the fly and they will be done in a considered way.

The consequence of this new standing order will be that if members do not have their amendments ready in time, the debate simply will not proceed; the debate can be adjourned. If members suddenly at the last minute discover an issue, they can come in here and seek the support of the chamber to adjourn the debate. That is a perfectly appropriate way to proceed. It may mean some things take a little longer to get done, but we will not have last-minute amendments coming into the chamber. I think that will produce better lawmaking in the territory, which is always something I am sure the community will appreciate.

Finally, on the later start to question time, again, it is far from being something that is an endeavour to have an easier time of it. I note that the Liberal Party supported just such an amendment on more than one occasion during the last term in discussions in admin and procedures. This returns us to the situation that existed prior to the 2008 election. I know a number of members of the Liberal Party observed the difficulty that the 2 o'clock start provided in the sense of being able to attend community events during the lunch break. The 1½ hours did not allow them enough time to get out and attend community events. Actually, I have heard this comment from across the chamber and not just from the Liberal Party. This is actually quite a practical measure to allow people to do things during the lunch break, and so Mr Coe is demonstrating a conveniently short-term memory on this one. The Assembly will now continue into later in the day—I think this was the plan—and so this will not see a reduction in the sitting times as I understand the changes.

MR SESELJA (Brindabella—Leader of the Opposition) (11.04): I wish to make a couple of points. I am not sure about the last point that Mr Rattenbury was making. My understanding was that the Assembly would still be adjourning at 6 o'clock, which is the same time at which we have adjourned in the past. So there is no make-up of time. If he wants to move such an amendment, we would support it. What was put to us was that the finishing time would be the same. In fact it is still unclear as to whether we will have late sittings on a Wednesday. Our preference absolutely is that, yes, there should be late sittings on Wednesdays, as was the case in the last Assembly, lest there be a further limiting of the time of this Assembly.

As it stands, whether or not we have the shortening of the Wednesday sitting, with this agreement between the Labor and the Greens the first thing that they have done is to shorten the amount of sitting hours. Thirteen sitting weeks is at the very low end, I think, of the historical average, and it certainly is very low. To then have a longer lunch break, which effectively means several hours lost, or in fact several days lost, of sitting in real terms is something we disagree with.

It makes a mockery of the case of the Labor Party in going out there and saying, "We need more members." They say, "We need more members in the Assembly; we need more ministers." The first thing they do when they come into this new parliament is to lower the number of hours. How seriously can you take them when they are saying that they are only going to sit for 13 weeks a year and, by the way, they are going to sit for less hours every day and they are going to shorten the matters of public importance that are debated? We disagree with that wholeheartedly. It makes an absolute mockery of it. It will undermine their case for things like pairs, because they are saying that community events and the like should all be able to be handled outside the Assembly sitting hours because of the longer break times.

I make the final point that it completely makes a mockery of the government's case for more members and for more ministers when they are saying they can actually get it done in less time than we have seen before—that the work of the Assembly can be done in less time, in 13 sitting weeks and while now having two hours for lunch.

We will not be supporting these amendments. We think it is the wrong way to go. I also support the words of Mr Coe in relation to the unworkability of the 24-hour

notice for amendments. There is often good reason, and for complex pieces of legislation, there is often back and forth. This will be an unreasonable stymieing of debate in this place. There is always the ability to adjourn when there is too much complexity and too many last-minute changes. The Assembly always has the ability to do that. But to make an ironclad rule that all amendments have to be circulated 24 hours before will stifle the work of this place. When you are only sitting for 13 weeks and for less hours, it is going to mean more of those pieces of legislation pushed out, and we will not achieve as much. We certainly will not be supporting this. I think it will come back to bite the government. As Mr Coe flagged, we will look very dimly on the government then seeking leave to suspend standing orders so that they can get around the rule that they are imposing on the entire Assembly.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (11.07): Laziness? How long did it take Mr Seselja to appoint his shadow ministry? It is the only thing he had to do between the Chief Minister being elected and the sitting today, and he left it until the last 24 hours. So laziness? For heaven's sake, Madam Deputy Speaker!

Mr Hanson: Madam Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, the matter before the house is about Assembly timings and amendments to standing orders. The first thing that the manager of government business does is stand up with this sort of vitriol that is irrelevant to the debate and attack, because he has no substance to deal with the issue at hand. I would ask you to ask the minister to be directly relevant to the matter before the house, which is these unworkable amendments.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, would you continue and keep relevant.

MR CORBELL: The truth hurts, Madam Deputy Speaker. Addressing the issues that members have raised across the chamber, first of all, it is important to reflect that in this parliament, unlike any other parliament in the country, a full one-third of every sitting week is dedicated to non-executive business. Go to any other parliament in the country and talk to the oppositions in those parliaments about how much time they have available to debate matters that they want to put on the table in those parliaments, and they would say to you, "What? A full day out of every three sitting days devoted to opposition and non-executive business? What a luxury." So let us have a bit of perspective, please, when it comes to the capacity of the non-executive members to raise matters in this place.

Turning to the issue of the provisions in relation to the standing orders and the proposal, particularly, which seems to have attracted the opposition's ire, in relation to providing for amendments to be circulated, this is a discipline imposed on all members, including the government. We will need to work through diligently in relation to these matters. The government are prepared to do it. The real question is: why aren't the opposition prepared to do it? Perhaps it is because the opposition are often the serial offenders in this place when it comes to presenting amendments late.

The government does frequently move amendments to its own bills. That is a common practice. But we always endeavour to provide those amendments in advance

of the debate in relation to that bill so that members are familiar with them and indeed can be briefed by the government's officials on the proposed amendments. In contrast, we have often seen amendments coming from the opposition very late, often minutes before a bill is brought on for debate. As Mr Rattenbury observed quite accurately, that does not make for good lawmaking. So this is a provision that seeks to impose some discipline on all members in that regard.

Finally, it is worth observing, of course, that the practice of question time occurring at 2.30 was the practice of this place from the commencement of self-government until 2008. It was a practice that was adopted by governments of all persuasions and it was adopted for good reason: to reflect the fact that often members will be engaged in functions, commitments and meetings during the lunch break on a sitting day. Far from simply taking two hours to eat a sandwich, members are frequently out in their electorates attending functions or meetings. They often have to travel and that travel time plus the attendance at the function was curtailed with the 1½ hours that was allocated for the luncheon suspension. Therefore a return to the two hours provides for members to do that work, and to do it reasonably, safely and efficiently, and still be able to return in time for question time. Members opposite know that. If they are not out working during the lunch break, that is a matter for them. But those are the facts.

Members interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, could you resume your seat for a moment. Stop the clock, please. Would members stop having yelling matches across the chamber. I cannot hear a word Mr Corbell is saying anymore, so he will be heard in silence for the remainder of what he has to say.

MR CORBELL: I commend my amendments to the Assembly.

Ordered that the question be divided.

Amendment 1 agreed to.

Question put:

That amendment 2 be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 8

Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher	Mr Coe	Mr Seselja
Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman	Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Porter	Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall
Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson	
Mr Corbell		Mrs Jones	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question put:

That amendment 3 be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 8

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Dr Bourke
Ms Burch
Mr Corbell

Ms Gallagher
Mr Gentleman
Ms Porter
Mr Rattenbury

Mr Coe
Mr Doszpot
Mrs Dunne
Mr Hanson
Mrs Jones

Mr Seselja
Mr Smyth
Mr Wall

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment 4 agreed to.

Question put:

That amendment 5 be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 8

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Dr Bourke
Ms Burch
Mr Corbell

Ms Gallagher
Mr Gentleman
Ms Porter
Mr Rattenbury

Mr Coe
Mr Doszpot
Mrs Dunne
Mr Hanson
Mrs Jones

Mr Seselja
Mr Smyth
Mr Wall

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment 6 agreed to.

Health (National Health Funding Pool and Administration) Bill 2012 (No 2)

Ms Gallagher, by leave, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (11.20): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I present to the Assembly today the Health (National Health Funding Pool and Administration) Bill 2012 (No 2), which will give effect to the funding arrangements set out in the national health reform agreement as agreed to by COAG in August 2011. The bill will establish for the ACT the national health funding pool, the administrator of that pool and a territory-managed fund for the purposes of receiving funding for ACT public hospital services.

The bill also provides for the establishment of a new entity under the Financial Management Act 1996 to be under the direction of the Director-General of the ACT Health Directorate, which will ensure appropriate accountability and transparency of funds received by the ACT local hospital network from the territory-managed fund and from the national health funding pool.

To provide the Assembly with some background, at the 13 February 2011 COAG meeting, all jurisdictions signed a heads of agreement providing for further reform of the national healthcare system. The heads of agreement modified various sections of the national health and hospitals network agreement, which was agreed to by COAG, except Western Australia, in April 2010. The heads of agreement committed the parties to finalising a national health reform agreement.

In August 2011, COAG agreed to the national health reform agreement, or the NHRA. This gives effect to the commitment made by COAG in the heads of agreement and, in doing so, the NHRA supersedes the national health and hospitals network agreement.

Under the NHRA, all states and territories will receive additional commonwealth funding for public hospitals, and no state or territory will be worse off in the short or longer term. This is because the states and territories will continue to receive at least the amount of funding they would have received under the former national healthcare arrangements. The NHRA represents a major step forward in addressing changing and growing healthcare needs, nationally and for the ACT, as well as providing substantial future increases in commonwealth funding for ACT hospitals.

The ACT Treasury estimates that the NHRA will provide the ACT with an additional \$260 million in commonwealth health funding over the period 2014-15 to 2019-20. Over the longer term, the commonwealth will contribute to efficient growth funding for public hospitals, contributing 45 per cent in 2014-15, increasing to 50 per cent in 2017-18. This means that beyond 2017-18, the commonwealth will contribute 50 per cent of the cost of increases in the efficient cost of providing public hospital services and growth in demand. This will provide a substantial funding base for the ACT public hospital system into the future.

The NHRA reforms the federal financial arrangements between the commonwealth and territory governments in relation to public hospital funding. Central to these arrangements, enabling legislation needs to be developed nationally that will establish a national health funding pool through which all public hospital funding derived from the commonwealth must flow. This legislation also needs to establish an administrator of the national health funding pool.

The bill presented today provides for these arrangements and is focused on establishing for the ACT the structures necessary to allow commonwealth growth funding for public hospitals to flow to the ACT in the future. In developing this legislation, COAG established a Health Reform Implementation Group made up of senior officials of each jurisdiction, and chaired by the commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, to provide national oversight to the implementation of the agreement.

This group has led a collaborative process of drafting common national provisions to be enacted in each state and territory that give effect to the provisions in the agreement for the establishment of the national health funding pool and body, and the administrator of that pool. The Parliamentary Counsel's Committee drafted the common national provisions of the legislation and the bill presented today reflects those common national provisions being enacted around the country.

This bill will allow the ACT to receive efficient growth funding for public hospitals from the commonwealth in the future. To do this, the bill proposes for the ACT the national health funding pool and the administrator of that pool. In addition, the bill provides for a territory-managed fund for the purposes of receiving funding for block grants, and a new directorate which will be established under the Financial Management Act. Establishing a new directorate under the Financial Management Act will ensure appropriate accountability and transparency of funds received by the ACT from the national health funding pool.

More specifically, the Health (National Health Funding Pool and Administration) Bill 2012 provides for the following: adoption of the common national provisions as drafted by the Parliamentary Counsel's Committee; necessary consequential amendments arising out of adopting the common national provisions including the disapplication of certain ACT legislation; establishment of a Reserve Bank of Australia account for the ACT, which will form part of the national health funding pool; establishment of the territory-managed fund for the purposes of receiving block funding; establishment of a new directorate under the FMA to be under the direction of the Director-General of the Health Directorate to ensure appropriate accountability and transparency of funds received by the ACT.

In regard to the national health funding pool, the following reporting arrangements have been agreed. The administrator for the commonwealth will prepare an amalgamated set of financial statements for all states and territories. The format, structure and content of the amalgamated financial statements will be determined by the administrative rules. The financial statement for the ACT will be audited by the ACT Auditor-General. The administrator for the ACT will have access to all required information for reporting purposes and will prepare the ACT's financial statements based on this information.

In addition, the administrator for the commonwealth will also rely on the audited financial statements prepared by the states and territories administrators in order to prepare the amalgamated financial statements. In regard to the state-territory pool accounts, each jurisdiction will prepare financial statements for their state-territory

pool accounts as per their normal arrangements which will be audited by the relevant state-territory auditor-general.

At its core this bill provides for the ACT's participation in a national scheme that reforms how public hospitals are funded. The national health funding pool, a central component of the scheme, became operational on 1 July 2012. The ACT has not had legislation in place to use the pool, and instead has utilised alternative arrangements with the commonwealth until the legislation is passed here in the ACT. Passage of this bill will allow the ACT to use the national health funding pool as required by the agreement.

It is also important to note that, whilst the national health funding pool commenced functioning on 1 July 2012, the commonwealth will not begin to contribute to the efficient growth funding for public hospitals until 2014-15. Therefore, there is no additional commonwealth public hospital funding that will flow through the national health funding pool when it is initially established. Instead, a portion of the current healthcare specific purpose payment will flow through the national health funding pool.

It is also important to note that the national health funding pool relates to national health reform funding set out in the national agreement. However, local hospital networks may also receive funding from other sources that are outside the scope of this agreement.

The bill forms a critical component of a suite of national reforms being delivered under the national healthcare reform agreement that represent a major step forward in addressing changing and growing healthcare needs. More specifically, this bill will provide the necessary administrative machinery to allow the ACT to receive that significant additional funding from the commonwealth for the purposes of our public hospital network. Supplementing the additional funding, the bill provides for improved transparency and accountability in relation to public hospital funds.

The bill provides for an important reform and delivers significant financial benefits to the ACT for the provision of our public hospital services. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Hanson**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Amendment Bill 2012

Mr Barr, by leave, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Community Services) (11.29): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Assembly for its indulgence in suspending standing orders to give me the opportunity to introduce this amendment bill. The bill is intended to resolve two very minor issues arising out of debate on the Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Amendment Act 2012. The amendment bill is necessary to allow the amending act to come into full force when it commences on 1 January 2013.

The first issue the amendment bill seeks to resolve is an unintended internal inconsistency within the amending act in relation to the time frames for early payment for medical treatment. The second issue that the amendment bill seeks to address is to reinstate a clause that was inadvertently negated during the debate of the amending act which was intended to preserve the existing rights of claimants from operation of the amending act until its date of commencement.

This amendment bill is uncontroversial and simply seeks to ensure that the amending act can come into full force upon its commencement on 1 January 2013. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Smyth**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2012

Ms Burch, by leave, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming) (11.32): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I present the Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2012, which addresses an error that was introduced during the debate of the Gaming Machine Amendment Act 2012 in the Legislative Assembly on 23 August in 2012.

As reported in *Hansard*, Mr Smyth intended to increase to 20 the number of gaming machines a licensee might operate before being subject to the proposed automatic teller machine withdrawal limit. However, by referring to an incorrect section, the amendment instead redefined a “small scale relocation amendment” as relating to up to 20 machines rather than 10 machines.

The error in amendment 18 regarding the definition of “small scale relocation amendments” in effect provides that the Gambling and Racing Commission would have discretion to not require a social impact assessment or social impact statement for proposals to move up to 20 machines rather than the 10 as was intended.

The error in amendment 29 regarding the number of machines a licensee may operate before being subject to the ATM withdrawal limit in effect provides that the limit does not apply to a licensed premise if the licence authorises the operation of 10 or less gaming machines rather than the 20 less as intended.

It is clear that the amendment was intended to ensure that the ATM withdrawal limit did not apply to smaller gaming venues, and this bill puts in place the arrangements to which the Assembly agreed during the debate. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Smyth**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Committees—standing Establishment

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (11.34), by leave: I move:

- (1) The following general purpose standing committees be established and each committee inquire into and report on matters referred to it by the Assembly or matters that are considered by the committee to be of concern to the community:
 - (a) a Standing Committee on Public Accounts to:
 - (i) examine:
 - (A) the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Australian Capital Territory and its authorities; and
 - (B) all reports of the Auditor-General which have been presented to the Assembly;
 - (ii) report to the Assembly any items or matters in those accounts, statements and reports, or any circumstances connected with them, to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Assembly should be directed;
 - (iii) inquire into any question in connection with the public accounts which is referred to it by the Assembly and to report to the Assembly on that question; and
 - (iv) examine matters relating to economic and business development, small business, tourism, market and regulatory reform, public sector management, taxation and revenue;
 - (b) a Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs to examine matters related to early childhood education and care, primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education, non-government education, youth services, technology, arts and culture;

- (c) a Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services to examine matters related to hospitals, community, public and mental health, health promotion and disease prevention, disability matters, drug and substance misuse, targeted health programs and community services, including services for older persons and women, families, housing, poverty, and multicultural and indigenous affairs;
 - (d) a Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety to perform a legislative scrutiny role and examine matters related to community and individual rights, consumer rights, courts, police and emergency services, corrections including a prison, governance and industrial relations, administrative law, civil liberties and human rights, censorship, company law, law and order, criminal law, consumer affairs and regulatory services; and
 - (e) a Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services to examine matters related to planning, public works, land management, municipal and transport services, heritage and sport and recreation and matters related to all aspects of climate change policy and programs, water and energy policy and programs, provision of water and energy services, conservation, environment and ecological sustainability.
- (2) The Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety when performing its legislative scrutiny role shall:
- (a) consider whether any instrument of a legislative nature made under an Act which is subject to disallowance and/or disapproval by the Assembly (including a regulation, rule or by-law):
 - (i) is in accord with the general objects of the Act under which it is made;
 - (ii) unduly trespasses on rights previously established by law;
 - (iii) makes rights, liberties and/or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions; or
 - (iv) contains matter which in the opinion of the Committee should properly be dealt with in an Act of the Legislative Assembly;
 - (b) consider whether any explanatory statement or explanatory memorandum associated with legislation and any regulatory impact statement meets the technical or stylistic standards expected by the Committee;
 - (c) consider whether the clauses of bills (and amendments proposed by the Government to its own bills) introduced into the Assembly:
 - (i) unduly trespass on personal rights and liberties;
 - (ii) make rights, liberties and/or obligations unduly dependent upon insufficiently defined administrative powers;

- (iii) make rights, liberties and/or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions;
 - (iv) inappropriately delegate legislative powers; or
 - (v) insufficiently subject the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny;
- (d) report to the Legislative Assembly about human rights issues raised by bills presented to the Assembly pursuant to section 38 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*; and
- (e) report to the Assembly on these or any related matter and if the Assembly is not sitting when the Committee is ready to report on bills and subordinate legislation, the Committee may send its report to the Speaker, or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publication and circulation.
- (3) If the Assembly is not sitting when the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services has completed consideration of a report on draft plan variations referred pursuant to section 73 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* or draft plans of management referred pursuant to section 326 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* the Committee may send its report to the Speaker, or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publication and circulation.
- (4) Each general purpose committee shall consist of the following number of members, composed as follows:
- (a) the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs:
 - (i) two members to be nominated by the Government;
 - (ii) one member to be nominated by the Opposition; and
 - (iii) the Chair shall be a Government member;
 - (b) the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services:
 - (i) two members to be nominated by the Government;
 - (ii) one member to be nominated by the Opposition; and
 - (iii) the Chair shall be a Government member;
 - (c) the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety:
 - (i) two members to be nominated by the Opposition; and

- (ii) one member to be nominated by the Government;
- (d) the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services:
 - (i) two members to be nominated by the Government;
 - (ii) one member to be nominated by the Opposition; and
 - (iii) the Chair shall be a Government member; and
- (e) the Standing Committee on Public Accounts:
 - (i) two members to be nominated by the Opposition;
 - (ii) two members to be nominated by the Government; and
 - (iii) the Chair shall be an Opposition Member.
- (5) In addition, the membership of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure, established under standing order 16, be composed of:
 - (a) the Speaker, as Chair;
 - (b) the Government whip;
 - (c) the Opposition whip; and
 - (d) a representative of the crossbench (or if a single party, the whip of that party).
- (6) Each committee shall have power to consider and make use of the evidence and records of the relevant standing committee appointed during the previous Assembly.
- (7) Each committee be provided with necessary staff, facilities and resources.
- (8) The foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.
- (9) Nominations for membership of these committees be notified in writing to the Speaker within two sitting hours following conclusion of the debate on the matter.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have circulated for the information of members proposals to establish five standing committees of the Legislative Assembly. These are a Standing Committee on Public Accounts, a Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs, a Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services, a Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

incorporating also a scrutiny of bills committee, and a Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services.

The development of standing committees of this place has been a more unusual task than it has been for a number of Assemblies now, given the absence of a crossbench representative or party to sit on any committees of this place. For the first time in a long period of time there will be no crossbench representation on the standing committees of this place. For that reason, the government has given close consideration to how these committees should be structured.

We propose that the standing committees on education, health, planning and justice will be composed of three members. In relation to the standing committees on education, health and planning, two of those members shall be nominated by the government and one shall be nominated by the opposition. In relation to the standing committees on education, health and planning, it is proposed that a government member chair those committees.

In relation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, members will note that it is proposed to establish a committee, again, of three members with two members nominated by the opposition and one by the government. In the normal course of events, the government would expect that it would be an opposition member who would be chairing that committee.

Finally, in relation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the government proposes that two members be nominated by the opposition and two by the government, and that the chair shall be an opposition member. This is in recognition of the very important role that the public accounts committee plays in this place. When you look at the terms of reference of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, you see that its ambit is broad, looking, of course, at the accounts and expenditures of the territory but also every Auditor-General's report presented to this place. For that reason we believe a slightly larger committee is justified, recognising the significant workload this committee in particular will perform during this Assembly.

Finally, I turn to the membership of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure. Of course, the normal membership is proposed for this committee—that is, Madam Speaker as chair, the government whip, the opposition whip and a representative of the crossbench, in this case Mr Rattenbury.

This committee structure proposes a robust and effective committee structure. It is going to be a lot of work for all members on these committees, and we believe this is the most effective one in ensuring that all members are effectively engaged in the work of the committee system. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (11.38): The opposition will be supporting the government's proposal for the standing committees for this place. However, in doing so we would like to place on record that we do not think the chairs of the various standing committees appropriately reflect the make-up of the Assembly and nor do they necessarily represent best practice in terms of holding the government to account.

When you consider the number of non-executive members of this place or, indeed, when you look at the overall numbers of members of each party in the Assembly, we do not think those relative ratios are respectively represented across the committees. We feel this is yet another instance whereby the government is taking undue control of too many committees and, in doing so, avoiding appropriate scrutiny which the committees apply to governance.

Before accepting the motion on the table today, the opposition would like to amend it by including a paragraph 4(c)(iii), and I move:

Insert new paragraph (4)(c)(iii):

“(iii) the Chair shall be an Opposition member;”.

Whilst it is probably clear that the opposition would control that committee, for completeness and so it is consistent with the other committees, we think it is appropriate that the standing order states that the chair shall be an opposition member.

MR SESELJA (Brindabella—Leader of the Opposition) (11.40): I would like to make another point, and Mr Smyth will be moving a further amendment at the conclusion of the vote on this amendment.

We note that the government have chosen with the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to have two members from the government and two members from the opposition. I stand to be corrected on this, but I am told that chairs do not get a casting vote in committees. That being the case, the government have chosen with arguably the most important committee to have an interminably deadlocked committee. They have chosen to nobble the PAC. We know what the strategy is here—it is to take the most important committee in the Assembly and to say, “The opposition will not be able to request anything because they will be nobbled from doing that at every turn by the two government members on that committee.”

This was not put to us in discussions. When the deal had been stitched up between Labor and the Greens and it was put to us how the committees were going to operate, we were not told that they were going to nobble one particular committee lest that committee be able to actually get to the bottom of public administration and maladministration by the government in public accounts.

This is a very poor start for the Labor-Greens coalition if the first thing they are going to do—it certainly does not accord with the Latimer House principles the Greens are so fond of—is to turn around and nobble the PAC from doing any reasonable work. You can be sure that, when it comes to requesting information from the Treasurer or requesting documents from the government, that will be two government votes against that happening at every turn.

We certainly do not support the idea of having one committee where the government sees particular risks for itself having a deadlocked committee at every turn. It is a far worse situation than what we have seen in the past where, in fact, occasionally the

crossbench changed which way they voted and did not always vote with the government. Here we will have government members always voting with the government to prevent any reasonable scrutiny in PAC. That is a very poor start for this new Labor-Greens coalition government. I would say to the Greens member of that coalition government that this requires a rethink and that turning around and nobbling PAC on the first day I think is the wrong way to go. It will not serve the interests of scrutiny.

For the government to have the controlling votes on three committees—which we disagree with—and then leave the opposition with the controlling vote only on one committee, there is no way that that stacks up. We have the makings of a government that is going to act very much like a majority government that will look to control everything it possibly can. That is reflected in this motion today. We certainly will not be supporting that aspect of it.

Mr Smyth will be moving an amendment to align it in the way that it should be aligned, which is what we were told and what was discussed when I had discussions with Mr Rattenbury and the Chief Minister. At no point was I told that one particular committee—namely, PAC—would be singled out for the government to avoid the opposition having the controlling vote on that committee. We certainly will not be supporting it, and Mr Smyth will be moving an amendment to that effect.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.44): I will be supporting the motion to establish the committees today. It is an unusual situation and it has taken some thinking to try and work out the best way to create the combination of committees in the permutation that we have in the Assembly.

Mr Smyth: Nobble it from the start.

MR RATTENBURY: It is going to be a long four years, Madam Deputy Speaker. The tone has been set this morning.

In thinking about this and trying to draw a balance between the two competing desires in the chamber, we have ended up with a situation where there are three chairs each for the two parties if you draw the admin and procedures committee into it, which is an important committee in this place. Certainly, I was of a mind to ensure that the key scrutiny committees had opposition chairs, and both the justice and community safety committee with the scrutiny of bills role and the public accounts committee are particularly important and should have opposition chairs.

Mr Doszpot: They're all scrutiny committees—health, education.

MR RATTENBURY: Of course they are all scrutiny committees, Mr Doszpot, but there is a particular recognition, particularly with things like the Latimer House principles, of the importance of those types of committees in holding governments to account. All committees hold governments to account, and all members of committees have the capability to hold governments to account.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Rattenbury, could you resume your seat for a second please. Stop the clock. I cannot hear what Mr Rattenbury is saying. He will be heard in silence for the remainder of what he has to say. Thank you, Mr Rattenbury.

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think I have made my key points. The other thing I would say is that I had a preference to see four members on all committees. There is an opportunity there to work on a consensus basis, but the Clerk, I believe, has provided advice that that perhaps is not the optimal model. But I think it is worth endeavouring with. Given the workload of the public accounts committee—and there is a very substantial workload on that committee—the ALP approached me and asked if they could have two members on that committee in recognition of that workload. I have agreed to that request on the basis that it is a substantial workload. I trust that all members of that committee will work for the benefit of the Assembly and of the ACT in the significant responsibilities they have.

It is somewhat of an experiment perhaps to have two and two. We will undoubtedly see how it goes. But I think it sits upon those members who nominate to that committee to ensure that it works and to not simply decide they are going to posture over the next four years to prove this vote wrong.

I note Mr Coe's amendment 4(c)(iii), and I think that is a perfectly appropriate amendment. I will be happy to support Mr Coe's proposed amendment.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (11.47): I will just make a few comments. The speech from Mr Seselja makes it clear that the opposition views committees and numbers on committees as power and not about actually dealing with issues and working collaboratively and cooperatively in the parliament that has been elected by the people of Canberra. As much as it hurts the opposition, the people of the ACT voted for an eight, eight, one parliament. That is what they get, and now it is over to this parliament to make that work.

A four-member committee exists. Admin and procedure is a four-member committee in that there are two Liberal members on that committee. So it is all right in admin and procedure, but it is not all right in any other committee. The challenge to Mr Smyth—and you are not known for your collaborative practice at times, Mr Smyth—presuming that you will be chair of this committee, is to embark on your great diversification strategy that has eluded you for however many years you have been in this place and to work with other members in this place to get outcomes on a very important committee. Before you all start crying, "It's unfair; nobody's recognised how important we are," let us accept that there is already a four-member committee and that the Liberals have the numbers on that committee. If the committees are about forcing power, in terms of having the same numbers—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MS GALLAGHER: I am sorry, Mr Coe, in terms of what you are criticising on public accounts, you are not criticising when you look at the committee that has two

Liberal members. I think the challenge here is for people to make this work. It is fair. There are allocations recognising the role that the opposition plays. There is also an acknowledgement that there is a legitimate backbench with a legitimate role in this parliament. That is reflected in this motion. The government will support Mr Coe's amendment. Really, the challenge now is over to you to make these arrangements work.

Mr Coe's amendment agreed to.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (11.51): I move the following amendment:

In paragraph (4)(e)(ii), omit "two", substitute "one".

What the amendment does is restore the public accounts committee to what it should be, a committee of three. That has been the tradition of this place. It has been the tradition of this place to enable the committees to come to a decision instead of being eternally deadlocked. This committee will be eternally deadlocked. That is the shameful and disgraceful intent of this motion. It is shameful and disgraceful that the man who says in his agreement with the government that he wants to ensure an accountable and transparent government that is responsible to the community has abandoned his principles at the first turn. That is what you have done, Mr Rattenbury.

Mr Corbell talks about the admin and procedure committee. The admin and procedure committee has always been that way. It is a different committee. Mr Corbell in his introduction speech for this motion said that having four members on this committee acknowledges its importance; it is a scrutiny committee. Apparently the other committees do not scrutinise the government. So you have to question: what do they do? If the other committees are not scrutiny committees of the government and what it does, what do they do? Clearly, the government is at a loss as to what they do because if they were doing scrutiny we would have four members on all the committees. But it has walked away from this. There is only one purpose and only one intent of having four members on this committee, and that is to nobble the public accounts committee.

The Treasurer is obviously afraid of any scrutiny of his tax reform and any scrutiny of his business reforms. He is afraid that the committee will inquire and will get to the truth of what the government are doing. Otherwise they would not be doing this. This will be an eternally deadlocked committee. Let us have no illusion about it. Two members of the government will very rarely agree with two members of the opposition where it questions what the government are doing. That is the job of this committee. They admit it over there by saying, "It's a committee to scrutinise the government." Scrutiny of the government inevitably will cause the government some level of pain. What this means is that there will be no pain at all because the committee will be eternally deadlocked. There will be no consensus.

We had the Chief Minister on the day she was elected as Chief Minister say she is looking forward to working together with members of the Assembly. There was this outbreak of collaboration. But at the very first turn there was no discussion with us on this committee having four members. We received this late yesterday afternoon when suddenly it had changed to two members of the government on the committee. At the

very first hurdle, her own commitment to working collaboratively with people goes out the door. It is collaboration as long as the government gets its way. It is collaboration as long as the government is not held to account. It is a collaborative approach as long as the government is not called to account.

Collaboration is not acquiescence to the government. Of all of the aspects of this place we have always had robust committee systems that called into account what the government was doing. We were never afraid of the committee system. We never tried to nobble committees in this way and I think it is shameful that today we do it in this way. Indeed, it is one of the most important committees because it looks continually at the finances of the territory. It is an important committee, as Mr Corbell pointed out, because it looks at the reports of the Auditor-General which in the main, you have to say, have not been particularly complimentary of this government over the years. If I was getting a constant beating from people like the Auditor-General because of my poor management then I would be looking for a way to nobble the PAC committee as well, and this is effectively what it does.

If you are honest, Mr Rattenbury, about hoping to achieve accountable and transparent government then you will vote for the amendment because at least then PAC will be able to make decisions. PAC will not make decisions with a committee that is tied in this way. Mr Rattenbury got up and talked at the Indian function the other night about the four pillars of the Greens. I think one of the four pillars of the Greens just collapsed under the strain of Mr Rattenbury being a ministry holder in this government.

The problem for us, and it is a problem for the people of the ACT, is that scrutiny goes out the window with this. I would like to hear what the pecking order is. Is education less important than the health committee? Is health less important than justice? Is justice less important than planning? Apparently they are all less important than public accounts. Which are the scrutiny committees? Apparently public accounts is a scrutiny committee, so what do the education, health, justice and planning committees do? They do not scrutinise? When a draft variation comes to the planning committee, is that not open for scrutiny or is it just there to rubberstamp what the government does?

It is a disgraceful outcome. It should not be supported. What it shows is that we well and truly have a majority government, that the Greens have been subsumed into the government, or is it the government that has been subsumed into the Greens? I am not sure which dog is wagging which tail here or which tail is wagging which dog, because what you find here, of course, is that we have the Greens and the Labor Party in lockstep, as they were indeed for the last four years. They will clearly be in lockstep for the next four years. What they are afraid of is scrutiny. What they are afraid of are the reports of the public accounts committee. What they are not in favour of, and indeed what Mr Rattenbury is not in favour of, is accountable and transparent government, because if he votes this out this is one more diminution of accountable and transparent government in the ACT.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (11.56): The provision for two members

from both the government and the opposition does reflect the particular importance of the public accounts committee, and that is what I said earlier—the particular importance—because, unlike the other standing committees that focus on a particular portfolio, PAC and scrutiny of bills, the justice committee performing its scrutiny of bills function, look across portfolios and across all functions of government. It is a particular importance attached to these committees.

When it comes to the public accounts committee, it is important to reflect on the fact that it has a significant workload. Every Auditor-General's report, looking at every part of the government's operations and functions, goes to PAC. It is a very important committee and there is no doubting that from the government's perspective. The provision of the membership cuts both ways. It is interesting that Mr Smyth only sees it in terms of control and whether or not he gets his way on the committee.

The fact is a membership of four will require the committee to work together. There will have to be an attempt made, particularly by the chair, if it is Mr Smyth, to win the support of a majority of the committee to get the committee to do its work effectively. That will require give and take on the part of all the members of the committee. That is what the government is saying when it comes to the particularly important role that the PAC plays—that there will have to be give and take, that there will have to be a willingness to compromise on the part of all members to get effective decisions from the committee.

I must say it does not bode well, given the comments that Mr Smyth has made this morning but, as the Chief Minister has said, this is the Assembly that the people of Canberra have voted for and it is incumbent on all of us to engage in a constructive and collaborative manner in the committee system. We hear arguments from those opposite about, "Well, you know, it's disproportionate, there are eight members over there and eight non-executive members over there and only four non-executive members on this side the chamber."

The point should be made, of course, that in other parliaments the shadow ministry does not participate in the committee system. Let us just recognise up front that we deal with a hybrid system here in this place. Let us just recognise up front that if we want to be pure about it then every one of you that holds a shadow portfolio should not be on an Assembly committee. But that has never been the practice in this place. So let us just have regard to that when we look at the so-called arguments about balance and representation. Let us just remember that in this debate. It is important that we reflect on the fact that it will be incumbent on all members to seek to collaborate and work together on this committee in particular, as it is in relation to every committee. That will certainly be the spirit, I am sure, that government members will bring to this committee.

MADAM SPEAKER: The question is that Mr Smyth's amendment be agreed to. Before we proceed to Mr Hanson—this is not a reflection on you, Mr Corbell—I did notice in the debate that was going on when I was upstairs that I really need to remind members that when they are debating they should keep in mind standing order 42, that they address the Speaker and that they not address members on the opposite side of the chamber.

MR HANSON (Molonglo) (12.00): I rise today in support of Mr Smyth's amendment because ultimately what the committees are about is the scrutiny of government. That is why we have them—be it the health committee, PAC, the education committee or JACS. It is about the opposition or the crossbench scrutinising the government. That is the important part that they play in the Assembly. If you will recall the last Assembly, Madam Speaker, we heard much from the then crossbench, the Greens party, about the importance of the committee system and the importance of the committee system in holding the government to account.

I think it would be no surprise to any of us here that the government would do everything it could to avoid scrutiny. As much as we hear the rhetoric from the Chief Minister about an open and accountable government, we know that what she wants to do, as much as possible, is to limit the ability of this side of the chamber to scrutinise the executive. So what she has done in the motion that has been tabled today is demand the chairs of various committees to avoid scrutiny in the areas of health, education and planning. Unless it is just about handing out lollies to Mr Gentleman, Ms Berry or others then why is it nominated that it must be a government chair? Clearly, it is to avoid scrutiny.

The committee that has the most significant role, arguably, in holding the government to account and scrutinising the government is that of PAC. It is outrageous and it is inappropriate that this committee be nobbled in the way it is. Through you, Madam Speaker, you are not going to get much love from the government on this issue because the government clearly wants to avoid scrutiny, but my plea would be to the crossbench member of the government. He has to make a decision about the way he is portrayed over the next four years—whether he is going to be portrayed simply as a stooge of the Labor Party, as someone who is in bed with the Labor Party to avoid scrutiny, or whether he is actually going to uphold some of the rhetoric, some of the principles, that he espoused as Speaker sitting in that chair throughout the last Assembly. There was much talk about the committee system and much talk about Latimer House principles. We heard a lot from Mr Rattenbury throughout the last Assembly. No doubt there was much talk, and I heard some of it in the media, about the role that he would play and that he would not just be a patsy of the Labor Party.

I would implore Mr Rattenbury to support Mr Smyth's amendment. Clearly, the government will not because they want to avoid scrutiny. If Mr Rattenbury does not support Mr Smyth's amendment then what he is essentially saying is, "I am lock, stock in bed with the government. I agree with them because I want to avoid scrutiny as well. The last thing I want is Mr Smyth or someone else actually providing effective scrutiny of this government because I am now so much a part of this government and so much a part of the Labor Party."

I do not expect the government will support Mr Smyth's amendment because it has got everything to gain by avoiding scrutiny. We know that this is now a government entering its fourth term and there is much to scrutinise. But I would implore Mr Rattenbury to now say what it is that he is going to stand for. Yes, he is a member of the government. Yes, he is a minister. But he has also put up some principles and today is a test of his credibility. Is he going to be credible when he says, "I'm going to

be somewhat separate”? We see this vacant chair, Madam Speaker, this illusion of separation. If Mr Rattenbury fails to support Mr Smyth’s amendment then he may as well move to that chair because any illusion of separation between him and the Labor Party has gone.

MR SESELJA (Brindabella—Leader of the Opposition) (12.05): When the Chief Minister offered in this new Assembly some desire to work across the Assembly, I took that at face value, and when we had initial discussions about committees it was very apparent and very clear that a deal had been done between the Labor Party and the Greens, which we did not agree with, that there would be three committees controlled by the Labor Party and two committees controlled by the Liberal opposition. But that is not what is reflected here.

However we look at the election result and the make-up of this new Assembly, no-one would dispute that it was a very close result and that the make-up of the Assembly is now as finely balanced as it has ever been. We have a situation where, for the first time, the party with the most votes is in opposition. We are not happy about that, but everyone would agree that it is a very finely balanced Assembly.

This motion today throws out the window what was said by both the Chief Minister and by Mr Rattenbury in relation to reflecting this parliament. It says that the Labor Party will take control of three committees and it will also seek to nobble the public accounts committee as well. So those opposite are using their numbers today to railroad through a system which is akin to majority government. What they are saying is: “We’re not going to reflect the numbers in the committee system. We have nine; you have eight.” And if that is the case, I will simply say, “You had better bring your nine votes every day,” because there needs to be cooperation in this place for this Assembly to work.

This coalition government today have said there will be no cooperation from them; they will ram through what they like because they have nine votes. If they then come to us seeking our cooperation on the various things that this Assembly needs to cooperate on, we are going to be far less inclined to do that. So this parliament will be a very difficult and possibly unworkable one. They have chosen today to make one committee—all agree that it is about the most important committee in the Assembly—unworkable and to make it as difficult as possible for that committee to scrutinise the government.

We know how these things work. We have seen how the Labor Party use their backbenchers when it comes to scrutiny of the government. When it comes to any big questions, they will be voting no to scrutiny. We can foresee that right now. No matter how much any chair tries to work with them, when it comes to it, Labor members are going to go in there and vote no to scrutiny of a Labor government. That is how it will work.

So the Labor Party and the Greens, this coalition government, today have said in this parliament and through this vote: “It doesn’t matter that it’s finely balanced. We’re not going to have the committees actually reflect the numbers in this place. We will have the committees reflect the fact that it’s nine-eight, so we will do what we like.”

As I said earlier, if you are going to rely on the fact that you have a one vote majority, you had better be prepared to bring those nine votes with you on a regular basis—because, if you are not going to show any level of cooperation to the opposition, you will not be getting any level of cooperation from the opposition.

This is a complete nobbling of this committee. This is undermining the statements that I took at good faith from representatives of this government, and it will see potentially this Assembly become a very difficult place to work in, because it does require cooperation. Every time we come into this place and there is a bill debated, it requires agreement, even just for it to work. Seeking leave, the granting of pairs—all of these things require agreement and goodwill.

The coalition government have said: “It doesn’t matter; we’ve got nine. We don’t need to worry about the other eight. We don’t need to reflect how finely balanced this parliament is. We will do what we like.” That is going to be a very difficult position to sustain. If you vote for this, if you vote against Mr Smyth’s amendment, if you nobble this committee today, what you are saying is: “It doesn’t matter. Nine beats eight. We will do what we like.” You had better be prepared to back that up at every opportunity in this parliament. And, as I said, I think that will make for a very unworkable four years.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Ageing) (12.10): I simply seek to briefly reflect on my earlier remarks. I think this committee can work. I think there is an opportunity in having four members of this committee for this committee to do a very important job in this Assembly. I share the views of Mr Seselja that this is an important committee for holding the government to account, and I think that is quite possible.

It is less likely to be possible in the context of the series of declarations that Mr Seselja has made about his unwillingness to work collaboratively. I think that is a disconcerting indication on the first day of the new Assembly, and hopefully that will not carry forward into the committee process. I trust that the four members who are nominated to that committee will seek to work effectively together for the betterment of the territory.

I do also note that Mr Smyth gave a speech in which he demonstrated he was quite exercised by this. He said that he received this yesterday afternoon and he was outraged. I note that in the intervening time, all of yesterday afternoon and this morning, I received no approach from Mr Smyth or his colleagues to seek to discuss this. For better or for worse, I have a casting vote. I have indicated to Mr Seselja my willingness to work with the opposition on a whole range of matters across the chamber. I received no approach, and then I noticed that at the last minute Mr Smyth sat across the chamber and scratched out an amendment on an Assembly notepad. That is how exercised he was. There was no approach. There was no discussion. It was a last minute amendment, scratched out on the floor of the chamber, to make a political point, and that is what this needs to be seen as.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (12.12): I will just speak briefly on this amendment. What we have seen happen here this morning is a lazy opposition that has not read a motion that was circulated to it yesterday.

Mr Coe, the opposition whip, started his address on this motion by saying that the opposition would support this motion subject to the amendment that he had circulated. Then it dawned on—

Mr Coe: Amendments.

MS GALLAGHER: No, the amendment that he had circulated, which he had circulated ahead of this debate: “We will support this motion subject to the amendment I have circulated about the justice committee.” And then we saw what happened. We saw the hardworking opposition actually read it for the first time and go, “Hang on a minute; this doesn’t suit us.” Then we heard Mr Smyth use words like “there will be no pain for the government through this committee”. So it is very clear what the agenda is from the opposition. It is about inflicting pain on the government, as opposed to working collaboratively in a committee system in the best interests of the people of the ACT, which is actually what the committee is meant to do. The committee is not meant to be a pain vehicle for the opposition, which is clearly what Mr Smyth was intending.

Contrary to what Mr Seselja has said—that this is about us refusing to cooperate—this is about us requiring that you do cooperate. You are not known for your cooperative stance, and this will require—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Chief Minister! I have already asked you, or asked members, to be cognisant of standing order 42. You should not be referring to members on the other side as “you”. You should be addressing the chair. Can you keep that in mind, please?

MS GALLAGHER: I can, Madam Speaker, and it is easier to do just that if you are not being heckled by members of the opposition, so I would just make that point.

In my discussions with Mr Seselja in relation to the committees I indicated to him when we met that, yes, we had reached agreement with Mr Rattenbury as per the parliamentary agreement. I also indicated to him that we were considering four-member committees. I made that point. It was clear. He responded by saying that he did not agree with that, and I said, “This is a matter that will be determined by our party room.” So just let us be correct on the record about those discussions that were had—and that this is a reflection of the party room discussion and is in line with the discussion that I had with Mr Seselja.

This arrangement does require the public accounts committee to work cooperatively. I think there is the opportunity to make sure that happens. The control and the capacity for that to happen are firmly and squarely with the chair and the opposition and the approach that they bring to the committee’s proceedings.

Question put:

That **Mr Smyth's** amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 8		Noes 9	
Mr Coe	Mr Seselja	Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher
Mr Dospot	Mr Smyth	Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman
Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall	Dr Bourke	Ms Porter
Mr Hanson		Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury
Mrs Jones		Mr Corbell	

Question so resolved in the negative.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (12.18): I seek leave to move amendments 1 to 4 circulated in my name together.

MADAM SPEAKER: Just before you speak, Mr Coe, in your first amendment that you circulated you mentioned paragraph (4)(a)(iii). I presume you meant (4)(a)(ii)?

MR COE: Yes, I did.

MADAM SPEAKER: Will members be satisfied that we take that as amended as we go?

Leave granted.

MR COE: I move:

- (1) Omit paragraph (4)(a)(ii), substitute “two members to be nominated by the Opposition”.
- (2) Omit paragraph (4)(b)(ii), substitute “two members to be nominated by the Opposition”.
- (3) Omit paragraph (4)(d)(ii), substitute “two members to be nominated by the Opposition”.
- (4) Omit paragraph (4)(c)(ii), substitute “two members to be nominated by the Government”.

The argument that has been put forward by the government, including both Labor and the Greens, is that by having four people on the public accounts committee that will force members of the Assembly to cooperate and be collaborative in nature.

But the very arguments that Mr Corbell, Mr Rattenbury and Ms Gallagher have put forward surely stack up in support of the amendments I have circulated, to have four members on the committees. So, in the case of paragraphs 4(a), 4(b) and 4(d), if it is good enough for the government to demand two members on the committees that they are only reflected in with just one member, surely it is good enough for the opposition in turn to demand that we are also represented by two members on committees.

We do not think that this government are at all genuine in their efforts to be collaborative or cooperative in how they manage the committees that they chair. Indeed we do not think that their efforts to put two members on PAC are part of an effort to be collaborative; they are an attempt to scuttle PAC from doing its job. If the government are so certain that four members on the PAC is the right thing to do, you would think the government would support four members on the other committees as well.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (12.21): You can see the hurried nature of this proposition from Mr Coe. He has made an error in relation to the first part of his motion, which is to omit paragraph 4(a)(iii), which is actually omitting the government chairing the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs. He is actually saying that the opposition will have three members on the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs. It would read, if Mr Coe's amendment was supported—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Corbell! Mr Corbell, this matter has been discussed and we agreed that we would agree with the amendment.

MR CORBELL: I beg your pardon?

MADAM SPEAKER: We agreed that that would be amended.

MR CORBELL: I beg your pardon?

MADAM SPEAKER: We discussed at the outset, Mr Corbell, when Mr Coe moved this amendment, that that was a typographical error, a writing error, and that we would take it as amended.

MR CORBELL: I beg your pardon, Madam Speaker. I did not hear that part of the debate. Thank you for clarifying that matter, Madam Speaker. I appreciate it.

The issue really is that there is no good faith on the part of the opposition in relation to these amendments, because they are not asking that the justice committee be a four-member committee. They are saying that the justice committee should be a three-member committee, and that they chair it.

So there is no good faith on the part of those opposite. They are not even mouthing a consistent argument in their amendment, let alone the argument they have just mounted about why there should not be four members of the PAC. So there is no good faith from the opposition on any of these matters. They are not prepared to say that the justice committee should be four members.

They are not prepared to say that the justice committee should be four members. They want every other committee to be four members, but not the justice committee, which is presumably the one that Mr Seselja is going to chair, Madam Speaker. So I think that highlights the lack of good faith that they demonstrate.

But the issue from the government's perspective has always been that the PAC will have a particular workload. The issue that the government has always seen in relation to the structure of committees is that the PAC will have a particularly difficult workload, that it will have to do a lot of work in this Assembly, perhaps more than it has ever done before. Recognising the particularly important scrutiny role that PAC performs, this justifies it having a slightly larger membership.

That is the government's proposition. That is what I said when I moved the motion. That remains the government's position, that the membership of the PAC should be larger to reflect the particular importance and workload that it will have to carry, perhaps more distinctly in this Assembly than it would in any other Assembly.

So there is no good faith on the part of those opposite, nor is there any willingness to reflect on the fact that the PAC has a particularly important role to play. For those reasons, Madam Speaker, we do not support the amendment.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (12.25): I think we find ourselves in an unfortunate situation now where, as I alluded to earlier, there was actually no discussion that went on prior to the sitting this morning and we have now Mr Coe's further amendment.

If everyone wants to do four-member committees, fine, except that now I have just approached Mr Coe and Mr Hanson and they do not want to do the JACS committee. So I am unclear—

Mr Coe: No, no, we are happy to support it.

MR RATTENBURY: Okay. If Mr Coe—I am just receiving an indication that all four of the committees will now be four-member committees. I think there will be a level of consistency at least. I do not think this is a very satisfactory way to be working this out. I think there should have been some earlier conversations. I am happy to adjourn the debate until later this afternoon if members actually want to take a deep breath and go and sort this out. This might be an appropriate way to proceed and take some advice from the Clerk.

I would be prepared to move an adjournment of the debate if the house would prefer that, and we can actually try and sort this out in a sensible manner. On that basis, I will move that the debate be adjourned.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Rattenbury, you cannot move that the debate be adjourned. Somebody else has to move that the debate be adjourned. Somebody who has not spoken needs to move that the debate be adjourned.

Mr Corbell: I ask for leave to speak again in this debate purely to deal with a procedural matter.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Rattenbury, have you finished speaking on this?

Mr Rattenbury: I have, yes.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is leave granted for Mr Corbell to speak again?

Leave granted.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (12.27): The government would not be disinclined to an adjournment. However, I understand that the issue is the establishment of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure, which needs to meet shortly to determine the order of private members' business, Assembly business and executive members' business. Its membership needs to be established.

Mr Hanson: It is already established.

Mr Smyth: It is under the standing orders.

MADAM SPEAKER: Sorry, could you just—

MR CORBELL: I seek your guidance, Madam Speaker, but my understanding is that its membership still needs to be established and appointed. It needs to be appointed.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Clerk has confirmed my understanding of things, that the part of the motion that refers to the admin and procedure committee is superfluous, because the standing orders already establish that.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson! It is not necessary to establish this committee. Members may wish to consider removing the reference in the motion to admin and procedure. It is superfluous. It does not really matter one way or the other. So the question becomes: do members want to adjourn this matter?

Mr Seselja: No-one has moved it yet, have they?

MADAM SPEAKER: If the debate is adjourned, I draw to your attention that there is the need to establish the committees and then have time for members to notify the Speaker, myself, of membership before the house rises today so that, for instance, the scrutiny committee can meet tomorrow. But it being almost 12.30, I could suspend for lunch and that would automatically—

Mr Corbell: That would do it.

MADAM SPEAKER: That would automatically adjourn it. Before I do that, I just remind members that we have to notify the Speaker, myself, this afternoon about membership of the committees.

Debate interrupted in accordance with standing order 74 and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour.

Sitting suspended from 12.29 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Energy—electricity prices

MR SESELJA: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development. The Greens-Labor agreement establishes a target of 90 per cent of Canberra's electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020. What modelling on the impact of this policy on electricity bills has been done by the government in the ACT? Will you release this modelling and, if so, will you do so by the end of this sitting week?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Seselja for the question. Detailed analysis has been undertaken as part of the development of this target, which is set out in action plan 2, the government's climate change strategy. It recognises that the cost of renewable energy will continue to decline and the cost of non-renewable energy will continue to increase. For that reason, a prudent investment in renewable energy is part of actually protecting Canberrans against the rising costs of energy if we continue to rely solely on non-renewable sources.

The detailed modelling is set out, first of all, in the options that were set out as part of the consultation on action plan 2. In the first instance, I would refer Mr Seselja to those assessments. Secondly, in relation to the final costing for a 90 per cent target, those were matters that were considered in detail by the government.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Seselja, a supplementary question.

MR SESELJA: Minister, when will you be completing that modelling and will you be tabling it in the Assembly?

MR CORBELL: That modelling is complete.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Yes, Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Minister, what impact will this policy have on many lower and middle income Canberrans already struggling to pay their electricity bills, and will you table the modelling in the Assembly by close of business this week?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Smyth for the question. As I indicated in my previous answer, what we know is that the cost of non-renewable energy is going to continue to increase. That is going to increase because the cost of carbon intensive fuels is going to continue to increase and at the same time the cost of network augmentation is going to continue to increase.

These are the factors that are putting the most significant pressure on power bills. For that reason, a shift to renewables, whilst it has an up-front cost, has a long-term benefit in terms of power prices because, in simple terms, the fuel is free. The wind and the sun is a free fuel source. That is the type of investment we need to make for the long-term energy security and price reliability for Canberra consumers.

It is also important to stress that investments in renewables is not occurring in isolation from other policy measures, in particular, policy measures that help save Canberrans money through energy efficiency. What we know from the energy efficiency laws passed by the last Assembly, opposed by those opposite, is going to save Canberrans—

Mr Smyth: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker—can we stop the clock, please?

MADAM SPEAKER: Can we stop the clock, please.

Mr Smyth: Standing order 118(a) says that answers to questions without notice shall be concise and directly relevant. The question was: what impact will this policy have on many lower and middle income Canberrans already struggling to pay electricity bills? The minister has not addressed the impact on lower and middle income earners and their electricity bill. I will remind him that I also asked that he table such modelling.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the point of order, the standing order does require the minister to be directly relevant. The question was about the impact on low income earners. Minister, can you come to the point of the question?

MR CORBELL: Just on the point of order, Madam Speaker, I am addressing issues around saving consumers money through energy efficiency and is not that part of my answer directly relevant?

Mr Seselja interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, can you sit down, please?

Mr Seselja: Madam Speaker, if I could assist? It is not directly relevant to it because it was specifically about what the impact would be of this policy on low and middle income earners. He was asked whether he would table it. He has not addressed the second part at all and he has strayed well away from the actual impact of this specific policy on low and middle income families.

Mr Corbell interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: I have already made a ruling. Mr Corbell, if you could sit down, please. I have made a ruling, and drawn your attention to standing order 118(a), that the answer shall be concise and directly relevant to the subject matter. The subject matter was “what is the impact this will have on low income earners?” The question was not “what impact is this going to have generally or how does this fit into the suite of other policies?” The question was “how will this affect low income earners?” I would ask you to be directly relevant to the question and come to the point of the question.

MR CORBELL: In relation to low and medium income earners, protecting them against price rises is going to be achieved through energy efficiency laws. Energy

efficiency laws are going to provide for low and middle income households to save money on their electricity bills. It is going to save money on their electricity bills in the order of over \$300 a year through energy efficiency. When you take those measures in concert with the—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, would you sit down, please? Can you stop the clocks, please, Clerk? Mr Corbell, the question was not about the legislation that was passed last year. It was about the 90 per cent renewable energy target. I propose to start the way I mean to go on. We passed a standing order that said that answers to questions need to be directly relevant to the question. I will expect members to be directly relevant to the question. Mr Corbell, can you answer the question, which was: how will the 90 per cent energy target impact on low income earners?

MR CORBELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I refer members to my previous answers.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister, will you table the modelling in the Assembly by close of business Thursday?

MR CORBELL: Madam Speaker, I refer members to my previous answer.

Budget—lease variation charge

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Treasurer. In the last five consolidated quarterly financial reports, the revenue received for the lease variation charge was below the government's estimated revenue for the time period. In September 2011 revenue was only \$1.5 million, \$4.1 million below the estimate. In December 2011 revenue was only \$4.7 million, \$6.5 million below the estimate. In March 2012 revenue was only \$6.8 million against \$8.9 million expected. In June 2012 revenue was only \$8.7 million, \$13.7 million below the estimate. In the September 2012 quarter revenue was only \$1.3 million, \$4.5 million below the estimate. Treasurer, rather than making excuses, why will you not admit that this tax is simply not collecting the revenue the government expects it to?

MR BARR: I can advise the Assembly that as at 14 November 2012 there are 95 applications within the system totalling \$21,139,000 that has been determined but not paid since rectification on 30 April 2010. This includes 59 residential developments with an assessed value of \$3.605 million; 14 commercial applications with an assessed revenue of \$1.492 million; five industrial applications with an assessed revenue of \$625,000; and 17 mixed redevelopment applications with \$15.417 million in assessed revenue.

The number of units with LVC payable over the last four years is as follows: in 2008-09, 500; in 2009-10, 532; in 2010-11, 586; and in 2011-12, 540. The lease variation charge is an efficient and fair tax, and the government supports it.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, on 5 June 2012 you and the Chief Minister announced that the government had established an urban improvement fund, with funding to come directly from the lease variation charge. Minister, given that the actual revenue collected is not meeting the government's estimates, will the government continue to fund this promise? If so, how will it be funded?

MR BARR: Yes, and through the budget.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, given that the property market is flat, will you consider reducing the LVC back to the 75 per cent remission rate to provide relief to the building sector and home buyers, which the Treasurer has advised would cost only \$6 million across the forward estimates?

MR BARR: A 75 per cent LVC remission rate applies to a large number of redevelopments in the city currently as a result of instruments I signed prior to the election.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Treasurer, when will the territory collect the \$21 million outstanding?

MR BARR: When the developers pay their LVC.

Government—priorities

MR GENTLEMAN: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, could you outline the key priorities for this government over the next four years?

MS GALLAGHER: Mr Gentleman, welcome back to the Assembly's question time, and I thank you very much for your question. One of the most important responsibilities of any government, and indeed the Assembly more broadly, is to make sure that we stay focused on delivering a very bright future for this city. This was very much at the centre of our thinking when we shaped our policies and our commitments going in to the election. It is now a great privilege for all of us on this side of the chamber to be in a position to deliver on those commitments, and that will be very much at the forefront of our minds over the next four years.

The first area in terms of setting goals for the future is one about transforming Canberra. We have spoken a lot about that. We have a great opportunity over the next four years in our approach to services and also to infrastructure across the city. Projects like the light rail project will transform the city over time. Some of the work we are doing in looking at the role and master planning for the city centres, including the very important work that is done in Civic, as the heart of the city, will be important to the future of this city. The Northbourne Avenue redevelopment project

will not only support the light rail project but also involves the entrance to our city, and the opportunities for transformation to occur on that corridor are real.

We are progressing to meet our renewable energy targets, as was mentioned by Mr Seselja, through the work that we have done in action plan 2. We are continuing to work on planning around infrastructure, building on the big projects in health and in education—making sure that we have great schools and a good health system. Importantly, we are improving, and continuing to improve, our public transport system.

With respect to looking at the health of our urban lakes and catchment management—our water catchments and a management strategy around that—I refer to some of the good work that has been done by Minister Corbell in terms of securing a very good outcome for Canberra under the Murray-Darling Basin plan. Again, this will provide significant ongoing and future benefits for generations to come.

Of course, the centenary gives us a great opportunity to reposition Canberra in the minds of perhaps not those of us who already deeply love this city and are attached to it but that of visitors and potential investors who will come to see what a wonderful city Canberra has grown into, and 2013 gives us a great opportunity for that.

One of the other priorities is improving our regional partnerships. I started work on this in the last term. I plan to continue to put a lot of effort into this over the next four years. We have started the work with New South Wales and with the local councils, and I look forward to continuing that. There is a great future for Canberra as the real heart of the region in terms of looking at where we can potentially make savings and also where we can offer services to surrounding councils as part of the work that we do.

We have also put a lot of effort into the smart city, looking at how we can further develop the education sector. I am not sure who is responsible for higher education in the opposition—Mr Doszpot. I look forward to working with you on making sure that we truly become one of the top education destinations in the world. We probably already are in Australia. Again, there is enormous room to improve there, and to reduce some of our dependence on the commonwealth government. We have a big agenda in terms of digitising the city. Again, that work will position us well for the future.

The other area we will continue to work in is the way we provide services. With respect to some of the work I have started in open government, we will continue with that, and some of the work that the Treasurer is doing about reducing red tape. So it is a busy four years ahead. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Chief Minister, what benefits can the community expect from these policies?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Mr Gentleman for the question. The benefits that will be delivered through the infrastructure plan that we have put in place are real, making sure that we have the best hospitals, the best health services that we can, out in local communities.

Mr Seselja: The best hospitals!

Mr Hanson: They are going well!

MS GALLAGHER: It is going very well. I know it is unparliamentary to respond to interjections but Mr Seselja continues to talk down the health system while we are trying to build it up and make sure that it is the best it can be. We will continue that work.

If we also look at the area of education in terms of building up capacity in our research and educational institutions, there are the partnerships we have created with the University of Canberra, the partnerships we would like to continue and grow with the ANU, as big employers and contributors to our local economy, and of course our role at the heart of region. We know that 25,000 people from outside the ACT come to Canberra to work every day. We provide a lot of services to New South Wales residents. That comes with challenges but it also comes with benefits to this city, meaning that we can provide a higher level of care than other cities of similar size when it comes to, particularly, the area of health.

But there are also opportunities, I think, around some of the normal, general business of government that councils around the ACT deliver, that we deliver and I think there are great opportunities both for savings and improvements to services if we look at how we provide those from a regional perspective.

These will be the key areas of focus for me as Chief Minister. I know there is a focus of every minister in the government and the government as a whole, and I look forward to delivering on them over the next four years.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, what changes will be required within the ACT public service to support these changes?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Ms Porter for the question. There are always ways to improve administrations. I think we are very well served by the ACT public service in this town but we will continue to implement the one government model of public service. It sounds easy on paper. It is harder to deliver in practice. But that work is well underway.

We also make sure that the ACT public service is very aware of what the government's priorities are and what we expect to be delivered over the next four years. Some of the work that the Treasurer is leading is seeking to reduce red tape and, I think, trying to create a culture where ideas and collaborative thinking are

encouraged when we look at opportunities for our leaders within the ACT public service. We continue to focus on things such as the RED framework to ensure that we are, and continue to be, an employer of choice.

We are a large employer in this town. I think we have a very streamlined administration. That is not to say that we cannot make further savings or look for efficiencies in the work that we do. We will continue to do that. But I think it is also opportune at this time to acknowledge how well served the people of the ACT are by their ACT public service.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, a supplementary question.

MR HANSON: Minister, what changes will you be making in the health system to stem the steady decline in the performance of key performance areas and the decline that we have seen in staff culture?

MS GALLAGHER: The premise of the question from Mr Hanson is wrong, so I find that I am not in a position where I am able to answer it, because I do not agree with it.

Hospitals—birthing suites

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. On 7 September you stated in relation to the Greens' promise for a study into a stand-alone birthing suite:

We would effectively be running three distinct birthing services at three different hospitals and for a community our size that would raise some concerns around patient safety.

Minister, do you still hold the view that a stand-alone birthing suite would raise patient safety concerns?

MS GALLAGHER: Yes, I do. My position on that has not changed. In the negotiations that we had with Mr Rattenbury we agreed to have some work done into investigating options around a stand-alone birth centre in conjunction with the work that we have committed to do through the election campaign where we announced that we would be doing further demand analysis for public birthing services on the north side of Canberra. That work will be rolled in together. It will examine the positives, the negatives. It will take clinicians' views as part of that. It will encompass the views of independent midwives and those who support stand-alone birthing services. Then it will provide its report.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, given your concerns about safety and your objection to a birthing suite, why is it that you have agreed to a \$300,000 feasibility study into something that you object to?

MS GALLAGHER: I would have to check the wording on the parliamentary agreement because I am not sure that it does refer to a price tag, but I will stand corrected on that. I am pretty sure it does not make reference to a \$300,000 figure.

Mr Hanson: Well, what does it cost?

MS GALLAGHER: What I am telling you, Mr Hanson, through you, Madam Speaker, is we have agreed to is a piece of work being done that brings together the commitments the Labor Party made in the election around demand analysis for public birthing services on the north side of Canberra. We have to accept that there has been about a 20 per cent increase in public birth demand over the last couple of years so that has changed some of the planning that we have had around the provision of public birthing services. That change has been largely brought about by the changes in the private health system relating to private birth.

That piece of work will also examine any opportunities for the provision of birthing services, including a stand-alone birth centre. My own view is that there will be concerns raised about the potential to deliver that in a city our size and the fact that we currently run two public birthing services at both of our public hospitals. But the review will look at all of those issues and provide its advice back to me and, through me, to the Assembly.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, will the new birth centre at Calvary hospital promised by Labor be delayed to allow completion of the feasibility study contained in the parliamentary agreement?

MS GALLAGHER: No, they are different models, and the birthing service as announced by us in the campaign will be done irrespective of the demand analysis that is going to be examined and the potential for a stand-alone birth centre.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Yes. Chief Minister, what is the cost of the review, who will conduct it and, if there are any changes to the facilities provided, will that mean that the Calvary hospital birth centre will be reduced in size?

MS GALLAGHER: I cannot answer the third part. It is a hypothetical question and it is impossible to answer that without having finished the work. In terms of the costs and who will do it, that has yet to be determined.

Transport—light rail

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services. In an article on the proposed light rail system published by *BRW* on 14 November this year, Hyder Consulting was quoted as saying “it is unlikely a PPP would work in the ACT’s case, as revenue streams to fund the financing would not be strong enough”. Minister, will the government continue to build the light rail system even if a PPP is not viable?

MR CORBELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The question was directed to the minister for urban services.

MR CORBELL: Yes, Madam Speaker. I think the question was directed incorrectly. Responsibility for transport planning, including the light rail project, falls within my portfolio responsibilities, so I will take the question.

I appreciate that there will be a range of views from consultants in relation to the development of the light rail project. We believe as a government that this is a transformative project for our city, and the government is now actively engaged in discussions with a broad range of stakeholders and expert advisers in relation to the steps we need to take to deliver this important project. We remain committed to the PPP model, and all the indications to date would suggest that it is going to be feasible to develop a model, a PPP model, that delivers this project, which Canberrans are looking forward to seeing eventuate.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, will the government proceed with light rail even if no private sector money is provided?

MR CORBELL: I think it is a hypothetical question, Madam Speaker, but the government remains committed to the PPP model. As I indicated in my previous answer, we have no reason to believe that the PPP model will not be effective.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, can you explain to the Assembly in general the government's policy on the light rail?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Porter for the question. This project was one of the key election commitments of the government and a goal that we share in common with our colleague Mr Rattenbury and the policy announced by the Greens. It is interesting, of course, that it stands in contrast to the policies not advanced by those opposite, which did not appear to advance any serious plan for mass rapid transit for our city.

The development of the capital metro project is a transformative project for our city. It is going to deliver not just better transport connections for people who live along the corridor from Gungahlin, the inner north, to the city but is also going to change the way the city develops. It is going to provide opportunities for greater intensification of residential development along the corridor. It is going to drive significant returns in revenue for the government because of the increased development potential that is going to be facilitated by that investment and it is going to be the beginning of a network which drives improved transport connections across the city.

This is a very big project for the government. It is going to take a lot of work. But the response from the community, the response from industry, the response from other stakeholders has been very positive. Right now the government is working in a very detailed way through the next steps that need to be taken to deliver this project.

But let us be very clear. We need a project like this to change the way people think about their transport choices. We need to give Canberrans better transport choices. We need to make sure our transport system—(*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, can you provide a guarantee that not one bus driver will lose their job as a result of building a light rail system?

MADAM SPEAKER: I apologise Mrs Jones; I called you Ms Jones.

MR CORBELL: I thank Mrs Jones for her question, her first question in this place, and it is a very simple answer—no bus driver will lose their job as a result of the development of the light rail network. In fact, what it means is that we will continue to see growth—we will need to continue to see growth—in ACTION’s operations as we continue to improve frequency and reliability of the suburban bus network.

This is not an either/or proposition. This is not about light rail or buses; this is about both. This is about providing better transport choices for Canberrans. This is about making sure we continue to improve frequency and reliability in the suburban bus services that will connect to the rapid corridor. That is this government’s objective.

Schools—Gonski review

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. In the Labor-Greens parliamentary agreement, point 4 on page 6 states:

In the event that “Better Schools” is not legislated by the Commonwealth Parliament prior to the 2013 Federal Election:

- a) Progressively move away from the AGSRC, in consultation with the education sector;
- b) Progressively move to needs based funding, based on the models of loading identified in the Gonski review ...

Minister, can you guarantee that not one non-government school in the ACT will lose a dollar of funding in real terms as a result of this policy?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Doszpot for his question on education. This government I think has shown over the last four years and certainly through our election commitments that we support needs-based funding. That is why in the parliamentary agreement if the better schools reform that flows from the Gonski review is not delivered we will continue to work with school systems, government and non-government, to make sure that they are funded on need. You will note our election commitments where we provided significant support for those children in need in non-government schools.

Mr Hanson: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, on being directly relevant. The question was quite specific. It was about whether the minister would provide a guarantee or not whether any non-government school in the ACT will lose a dollar of funding. The minister has not answered that question. I would ask her to be relevant and answer the question, which is: can she make that guarantee that no non-government school will lose any funding?

MADAM SPEAKER: Although you were talking about needs-based funding, Ms Burch, could you directly answer the question?

MS BURCH: I will come directly to the answer. I note that it is a bit difficult to concentrate when there are constant interjections which you seem to be ignoring, Madam Speaker.

Mr Seselja: On a point of order –

MADAM SPEAKER: Could you sit down, please, Ms Burch, and could you stop the clock, please? It is all right, Mr Seselja. I will start this process of being the Speaker in an educative way and in as conciliatory a way as possible. I am not any previous Speaker; I am the current Speaker. The way that the chamber will work will be in a collaborative way according to the rulings that I make. Question time in the Westminster parliament is not a place where people sit in silence and listen to answers to questions. It has never been the practice in this place and it will not be the practice under my speakership. When I consider that things are getting out of control, I will put a stop to things.

Members really need to perhaps educate themselves about how question time is conducted in other Westminster parliaments, because this is pretty tame compared to some other parliaments that I have observed. I think that members need to get used to the idea that there may be some cut and thrust during question time.

Mr Barr interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: It might be useful for members to concentrate on answering the question rather than attempting to chip the Speaker about how the Speaker controls the parliament.

Mr Seselja: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Two things: one, I would ask you to ask Ms Burch to withdraw her suggestion, the imputation in what she said, when she said you seem to be ignoring the interjections, that you have somehow lost control of the Assembly. Secondly, it is highly disorderly for a minister, in Mr Barr, to be interjecting while you are delivering, which is exactly what he did, using words like “well, it would be a free-for-all then”. I would ask you to ask him to withdraw and, if he has something to say to the Speaker, I am sure he will get on his feet and say it.

MADAM SPEAKER: You have a point of order, Mr Corbell?

Mr Corbell: Yes, Madam Speaker. It is on your ruling, if I may, just to seek some clarification.

MADAM SPEAKER: I did not make a ruling; I was just giving some general direction.

Mr Corbell: I beg your pardon; the statement that you made, Madam Speaker. The government appreciates that there is always some cut and thrust during question time, but I would also ask you, in considering and adjudicating on these matters, to have regard to the fact that in a small Assembly where often some members do not speak as loudly as others that the opposition, or indeed any interjection, can have a significant impact on the ability of a minister who is trying quite genuinely to answer a question and to provide factual information.

During question time so far today there has been repeated interjection, not just on Ms Burch and her answers but on me and other ministers. We have no difficulty in attempting to deal with that, as long as the chair continues to have close regard to that matter. I appreciate the statement and the guidance you have given in relation to how you are going to conduct yourself on these matters, but I would ask, on behalf of the government, that you have regard to the fact that in a small chamber it is very easy for a small number of members to overwhelm a member who is trying to speak when they have been given the call.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Corbell. On the points of order, they really are not points of order. However, I would draw people's attention to, while I will be somewhat lenient about interjection, this is a place where I expect that there will be courtesy and that Mr Corbell has a fair point about not drowning out other people. This is a place where I will expect courtesy. The point that was made by Mr Seselja is correct: if you have something to say, rise at an appropriate time and have something to say. I will not take kindly to sotto voce chips at the Speaker. If you want to make a point of order, stand. On that subject, when someone does stand to make a point of order, anyone else who is standing and speaking must immediately yield to that person. I noticed a couple of times this morning that that did not happen.

In the process of setting up a system of rules in this place, I will ask for courtesy. I will not require an Assembly to sit in silence and listen to people, but I would ask people to moderate the comments that they make, keeping in mind that some people have more capacity to project than others. But remember that I have probably got the loudest voice in the chamber and I will use it if necessary. Ms Burch, you were answering a question in relation to a guarantee. Would you like to come to answering the question?

MS BURCH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What I was saying was that our commitment clearly shows that we support needs-based funding and it is no intention of mine ever to disadvantage any school that has a need for additional support.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on the point of order—

MADAM SPEAKER: Do you have a point of order, Mr Hanson?

Mr Hanson: Yes, I do. I asked before that she be relevant and answer the question. She has not. She was asked to make a guarantee about the funding for non-government schools, that no non-government school would lose funding—it is a simple question: yes or no—and she has not done that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Burch, have you finished answering the question?

MS BURCH: I have answered the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Okay. Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, can you guarantee that not one parent in the ACT will pay higher fees as a result of this policy? An answer would be nice.

MS BURCH: Madam Speaker, I do not think it has ever been in the purview of the minister for education to set fees for non-government schools. I do not think it has been and I do not intend to introduce it.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, would it not be premature to implement this type of reform away from a nationally consistent framework and without knowing the financial implications on all ACT schools from the commonwealth's changes?

MS BURCH: Andrew, across the chamber—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Wall, please.

MS BURCH: Sorry. Mr Wall, you were asking whether it would be premature to implement this before the federal changes. If that is the essence of your question, I would have to agree with you. That is why this says if it is not progressed at a federal level, we will look to support schools based on need locally.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, should ACT parents draw comfort from the PM's guarantee of August this year that all public and private schools will receive more funding under the Gonski plan?

MS BURCH: I thank Dr Bourke for his question, and I do draw comfort from the Prime Minister who has said that, regardless of the school, whether it is government or non-government, there will be additional resources on the table to provide support to those students and those schools in need. Whilst there is much mirth from those opposite, I do not think anyone in this chamber will say that we should not make sure that we provide the support needed to any student in any school in any sector.

It is the Prime Minister and it is the federal Labor government that have put these reforms on the table with a commitment to do that. As I understand it, legislation will be tabled in Parliament House in the House of Reps this week to ensure that that progresses.

Taxation—reform

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer outline the Gallagher government's intentions on continuing tax reform?

MR BARR: I thank Dr Bourke for the question. Can I say how very pleasing it was that the community endorsed the ACT government's commitment to tax reform. I am very pleased with that outcome, Madam Speaker. As much as those opposite might crow, there are still those opposite sitting on that side of the chamber and tax reform was a very important part of this election campaign.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr Seselja interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members! Mr Seselja, I would like Mr Barr to be directly relevant and you are distracting him somewhat. He has had a minute to speak about the election result. Would you like to talk about tax reform?

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So the ACT now holds the title of the most reformist jurisdiction on tax reform in Australia. Whilst other jurisdictions know the reform that needs to be undertaken, we are the only jurisdiction actually doing something about it—getting rid of inefficient taxes and replacing them with more efficient ones. We have a modern and thriving economy that delivers high quality services and infrastructure to our citizens.

However, to continue to fund these services into the future, we need a modern revenue base. So during this term it is the government's intention to continue to put the territory's taxation system on a more sustainable basis in order to provide high quality services and infrastructure into the future. Our goal is to make our tax system fairer, simpler and more efficient.

Tax reform implementation is an ongoing task. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that over the next few years we will become the first jurisdiction in Australia to abolish all tax on insurance. We will continue to reduce stamp duties across the board to assist every homebuyer in this city, every single homebuyer in this city, to buy a house.

We will continue to reform land tax for the benefit of those particularly low and middle income earners who are renting homes in this city and we will continue to cut payroll tax to continue to be the most competitive and lowest taxing jurisdiction for small and medium size enterprises in the country.

These measures are essential to ensure that our economy remains strong and to allow us to continue to make public investment in the future of our city. Tax reform is important and essential to our economic wellbeing. Tax reform that supports

economic growth makes housing more affordable and allows the government to maintain and enhance the high standard of living our community enjoys. It is one of the most central tasks that this government will pursue over the next four years.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Can the minister outline the improvements in economic efficiency that come from the reforms?

MR BARR: Reform measures are all aimed at improving the economic efficiency of the taxation system. By the end of the current forward estimates period, the share of transaction taxes in our revenue base will reduce from 29 per cent of total taxation to 23 per cent. The share of efficient taxes will increase from 29 per cent to 38 per cent, and the excess economic burden lifted from the territory economy will be in the order of \$169 million cumulatively over the next five years. In very simple terms, this means that every resident in the ACT will be better off on average by \$400 per person as a result of the government's tax reforms.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, what will rates increase by in the ACT in the next five, 10 and 15 years under these reforms?

MR BARR: The prevailing wage price index as determined in the December quarterly annually as well as the proportion of revenue replacement outlined in the first five-year tranche of reforms I delivered in this year's budget.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, how many businesses will benefit from the extension of the payroll tax-free threshold from \$1.5 million to \$1.75 million as part of these taxation reforms?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Gentleman for the question and for his interest in cutting payroll tax for businesses, particularly in his electorate of Brindabella. I can advise the Assembly that 115 businesses that previously paid payroll tax will now no longer pay payroll tax as a result of the government's changes. Businesses with payroll above the \$1.75 million threshold will all receive a \$17,125 a year annual payroll tax cut, ongoing, into the future. This will allow small and medium sized businesses to employ more Canberrans.

This is a good thing for the territory economy. It places the ACT as the most competitive jurisdiction in this country for businesses with a payroll of up to \$4.7 million. These businesses are across the economy. They are in multiple sectors. It will be easier for those businesses to employ more staff as a result of this tax reform, and the government have indicated that we will continue to raise the payroll tax threshold during this term of the Assembly.

Work safety—report

MS BERRY: My question is to the Attorney-General. Minister, this week you released *Getting home safely: inquiry into compliance with work health and safety requirements in the ACT's construction industry*. This report has raised some serious issues in the ACT construction industry relating to safety. Could you inform the Assembly about what steps the government is taking to act on this report immediately and to adopt urgent recommendations?

MADAM SPEAKER: I presume that you are answering this question in your capacity, minister, as the Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations?

MR CORBELL: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. But, to be fair, I did commission the report as Attorney-General, so Ms Berry is half right, and I congratulate her on her first question in this place.

Yesterday I joined with Ms Lynelle Briggs and Mr Mark McCabe, the ACT Work Safety Commissioner, to release *Getting home safely*, the report into compliance with occupational health and safety obligations in the ACT's construction industry.

This is a sobering report. This report highlights an unacceptable work safety record in the ACT's construction sector and a disturbingly high level of lack of commitment on the part of the construction sector to work safely and to keep employees safe. It reveals an entrenched culture that sees safety as an administrative burden rather than as a moral obligation and a smart investment for the business's long-term success.

I would like to thank Ms Briggs and Mr McCabe for their detailed report, which really is a wake-up call for everybody involved in the construction sector in the ACT. The report has made 28 recommendations, and yesterday I outlined the government's immediate commitment to taking action as well as our longer term proposal for response.

First and foremost the government has agreed to seven recommendations immediately of the 28 made by the report authors. In particular, we have committed to increasing the number of inspectors in the work safety inspectorate as part of our consideration of the forthcoming 2013-14 budget.

We have also decided to adopt a number of other recommendations, including establishing a community-wide or sector-wide target of a 35 per cent improvement in the serious injury claim rate in the construction sector by the year 2016. We have decided to reform legislation to increase the number of work and safety matters where on-the-spot fines can be issued by work safety inspectors. We will continue with the process to establish an industrial magistrate, a reform that has been welcomed across the sector and which was one of the Labor government's key election commitments.

We will implement better coordination of the work of our building inspectors and our work safety inspectors to make sure we use those resources more efficiently to target and deal with poor practices in the building industry, and we will also undertake

significant reforms to the territory's own procurement processes for capital works projects, including introducing the active certification approach, which has been under close development in my colleague Minister Barr's portfolio for a number of months, as well as establishing comparative assessment of contractors' safety records when taking account of their bids for government work.

Finally, we will take steps to provide for improved registration arrangements for engineers, firstly through pursuing national reform and seeking agreement to national reform for national registration schemes for the engineering profession and also to provide that, in relation to ACT government jobs, these engineers demonstrate their current registration on the relevant register wherever it is applicable.

These are important and immediate short-term steps, but there is much more work to be done in this sector, and, in particular, we will need the leadership and we will need the advocacy of those who work in the sector—the contractors, the employers, as well as the workers and their unions—if we are going to attack the problems we currently see with death and injury in the ACT's workplaces.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, how will the government work with the unions and the ACT construction industry and its representative bodies to make the required cultural shift to a safer and more positive environment on construction sites?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Berry for the supplementary. First and foremost, I will be convening a meeting of the ACT's Work Safety Council, which is the formal statutory body representing employers, workers and third parties when it comes to the regulation of work safety in the territory. The purpose of that meeting will be to win that body's support for the reforms outlined in the report and to help inform the government's more detailed response next year.

I was very pleased yesterday to learn that unions, in particular the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union and the other building trades group unions, and the employer groups, particularly the MBA, had already had an informal discussion about how they together can join forces to do the work and put in place the leadership that is needed at their level to drive change in this sector.

What is very telling about the report issued yesterday is that it does not just put the onus and the responsibility on the government. Indeed Ms Briggs in her comments yesterday made it very clear that employers in particular must own this problem because under the law it is the employer who has the overwhelming statutory duty to ensure that their workplace is safe. Her message, loud and clear, is that the industry must own this problem and must put in place the leadership and processes within their own businesses to drive a safe work environment and culture. That is the only way we are going to make sure that men and women who work in our construction sector are able to get home safely at the end of the day, get home without injury and get home without facing the prospect of losing their life.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Seselja.

MR SESELJA: Minister, over the last 11 years you have put forward numerous changes to legislation in relation to work safety. Yet at the end of that, we have the worst safety record in the country in the construction sector. The question is: how have you allowed it to get so bad and what confidence can the community have that this time, after 11 years, these reforms will actually work?

MR CORBELL: Of course Mr Seselja's question implies that the responsibility is wholly on the government, and that is not what the report authors have said. The report authors have said very clearly that industry must own this problem. The report authors have said very clearly that there is no one reason why we are in these circumstances. But what they have also said is that without leadership on the part of the industry, contractors, their relationships with subcontractors, their relationships with unions, we are not going to achieve the improvements we need to see.

The government said very clearly yesterday that we are prepared to shoulder our responsibilities and do more in our area of responsibility, which is regulation and enforcement. That is why we have committed to the actions that I outlined yesterday and in my answer to the previous question.

But there is also a task ahead of us, for the contractors, for the construction companies, for the managing directors down. They need to also see that safety is not a burden, safety is an obligation. Safety is a moral obligation, not just a legal obligation. We should not accept that there are businesses in this town that do not see safety as a priority and do not factor it into the way that they do their work.

We should not accept that as an acceptable approach on the part of a company. A company, first and foremost, should have absolute regard to the health and wellbeing of its employees and its contractors and subcontractors. That is the clear and overwhelming message from this report.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, when will the government provide its formal response to this report?

MR CORBELL: I thank Dr Bourke for his supplementary question. The government is committed to providing a detailed response to each recommendation of the inquiry's report by the end of February next year. This will be a comprehensive response and will demonstrate our commitment to tackling these issues. It will be developed in consultation with and informed by the feedback of stakeholders in the industry, particularly employer groups, unions and workers themselves.

Waste—green bins

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development. Minister, on 27 August 2012 in response to the Canberra Liberals announcement of a garden waste bin, you were quoted in the *Canberra City News* as saying that the "cost would be \$19 million per year". Subsequently on 18 October

2012, the Treasury confirmed that the cost was only \$7.5 million per year. Minister, why did you mislead the community on the cost of a kerbside garden bin collection?

MR CORBELL: I didn't.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Wall, a supplementary question.

MR WALL: Minister, did you use false numbers in persuading the ACT Greens to backflip on their previously stated support for green bins?

MR CORBELL: No.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Seselja.

MR SESELJA: Which false numbers didn't you use? Minister, on 15 June 2012 you stated:

The option for a Residual Material Recovery Facility will cost \$8.4 million per year, compared with implementing a third bin which would cost \$20 million per year.

Given that Treasury has costed a third bin service at \$7.5 million per year, will you reconsider your position on green bins?

MR CORBELL: No, I will not, and the reason for that is that the Treasury has costed the Liberals' assumptions around the delivery of the service, and that is the mechanism that is used in the policy costings process. But I would draw members' attention to the advice which the government has received and which we believe continues to be an accurate assessment, and that is the report commissioned from Hyder Consulting that looked in detail at the different cost options.

Of course, the other question that arises here is about cost effectiveness. Is the Liberal Party's proposal going to increase recycling rates? Is it going to see more green waste recycled? And we know the answer to that is no, it is not. The reason it is not is that we already achieve a recycling rate for green waste of over 90 per cent, and we do that at no cost to taxpayers. So the real question for the government is: does it make sense to spend taxpayers' money to achieve no net benefit, no increase in the recycling rate? The government's answer to that is, no, it does not make sense.

MS PORTER: A supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, could you explain to the Assembly the government's alternative policy with regard to green waste?

MADAM SPEAKER: Could you hang on a second, please, Mr Corbell. You will just have to be patient with me. I am learning some of these things as we go along. I was wanting to clarify whether that was entirely in order. I believe it is. Perhaps for the benefit of Mr Corbell, you might repeat the question.

MR CORBELL: I heard it. The government's position in relation to matters of green waste is to focus on reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill. At the moment we achieve a very high level of diversion of green, garden waste from landfill through the existing arrangements, existing arrangements that have supported local businesses like Corkhills, made sure that they employ many Canberrans, contribute to our economy and do so without any cost to taxpayers. We think that those arrangements should continue, because they are the most cost-efficient arrangements and efficient services without a burden on taxpayers. I thought that was what the Liberal Party campaigned on at the last election.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, the question is about your policy.

MR CORBELL: Our policy is to focus on other forms of green waste that are currently not being diverted from landfill, in particular the organic food waste which currently ends up in the common, general collection rubbish bin of most Canberra households. There is an enormous amount of food waste, another form of organic waste, that is currently going to landfill. It is a major contributor to landfill and to the emissions that are generated from landfill. For that reason, the government's focus is on putting in place policies such as a mixed waste residual recovery facility to separate that food waste from the general waste stream and to provide for it to be recycled.

We will divert tens of thousands of tonnes of food waste from the general waste stream, waste that is currently ending up in landfill, that can be usefully used for other purposes through recycling efforts. That is where the government's policy sits. *(Time expired.)*

Government—directorates

MRS JONES: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, on 12 November 2012 you announced a restructuring of the ACT government directorates which includes transferring aspects of the Treasury Directorate into the Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate. Chief Minister, can you state now that no ACT public servant will lose their job or be given a redundancy as a result of these changes?

MS GALLAGHER: Yes, I can. The changes are already in place.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Chief Minister, the last time there were administrative arrangement changes under the Hawke review millions of taxpayer funds were used to reshuffle public servants. Will this cost be incurred again?

MS GALLAGHER: No. This has affected just over 100 staff, I believe, and the changes are done without any significant cost impact at all. There will be some small costs associated, I imagine, with changing the directorate letterhead or things like that, but it will be very minimal and it will be done as cheaply as possible because it will have to be done in a budget neutral sense.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Chief Minister, can you give us an indication of how much this small amount will be?

MS GALLAGHER: No, I cannot at this point in time. As I said, I cannot say it would be zero dollars but it would be very minimal and it will be done within the existing budget appropriations.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Chief Minister, when was the decision taken to restructure these directorates?

MS GALLAGHER: Prior to the announcement being made.

Education—policy

MS PORTER: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. I refer to the recently released data on student literacy and numeracy showing the ACT is the highest performer of the states and territories. Can the minister detail for the Assembly the priorities she will set to ensure that the ACT retains its position at the top?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Porter for her question. The ACT Labor government is committed to ensuring that every child is given the best education possible, whatever school they go to. In the ACT we have had great success in this, and we are committed to ensuring that we retain our position as the best performing jurisdiction in Australia. We will do this by continuing to provide high quality education to our students, continuing to invest in the high quality of our teachers and continuing to build and modernise our school infrastructure.

In the last election ACT Labor set out a comprehensive policy to maintain our high quality education. My top priority as education minister will be to implement this policy. Labor is committed to supporting the national review of school funding and the transition to a needs-based funding system to provide fairer funding for every Canberra student in both public and non-government schools.

For school infrastructure we will provide \$28 million for upgrading Belconnen high, \$8 million for a numeracy centre at Caroline Chisholm School, \$70 million to upgrade many of our older schools, \$51 million for a new primary school at Coombs, and \$1 million to upgrade canteen services in public schools.

No-one, of course, could forget the Canberra Institute of Technology, although I do need to say that Mr Doszpot managed to forget that in the last election. I am still waiting for that to come through.

MADAM SPEAKER: Relevance Ms Burch.

MS BURCH: We will build a new \$7.5 million CIT learning centre at Tuggeranong. It will be a particular focus of mine as education minister to look after our students in need, including those vulnerable students who have a disability or difficulties at home. Labor will also provide \$10 million over four years to support students with learning disabilities in mainstream and special schools. We will provide \$12 million for more in-class support for teachers and students at risk and invest \$14 million in pregnant and parenting students to ensure that they stay engaged in education at the new learning centre, called Canberra College Cares.

There is \$1.6 million to continue therapy assistance in schools, and for non-government schools we will be providing over \$18 million in needs-based funding over the next four years. Additional funding for non-government schools will be through over \$2 million in smart school, smart students grants. These are only some of the commitments to education, but implementing all of them on budget and on time will be my priority.

In doing this, I want to ensure that our education system does not lose sight of what is most important—that is, the job of turning out young citizens who can read, write and understand mathematics. Without these basic foundations, none of the other important things that our schools provide count for much, and it is what the parents focus on. I want to make sure that we have a system that continues to talk to our students and their parents and to listen to what they have to say and to respond.

Through a combination of quality teaching and a focus on good results for all our students, I know that the ACT will continue to maintain its position as the best achieving jurisdiction in Australia.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Can the minister provide some detail on what the literacy and numeracy data reveals?

MS BURCH: The NAPLAN results are critical to understanding how our students are performing in literacy and numeracy. In turn they help our schools to focus on the needs of students. Results from the tests for 2012 show that the ACT continues to be among the highest performing in the country. Indeed the ACT's mean scores were the highest or equal highest in the nation in 16 out of the 20 areas tested.

The ACT consistently has a high proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN testing. That is the case nationally. This has been the case since NAPLAN testing began. The ACT has ranked first or equal first nationally in reading across all years since 2008. In grammar we have ranked first or equal first in years 5, 7 and 9. We have seen a real improvement in reading, writing and grammar and punctuation for students in years 3 and 5 since 2008. In year 5 we have seen an improvement in the results for numeracy.

The ACT has continued to achieve excellent results in grammar and punctuation across all year levels, ranking the highest or equal highest in Australia. And the good

news continues, with almost 96 per cent of year 3 students achieving at or above the minimum standard in literacy and numeracy. Our results for years 7 and 9 for this show that on average they are a full year ahead of their peers in other states. In years 5, 7 and 9 students scored the highest or equal highest in the country in relation to writing. In numeracy the ACT has the equal highest mean score across all school levels.

These strong and consistent results do not occur by accident. They are a result of a lot of hard work and dedication from teachers, parents and students, and justify the record investment made by this government in our education system.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, how will the government's commitment to a centre for excellence at the Caroline Chisholm school in my electorate, and your electorate, help build on this success?

MADAM SPEAKER: Sorry, Mr Gentleman. Could you repeat that question, please?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes. How will the government's commitment to a centre for excellence at the Caroline Chisholm school—it was mentioned in the minister's answer—help build on this success?

MS BURCH: I do thank Mr Gentleman for his question and his keen interest in the students and families and our education system in the most wonderful electorate of Brindabella. The centre for excellence in Caroline Chisholm shows the government's recognition of the need to raise the profile and participation of the students to a higher level in mathematics. Numeracy results show a significant gap and an entrenched disengagement for students at a number of our Tuggeranong schools.

The Caroline Chisholm school in the senior campus, which was opened in 1983, is long overdue for refurbishment and enhancement. The new centre at Caroline Chisholm will provide our students with first-class modern facilities that will spark our students' interest and actively engage them in the pursuit of a future in mathematics.

It will include mathematics laboratories with observation spaces, open and flexible learning studios and areas, a lecture theatre, video conferencing technology, a resource centre and external spaces to support student learning. In short, it will provide a modern building that is not just about providing spaces but spaces where students will long to learn and have very good outcomes that will hold them well in their future life.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, thank you for your mention of the CIT. Can you give us an update on how the inquiry into the CIT bullying issues are progressing, as was promised by your predecessor?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Doszpot for his question. I wait in anticipation for any input he has on CIT. The response for CIT is progressing well. They are providing reports to me as required and all things are progressing well. As I understand it, a significant number of CIT staff have undertaken the appropriate training and I am very comfortable with the progress that I have seen to date.

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

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Standing order 191—Amendments to:

Civil Unions Bill 2011, dated 31 August and 3 September 2012.

Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2011, dated 3 and 4 September 2012.

Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2011, dated 4 September 2012.

Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Amendment Bill 2011, dated 3 and 4 September 2012.

ACT Legislative Assembly Secretariat—Annual Report 2011-2012—

Annual Report, dated September 2012.

Erratum, dated 1 November 2012.

Auditor-General Act—Auditor-General's Reports Nos—

7/2012—Annual Report 2011-12, dated 28 September 2012.

9/2012—Grants of Legal Assistance, dated 14 November 2012.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, pursuant to subsection 12(5)—Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission—Report 9 of 2012—Final Report—ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report 2009-10, dated September 2012.

Daniel Morcombe Foundation—Correspondence received from the Hon Peter Slipper MP, Federal Member for Fisher.

Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 10 April 2008, as amended 21 August 2008—Report for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, dated 3 October 2012.

Estimates 2012-2013—Select Committee—Pursuant to standing order 253A—

Answers to questions on notice and questions taken on notice, as at 11 September 2012.

Schedule of outstanding questions on notice and questions taken on notice, as at 11 September 2012.

Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services—Standing Committee (Seventh Assembly)—Report 15—*Draft variation to the Territory Plan No 306—Residential development, estate development and leasing codes*, dated 19 September 2012, including a dissenting report (*Mr Coe*), together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

Ms Gallagher presented the following papers, which were circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2011-2012—

Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate (2 volumes), dated 17 and 18 September 2012.

ACT Public Service—State of the Service Report (incorporating the Commissioner for Public Administration), dated 24 September 2012.

Executive contracts Papers and statement by minister

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education): For the information of members, I present the following papers:

Public Sector Management Act, pursuant to sections 31A and 79—Copies of executive contracts or instruments—

Long-term contracts:

- Adrian Walsh, dated 16 October 2012.
- Anne Glover, dated 15 August 2012.
- Benjamin Ponton, dated 14 September 2012.
- Christopher Reynolds, dated 22 August 2012.
- Fiona Barbaro, dated 5 November 2012.
- Karen Doran, dated 17 September 2012.
- Kim Richard Smith, dated 16 August 2012.
- Kim Salisbury, dated 10 September 2012.
- Liesl Centenera, dated 15 October 2012.
- Lisa Holmes, dated 9 October 2012.
- Loretta Zamprogno, dated 27 August 2012.
- Meg Brighton, dated 11 October 2012.
- Melissa Tierney, dated 14 November 2012.
- Penny Farnsworth, dated 13 September 2012.

Short-term contracts:

- Adrian Scott, dated 12 September 2012.
- Alice Tibbitts, dated 5 September 2012.
- Andrew Taylor, dated 6 September 2012.
- Anthony Graham, dated 20 November 2012.
- Austin Kenney, dated 24 October 2012.

Bianca Kimber, dated 6 September 2012.
Carolyn Grayson, dated 9 November 2012.
Christopher Cole, dated 10 September 2012.
Daniel Stewart, dated 12 November 2012.
David Metcalf, dated 15 October 2012.
David Power, dated 17 October 2012.
Douglas Gillespie, dated 6 September 2012.
Geoffrey Rutledge, dated 12 September 2012.
Jillian Paull, dated 5 October 2012.
John Lundy, dated 11 September 2012.
Jonathan Sibley, dated 10 August 2012.
Lisa Salerno, dated 5 October 2012.
Lynda Tooth, dated 27 August 2012.
Lyndall Kennedy, dated 24 October 2012.
Margaret Jones, dated 11 September 2012.
Mark Crossweller, dated 6 September 2012.
Mary Toohey, dated 6 September 2012.
Michael Edwards, dated 15 October 2012.
Natalie Wise, dated 10 September 2012.
Neale Guthrie, dated 17 August 2012.
Nicole Kefford, dated 14 September 2012.
Peter Brayshaw, dated 12 September 2012.
Philip Canham, dated 8 November 2012.
Rhonda Maher, dated 29 June 2012.
Richard Bontjer, dated 12 September 2012.
Russell Noud, dated 15 October 2012.
Sandra Georges, dated 24 September 2012.
Stephen Alegria, dated 11 September 2012.
Susan Lebish, dated 9 October 2012.
Therese Gehrig, dated 9 and 11 May 2012.
Wendy Cuzner, dated 27 August 2012.
William Rodgers, dated 12 September 2012.

Contract variations:

Alison Playford, dated 13 September 2012.
Allan McLean, dated 19 and 28 October 2012.
Brett Stanton (2), dated 5 and 12 September 2012.

Bronwen Overton-Clarke, dated 19 and 24 October 2012.
Bruce Fitzgerald, dated 12 and 19 November 2012.
Colm Mooney, dated 9 and 22 October 2012.
David Matthews, dated 19 and 26 October 2012.
Helen Pappas, dated 3 and 10 September 2012.
Leanne Cover, dated 3 and 17 September 2012.
Lois Ford, dated 19 and 26 October 2012.
Maureen Sheehan, dated 19 and 25 October 2012.
Meredith Whitten, dated 19 and 30 October 2012.
Michael Kegel, dated 12 and 19 November 2012.
Paul Lewis, dated 3 and 14 September 2012.
Richard Baumgart, dated 19 and 26 October 2012.
Shane Kay, dated 28 August 2012.
Stephen Gniel, dated 3 and 12 September 2012.
William Mudge, dated 9 and 19 October 2012.

I ask leave to make a short statement in relation to the papers.

Leave granted.

MS GALLAGHER: I present another set of executive contracts. These are tabled in accordance with sections 31A and 79 of the Public Sector Management Act which requires the tabling of all director-general and executive contracting contract variations. Contracts were previously tabled on 24 August. Today I present 14 long-term contracts, 37 short-term contracts and 19 contract variations. The details of the contracts will be circulated to members.

Papers

Ms Gallagher presented the following papers, which were circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting:

Administrative arrangements—

Administrative Arrangements 2012 (No 2)—Notifiable Instrument NI2012-593 (Special Gazette No S5, Monday 19 November, 2012).

Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Ministerial Appointment 2012 (No 1) (Special Gazette No S4, Friday 9 November, 2012).

Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Ministerial Appointment 2012 (No 2)—Notifiable Instrument NI2012-580, dated 9 November 2012.

Parliamentary Agreement for the 8th Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory—Agreement between Ms Katy Gallagher MLA, Leader of the Australian Labor Party, ACT Branch and Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA, ACT Greens Member for Molonglo, 2 November 2012.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2011-2012—Health Directorate, dated 13 September 2012.

Mr Barr presented the following papers, which were circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2011-2012—

ACTEW Corporation Limited, dated 19 September 2012.

ACTTAB Limited, dated 3 September 2012.

ACT Insurance Authority (including Office of the Nominal Defendant of the ACT), dated 18 September 2012.

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission, dated 13 September 2012.

Totalcare Industries Limited—Special Purpose Financial Report for the period 1 July 2011 to 29 February 2012.

Treasury Directorate (2 volumes), dated 18 September 2012.

Financial Management Act—instrument Paper and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Community Services): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 47—Instrument of approval of guarantee—FRV Royalla Solar Farms Pty Limited, dated 31 August 2012.

I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the paper.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: Section 47 of the Financial Management Act 1996 entitles the Treasurer to approve a guarantee by the territory for the payment of money or performance of an obligation under a contract. The guarantee comes into effect if the Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Act 2011 is repealed, amended or has conditions imposed that amends the feed-in tariff entitlements. The guarantee extends for the period between the date of the grant of the feed-in tariff entitlement and 31 March 2034.

The guarantee entitles the proponent to be paid an amount by the territory to place it in an equivalent financial position as it would have been had the FIT entitlement not been varied. The undertaking does not include payment for losses of future earnings or profits. The guarantee was a necessary element to facilitate the proponent securing necessary financing, and I commend this instrument to the Assembly.

Financial Management Act—instruments Papers and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Community Services): For the information of members, I present the following papers:

Financial Management Act—Instruments, including statements of reasons, pursuant to—

Section 16—Directing a transfer of appropriations from the Treasury Directorate to the Commerce and Works Directorate, dated 23 November 2012.

Section 16B—Authorising the rollover of undisbursed appropriation of the—
Canberra Institute of Technology, dated 22 November 2012.

Exhibition Park Corporation, including a statement of reasons, dated 5 October 2012.

Shared Services Centre, dated 22 November 2012.

Section 18A—Authorisations of expenditure from the Treasurer's Advance to the—

Community Services Directorate, dated 13 September 2012.

Community Services Directorate, dated 13 September 2012.

Economic Development Directorate, dated 13 September 2012.

I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the papers.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: As required by the Financial Management Act 1996 I table a number of instruments associated with sections 16B and 18 of the act. Advice on each instrument's direction and a statement of reasons must be tabled in the Assembly within three sitting days after it is given. I table a total of eight instruments today for the following.

Section 16 of the FMA allows for the transfer of responsibility for a service or function from an entity for which an appropriation is made to another entity, and this package includes one instrument authorised under section 16 of the act. The instrument authorises the transfer of \$3.976 million from the Treasury Directorate to the Commerce and Works Directorate for the management and responsibility of the first home owners grant and first home owners boost national partnership payments.

Section 16B of the FMA allows for appropriations to be preserved from one financial year to the next, as outlined in an instrument signed by myself as Treasurer. This package includes three instruments authorised under section 16B of the act. The first authorises a rollover of \$705,000 in capital injection for the Exhibition Park

Corporation for the refurbishment of the Budawang Pavilion and the use of non-potable water for irrigation at Exhibition Park.

The second instrument authorises the rollover of \$109,000 in net cost of outputs for the Shared Services centre to complete a request for proposal and feasibility study for the data centre infrastructure project.

The third instrument authorises the rollover of \$1.07 million in capital injection to the Canberra Institute of Technology for the new CIT Learning Centre, Tuggeranong, for the design, for asbestos removal, and remediation of the Watson campus and building improvements.

Section 18 of the FMA provides for the authorisation of expenditure from the Treasurer's advance. This package includes four instruments authorised under section 18 of the act for the following: \$3.75 million in net cost of outputs to the Economic Development Directorate for Pace Farms' conversion of the Parkwood farm from a cage to barn egg production facility; \$1 million in capital injection for the Community Services Directorate to support the construction of the boundless national playground; \$90,000 in net cost of outputs for the Community Services Directorate to support the establishment of a single service hub to support the ACT gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex community through Diversity ACT Community Services; and \$40,000 in net cost of outputs to the Economic Development Directorate for the young pioneers program.

Additional details regarding all instruments are provided in the statement of reasons accompanying each of the instruments I table today, and I commend these to the Assembly.

Financial Management Act—consolidated financial report Paper and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Community Services): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 26—Consolidated Financial Report—Financial quarter ending 30 September 2012.

I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the paper.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: I present to the Assembly the September quarter 2012 consolidated financial report for the territory. This report is required under section 26 of the Financial Management Act 1996. The September quarter headline net operating balance for the general government sector was a surplus of \$82 million. This result was \$28.3 million greater than the year to date budget of \$53.7 million. This

improvement is mainly due to higher commonwealth grant payments than anticipated, associated with the national healthcare SPP and higher than anticipated revenues and dividends on financial investments.

Expenses were broadly in line with the year to date budget, with only marginally lower suppliers and services expenditure. On an Australian accounting standard basis, the general government sector recorded a surplus of \$152.5 million compared to a year to date budget surplus of \$67.4 million. The improvement here is mainly due to higher capital gains on investments to the superannuation provision account associated with strong performance of the global equity markets in the first quarter.

Financial Management Act—consolidated annual financial statements 2011-2012

Paper and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Community Services): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 25—Consolidated Annual Financial Statements, including audit opinion—2011-2012 financial year, dated 26 and 27 September 2012.

I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the paper.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: I present to the Assembly the 2011-12 consolidated annual financial statements for the territory. I am pleased to report that the consolidated statements received an unqualified audit opinion from the Auditor-General on 28 September 2012. The final 2011-12 headline net operating balance for the general government sector is a surplus of \$43.8 million, representing a \$163.9 million improvement from the 2011-12 estimated outcome.

In an election year, an audit opinion is required on the territory's financial statements one month earlier, aligning the submission of the territory's financial statements with the audit of agency financial statements. As a result of agency audit findings, the headline net operating balance declined by \$6.6 million compared to the June interim result. The variation to the interim outcome is mainly due to the identification of capital works expenditure during agency audit processes that was more appropriately classified as expenses rather than capitalised.

While key financial indicators in the balance sheet have deteriorated compared to 30 June 2011, largely due to the rating factor utilised under accounting standards to value employee liabilities, the general government sector still demonstrates a very strong financial position.

Net debt remains negative, indicating the territory's cash reserves and investments are greater than our gross debt liabilities, and net worth remains very strong at \$13.8 billion. Whilst the 2011-12 final outcome indicates we are in a surplus position, this result was largely driven by one-off accounting adjustments, including the accounting for unassessed revenue for taxation purposes by ACTEW Corporation, the advance receipt of commonwealth grants, lower expenditure, actuarial re-evaluations, and higher returns from land-related activities.

These impacts are not expected to flow through to forward estimates; so the government remains mindful of the need to return the budget to surplus in the fiscal year 2015-16 in line with our 2012-13 budget plan. The next update to the territory's financial position will be released with the budget review in February of next year.

The financial statements I present today have been prepared in accordance with the Australian accounting standards and are in line with the requirements of the Financial Management Act 1996. I commend the 2011-12 consolidated annual financial statements for the territory and audit opinion to the Assembly.

Papers

Mr Barr presented the following papers, which were circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2011-2012—

Economic Development Directorate (1 volume), dated 7 September 2012.

Exhibition Park Corporation, dated 14 September 2012.

Land Development Agency, dated 4 September 2012.

Mr Corbell presented the following papers, which were circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2011-2012—

ACT Electoral Commission, dated 31 August 2012.

ACT Human Rights Commission, dated 24 September 2012.

ACT Ombudsman, dated 12 September 2012, including a corrigendum.

Director of Public Prosecutions, dated 24 September 2012.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate (2 volumes), dated 14 September 2012.

Legal Aid Commission (ACT), dated 15 August and 5 September 2012.

Public Advocate of the ACT, dated 24 September 2012.

Public Trustee for the ACT, dated 7 August 2012.

Victims of Crime Support Program (incorporating Victims of Crime Commissioner, Victim Support ACT and Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Act 1983), dated September 2012.

ACT Criminal Justice—Statistical Profile 2012—September quarter.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2010-2011—ACT Policing, dated 7 September 2012, in accordance with the Policing Arrangement between the Australian and the Australian Capital Territory Governments.

Crimes (Controlled Operations) Act, pursuant to subsection 28(9)—ACT Policing Controlled Operations—Annual Report 2011-2012, dated 7 September 2012.

Crimes (Surveillance Devices) Act, pursuant to subsection 38(4)—ACT Policing Surveillance Devices—Annual Report 2011-2012, dated 7 September 2012.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2011-2012—Long Service Leave Authority, dated 12 September 2012.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2011-2012—

Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, dated 17 September 2012.

Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, dated 30 August 2012.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, pursuant to subsection 19(4)—Climate Change Council—Annual report 2011-2012, dated 24 September 2012.

Planning and Development Act 2007—schedule of leases Paper and statement by minister

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 242(2)—Schedule—Leases granted for the period 1 July to 30 September 2012.

I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the paper.

Leave granted.

MR CORBELL: Section 242 of the Planning and Development Act 2007 requires that a statement be tabled in the Assembly each quarter outlining details of leases granted by direct sale. The schedule I have tabled covers the leases granted for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 September 2012. In addition, 41 single dwelling house leases, 26 of which were land rent leases, were granted by direct sale for this quarter.

Papers

Ms Burch presented the following papers, which were circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2011-2012—

ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority, dated 12 September 2012.

Education and Training Directorate, dated 24 September 2012.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2011-2012—Community Services Directorate (2 volumes), dated 4 September 2012.

A Picture of ACT's Children and Young People—2012, dated October 2012.

Children and Young People Act, pursuant to subsection 727S(5)—ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee—Annual Report 2011-12, dated 29 October 2012.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2011-2012—Cultural Facilities Corporation, dated 19 September 2012.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2011-2012—ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, dated 4 September 2012.

Mr Rattenbury presented the following paper, which was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2011-2012—Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (2 volumes), dated 24 September 2012.

Standing orders—suspension

Motion (by **Mr Coe**) agreed to, with the concurrence of an absolute majority:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Assembly business, order of the day, relating to the establishment of standing committees, being called on forthwith.

Committees—standing Establishment

Debate resumed.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (4.04): I have moved the amendments in my name on the A4 sheet with “revised” marked on the top regarding the establishment of standing committees. As was foreshadowed earlier, the opposition has a preference for having three members on each of the standing committees. However, given the government have stated that they would like four on the PAC, it is the opposition’s view that four should be on each of the standing committees. Therefore, the amendments which I have moved omit subparagraphs (4)(a)(ii), (4)(b)(ii), (4)(d)(ii) and (4)(c)(ii) and insert “two members to be nominated by the opposition” in place of each of those.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (4.06): The government will support the amendments proposed by Mr Coe. I think it is worth placing on the record some of the inaccurate assessments that were made by Mr Seselja in his reference in the debate earlier today when it came to the size of committees. It was Mr Seselja who indicated to the Chief Minister they were not supportive of four-member committees, not the other way around. The government proposed the structure we did this morning based on that feedback from Mr Seselja. But that is all clearly water under the bridge at this point in time, and we now have a proposal where each committee will be constituted by two members of the opposition party and two members of the government party.

I note that Mr Coe’s amendments do not make further changes in relation to my substantive motion, which proposes the relevant chairs and which of the either governing or opposition parties will chair certain committees. I am pleased with that outcome. I note that the Assembly has already resolved to make it clear that the justice and community safety committee will be chaired by an opposition member.

In conclusion, I think it is worth reiterating the comments that were made this morning in debate; that is, with a committee of two members from each party and no crossbench representation it is going to be incumbent on all members appointed to these committees to strive to work together, to strive to reach common ground and consensus and compromise, for the conduct of the committees to be effective. That will certainly be, I am confident, the approach of the Labor nominees to each of the committees and I encourage Liberal members to adopt a similar view. The government will be supporting the amendments proposed by Mr Coe.

Mr Coe’s amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ACT centenary

Discussion of matter of public importance

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Gentleman): The Speaker has received letters from Ms Berry, Mr Doszpot, Mr Gentleman, Mr Hanson, Ms Porter, Mr Seselja and

Mr Smyth proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, the Speaker has determined that the matter proposed by Ms Berry be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of the centenary to the ACT community.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (4.09): I welcome the opportunity to speak today on the matter of public importance. Next year's centenary will be an opportunity to promote this fantastic city and surrounding region to the nation and the world, offering a huge range of economic benefits and opportunities for our city and our community. It is also an opportunity for us to come together like never before to share what is shaping up to be a fantastic year.

The program launched by the Chief Minister in early September is jam-packed with celebration, commemoration and amazing events. For the Canberra community there is something for everyone on every day of the year—from festivals, exhibitions, concerts, theatre, films and sport.

Thanks to the installation of lights at Manuka Oval, in early February we will host the first one-day international featuring our national cricket team playing the West Indies. A few days later the action swings to the Royal Canberra Golf Club, which will host the Australian women's golf open featuring many of the world's top 20 golfers. Australia and New Zealand will play the only scheduled rugby league test for 2013 in April here in Canberra, and Australia and New Zealand will again do battle in netball at the AIS later in 2013.

In arts and culture, Robyn Archer has brought together an amazing cultural program. It will be the biggest season ever seen at the Canberra Theatre, with performances being brought in from all over Australia for *Collected Works: Australia 2013*. Our March birthday will see the world premiere of a specially commissioned symphony by Andrew Schultz, inspired by Canberra's history and the Canberra story.

The centenary team has been working closely with our national attractions to pull together a best ever program in our wonderful national cultural institutions, starting with Toulouse-Lautrec, which opens at the National Gallery next month. In our centenary year there will be special open days at the Australian War Memorial, the Australian Institute of Sport and Parliament House. I am looking forward to seeing the start of a new centenary loop bus service, which will link the city to the parliamentary precinct early next year. This service will, of course, be welcomed by visitors to Canberra, but it is the local community who will benefit most.

We have an Indigenous program which connects our local community with some of the best performers and artists from right across the nation. The centenary team is also working closely with young people in our schools, with our multicultural community and with our seniors to ensure that as many from our community as possible are fully engaged in the year. There will be world class arts, culture, sport and a second-to-none speakers program, but 2013 will be celebrated right down at the grassroots. More than 50 individual projects and activities will share in the \$1 million allocated through the centenary community initiatives fund.

The centenary legacy will stretch well beyond our borders. Through the dollars for Dili fundraising project, in collaboration with Rotary and the Scouts, we have already built important facilities at a school in our friendship city which will encourage more girls to go to school in Dili. I encourage every Canberran to give this very worthy Canberra centenary project support.

We are asking Canberrans to resist the temptation to head to the coast on our big birthday weekend next March. The long weekend program has a lot to offer—great sport, outdoor movies, locally grown and produced tapas, music on the lake, music on bikes and, of course, the very special musical and fireworks finale. On the birthday itself—12 March, a Tuesday—we will all be at work. And while we cannot do a Bob Hawke and ask your employers to give you the day off, our plan is to ask Canberrans to stop for morning tea in their workplaces, in their schools, in their clubs and in their communities.

Canberra's birthday is a national occasion, but it will also bring us together as a community. The range of exciting events in 2013 will provide opportunities for the community to be involved as participants or spectators and especially as volunteers. There are many diverse and exciting roles through the year for Canberrans wishing to volunteer in the centenary of Canberra program. Already several hundred Canberrans have volunteered to play a part in the delivery of the 2013 program.

The call-out for volunteers is continuing right now, and I encourage every Canberran with a passion for this city and an interest in supporting the centenary to contact the team at the Chief Minister's Directorate. Canberrans can assist on Indigenous programs involving weaving, painting and craft activities. Volunteers will be the proud face of our city and our centenary, welcoming visitors to the dozens of events both outdoors and in our wonderful galleries and institutions.

The centenary of Canberra is actively working with schools and community groups to deliver a whole variety of events through the year that will give budding young performers, athletes, scientists and mathematicians a chance to showcase their skills and talent.

The smells like centenary spirit project will allow young people from across the ACT to compete in a battle of the bands competition, with the finalists performing on stage alongside a national headliner. In the lead-up to this event young people will have the opportunity to learn from the music industry professionals and be part of the production of the events for the final concert on Stage 88 in November 2013.

The own grown market day in Glebe Park on March 21 will highlight the work of Canberra schools from across the region in Glebe Park with a particular focus on schools growing their own fruit and vegetables. Further events include a youth week celebration that will focus on the artistic work carried out by schools and youth organisations. Planning is underway for a special celebration for Canberra's younger citizens and their families in collaboration with key children's organisations from across the region and will be a highlight of Children's Week in October 2013.

The centenary team is also working with multicultural groups and seniors. Our multicultural community will be front and centre throughout 2013. The harmony bus will bring together various multicultural and broader ACT communities who will travel by bus to visit a number of ethnic and cultural venues in an aim to foster ongoing community relations and empower prominent community leaders in local communities to gain a better understanding and appreciation of diversity and shared values of respect and harmony.

Museum of the long weekend is an intergenerational project that will engage a group of youths who will be mentored in filmmaking skills and who will then interview our seniors about their recollection of recreation and holidays. The films will be played in vintage caravans on the edge of Lake Burley Griffin in October 2013.

In addition, a number of large-scale community engagement projects will engage the wider community. Fifty-one projects have been funded through the million dollar centenary community initiatives fund which supports the capacity of the community to extend their existing programs and to support new initiatives.

On a grassroots community level, centenary club of the month will be awarded to the sporting team, club or organisation that celebrates and recognises the centenary of Canberra through their own networks. There will be one winner each month from February to November, when the final 10 winners will have the opportunity to win the centenary club of the year.

A range of large-scale productions will be for all the Canberra community, but the centenary celebrations will also bring together the various residential communities across Canberra. Having lived in Belconnen all my life, I will be looking forward to the range of exciting events that the centenary year will bring to the Belconnen town centre and surrounding suburbs. Highlights for next year include the exhibition *Terrain: mapping Strathnairn* at the Strathnairn Arts Association in Holt in May, and there will be the wind, air, water centenary kite festival on Lake Ginninderra.

The Belconnen Skate Park will host the Australian female skateboarding championships in October. The University of Canberra and the Belconnen Arts Centre will be presenting a program of events in 2013. One of the highlights includes *Crosscurrents*, a performance featuring artists from diverse cultural backgrounds and disciplines. The performance will address ethnicity, creativity and the power of cultural interchange in the national capital. One of Australia's foremost ceramic artists, an exponent of the modernist movement in Japanese ceramics, Hiroe Swen will present a solo exhibition in October and November at the Belconnen Arts Centre.

Mr Assistant Speaker, the importance of next year's celebrations will not be lost on the ACT community.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (4.19): I will take up where Ms Berry finished off. I am sure it will not be lost on the people of the ACT. But the question is: will it actually reach the rest of the country? I think we are all looking forward to next year—certainly to seeing the first half of the production; I cannot wait to get volume 2 for

winter and spring. It is important that we celebrate. It is also important that we have appropriate things that we celebrate by and it certainly is a diverse program that Robyn Archer and her team have put together.

But I want to ask some questions about what happens after the centenary. Let me start by simply saying that all on this side of the chamber wish all of those who participate well. We wish the organisers well—that the things come together, that they get good weather for the right events and that we truly do have a national celebration of the country's capital next year. There is certainly a full program. If you cannot find something to appease your wishes in the first half of the year, you would be pretty fussy and pretty hard to please, I suspect.

If people have not gone to it, on the website for Canberra 100 there is a section called “Vision and Goals” and I think it is important that we remember why we are doing this. Is it just a party for the locals to celebrate or is it actually a national celebration? It should truly be a national celebration. Under “Vision” it says:

All Australians proudly celebrate and share in the Centenary of Canberra, our nation's capital—the city that tells the story of our country's freedom, spirit, achievement and aspirations.

So the question is—and I am sure the Chief Minister will speak after me—how are we going to make sure that that vision is fulfilled?

A number of goals then complement the vision and the first goal is:

Increase the pride and ownership of Australians in their capital.

I do not think any of us would disagree that that needs to occur. The second goal is:

Fully engage the community of Canberra, the Capital region and the broader Australian community in the celebrations.

So the question again has to be asked: how do we achieve that goal and how do we measure it? The third is:

Establish enduring international recognition of Canberra and its role as the capital.

Again, what measure have we got in place to determine whether we have achieved that? The fourth is:

Build the positive image and reputation of Canberra as a city and community.

That is certainly a worthy goal and something that we all should be working towards, but again the question is: how do we measure that? The fourth is:

Build lasting legacies of community through memorable celebrations—

They are certainly well outlined in the documents I have seen—

and high quality projects.

So what are those projects and how will we measure their lasting contribution? The sixth is:

Create impetus for future development of the national capital.

Again, how does that occur? When will we know what the impetus has achieved? I guess most of us here know that parents of young kids when they travel somewhere hear from the back seat of the car, “Are we there yet? How will we know when we get there?” I think these are important questions. I have said in this place before that I am disappointed that the federal government has not matched the initial request of the ACT government. Remember that this goes back to the Howard government; when the original intergovernmental agreement was signed we said that both governments would work towards making sure that we got a great celebration for the nation’s centenary. And remember that it is probably more a job for the federal government than it is for the local government, because we are actually celebrating the national aspects of the capital, not just the home where we live; it really is the national aspects.

I do express a sense of disappointment that after the initial discussions with the Howard government some of the follow-through did not occur with the Rudd and the Gillard governments. We know that the government put forward a \$40 million budget for the programs—\$20 million from the ACT and hopefully \$20 million to be matched by the federal government, which they have not matched. The federal government have put in only \$6 million. So the people of the ACT, through their ACT budget, are carrying the lion’s share of the activity across the course of the year. I think that is disappointing and I think it shows some of the disdain that federal Labor show for the ACT. Of course there is still time for the federal government to correct that. Maybe there will be a small cheque in the Christmas stocking from the federal government. I will not hold my breath, given Wayne’s quest for his grail-like surplus. But you never know; maybe the feds will realise they have got a bigger responsibility in this than they currently do.

So the question really is: how will the vision be achieved, how will the goals be achieved and how will they be measured? For those that attended the Tourism Industry Council awards on Friday night—Minister Barr and I were certainly there; I did not see anybody else if they were there—the minister announced the establishment of a task force to look at how we continue to get the benefits after 2013. I suspect that is a little late, and perhaps it should have been integrated a little bit further, or much earlier, into what we are trying to achieve, so that we know what the measurables are. Perhaps when the Chief Minister speaks she might like to answer some of these questions.

It is important when we talk about, for instance, the high quality projects. I am sure we will be quoted chapter and verse the arboretum. I suspect the arboretum did not start as a centenary project. It certainly may well become the only centenary project of renown that the federal government will contribute to. If we could have an exposition from the Chief Minister on what the high quality projects are, that would be of interest.

One of the things that perhaps we should truly work towards coming out of 2013 is a sense of where we are going. The government has done its consultation on Towards 2030 and there are a lot of documents there. There is a lot of consultation there, there are lots of comments there, and there are lots of ideas there. But I do not get a sense that we have actually taken that work and put it to something useful. If I am wrong, I am sure the Chief Minister will correct me, or if it is about to be revealed then I will be delighted to hear what it is.

But we do have consultation and sometimes it seems to be consultation for consultation's sake, and consultation can be a two-way street, of course. With these goals that the government has outlined on their "Vision and Goals" page, there can be an education of the community as to whether or not they think they are the appropriate goals and how they will work with us to ensure that these goals are achieved.

Centenaries by their nature only come every 100 years or thereabouts, so it is important that we do not miss this opportunity. You might get to 125 and 150 and 175 and 200, but it is important that we use this. In many ways, I think goals 5 and 6 are perhaps the two that we need to address the most. Goals 1 and 4 in many ways will build into those—what the lasting legacies of community value are and what the impetus for the future development of the national capital is—because it is truly only with the community that we can go ahead.

I have said in other venues that one of the movements around the world is that cities are now adopting charters, as it were—almost constitutions for the city—a charter about what sort of city they see themselves as, where they are going, how they want to get there, how they might want to pay for it, and perhaps something that might come out of a year like our centenary next year is that at the end of the year we have a coming together of the community to say, "These are the things we value. These are the things we want to protect. We know we have got to pay for it. Here is a way that we as a community all agree on what we might take to get to the outcome."

This is important. For instance, if light rail is to go ahead, one of the consequences of light rail is that you need density, and most people are fine with density as long as it is somewhere else, but we have got to have the density along the corridor. So are the residents who live on either side of Northbourne Avenue in Dickson and Lyneham going to agree that density in their part of the rail corridor is the right place? Are they willing to have four, five, six storeys going 100, 200, 300, 400, 500 metres out from the actual light rail route, whatever it may be?

That is a question that we have got to ask, because otherwise these things will not work. So it is a great opportunity to have a reasonable conversation, and it is not a conversation that should be rushed. Some of the initial work has been done. If members have not read Towards 2030, it is worth going through all of the documents there. There are a lot of recurring themes there; there is a lot of repetition from people. But what we need to do now is tease that out so that, if we are going to create impetus for future development of the national capital, 2013 is not a bad place to start.

I will give you an example: the talk of building a national museum started in 1980. I think the act was passed in 1983. It opened its doors in 2001 under a Howard government. So that is the time frame that it takes to get a significant building. For instance, the University of Canberra architecture students did a project four or five years ago on building a national history museum for Australia. I think I have mentioned in this place before, and there has been some conversation in the media now following an article, about the future of Canberra's endangered species. So if we are going to see those sorts of outcomes, now is the time to start. (*Time expired*).

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (4.29): I do welcome the opportunity to speak on this matter of public importance. It is just over five weeks until we enter our centennial year. In 105 days it will be 100 years since Lady Denman declared the name of the new capital of Australia “Canberra”, and we intend to mark this occasion with a yearlong celebration. Although it will be our 100th birthday celebration, it is perhaps best likened to an 18th birthday, a coming of age celebration and an opportunity to show the nation the city we have become and how we have matured over the past century.

Although 100 years is not much in the life of a city and we are very much, on international standards, a young city, this has been an extraordinary century. We have witnessed enormous changes in the way we live, work and travel, how we relate to and communicate with one another. Canberra has grown up as these changes have taken place. And so have at least 40 extraordinary Canberrans who have lived through this century, seeing it all unfold, and who will be recognised in our centenary year. Our city has been instrumental in the shaping of our nation's history and we can be proud of our role as the centre of decision making and democracy in Australia.

But we know we have become much more than a place of politicians and public servants, and our centenary year is an opportunity to rebrand our city and build national pride in Canberra as the nation's capital. It is also a very good opportunity to attract visitors to our wonderful city. Already conference and accommodation bookings are well above average and we expect to see thousands of extra tourists coming to Canberra and the region, spending money in Canberra and supporting jobs in our city.

But the centenary will do more than boost tourism in a single year. I think it will promote greater interest in investing in and living in Canberra for many years to follow, and this will make a real difference in building and maintaining a strong and dynamic ACT economy. All of us here today know that Canberra is a great place to live and that there is much to love about this city. Centenary creative director, Robyn Archer, and her team—her small team of very hardworking officers—have made sure that we will showcase Canberra as the vibrant and energetic city that it is.

In the lead-up to the celebrations we have asked Canberrans to help us spread the word about the year ahead and the things that make Canberra so special. So many members will have already seen the like Canberra campaign that started, I think, the day after the election campaign, once they moved us politicians out of the way. In just

a few weeks—that would make it just about four weeks that the campaign has been launched—there have been already more than 9,000 nominations through that campaign from people saying what they like about Canberra. Some of those suggestions will be no surprise—things like the four beautiful seasons, great sporting, the great environment we live in and yes, it might come as a surprise to Mr Hanson, there is even feedback about our superb health facilities. Early next year, as a community, we will get to vote on what we believe are the 100 best things about Canberra, with the top 100 announced in time for our birthday in March.

Mr Smyth made mention of the first part of the centenary program that has been launched, and I think that does give you a taste of what the year will be. I think one of the challenges for the centenary team has been trying to create a program for an entire year. Most festivals happen over a weekend. At the most, they happen over 10 days. What the centenary team have been charged with is finding something for everyone, from very small community events to large-scale events that compete on the international stage, and running them over, perhaps, 40 weekends. It is on a very modest budget, and I do not think that has been a well-understood challenge more broadly. But I think they have done an incredible job. The first volume is testament to that. The second volume will come out early next year.

I think part of what we have also tried to do through the program—and it has been a very conscious decision of Robyn Archer as the creative director—is not only look, as a part of our requirements with the commonwealth funding, to recognise Canberra as the nation's capital and look at how that is presented nationally. Robyn Archer has done a lot of work travelling around Australia, spreading the message of the centenary. I have done what I can through COAG channels as well and will continue to do that—and Canberra is the nation's capital—and make sure that that is presented.

But it is also very much about our city, who we are, the things that we treasure, the organisations that are the social fabric of our city, the young artists who would find it difficult to compete in larger events in the early stages of their career but who will get a chance to showcase what they can do through some of the support they have been given. Robyn Archer has made it very clear—and it is a decision that I have supported—that what she would like to see happen when the centenary year is over is that many of the supports that have been provided through the centenary program actually continue and that it is a much more lasting legacy about our city.

The community initiatives fund, which has supported a number of programs which Ms Berry has talked about, again, is a testament to that decision of Robyn Archer, from small cake decorating to car rallies, to dancing weekends that will be on, I think, nearly every weekend at the Albert Hall when it is available. We will all see that sort of social infrastructure being invested in.

We will have the national arboretum. It is an important centenary project and it was a visionary project that was supported by Jon Stanhope at a time when nobody else supported it. I think it is a shame that Mr Stanhope was not there to see 4,500 people on the side of the hill, in the amphitheatre, for that voices in the forest, to see a program that he championed and that was fought ferociously by those opposite and

resisted at every opportunity has actually grown into something that all of us are proud of, some of us more openly than others. I do not think the Liberal Party have quite come to terms with the fact that the national arboretum will be, if not the major drawcard to Canberra in years to come, certainly a major drawcard to Canberra. It is a magnificent place and for generations to come we will thank the people that took the initiative and got the national arboretum going.

The boundless playground is another excellent example of a lasting legacy project from the centenary, raising funds for a playground that every single Canberra child will use—a state-of-the-art facility—and bring life down to the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, again showing that that partnership between the NCA and the ACT government is perhaps as close as it has ever been and we are able to deliver these partnerships in our centenary year.

I will just finish with this comment briefly. Whilst Mr Smyth made a number of comments about funding for the centenary, I will remind Mr Smyth that perhaps the last contribution he made to the centenary program was to announce a \$2 million cut to it as part of their election commitments. So at least there is \$2 million more. And you might you sit there and whinge about how much is being invested in the centenary by the commonwealth government, the reality is that the last time—

Mr Smyth: So you are happy with the \$6 million?

MS GALLAGHER: You did have that trip overseas to talk about the centenary, and we are still wondering what you actually said, considering you had nothing to do with it. But I did not speak about the \$2 million that you were going to cut out of it because you decided that there were savings to be made in the centenary. But now you come here and say you are not sure there is enough money going into the centenary and that there should be more from the commonwealth.

I would say, my final comment, in relation to a Prime Minister that is a friend to this city, all of the outstanding issues are in regard to Constitution Avenue and support for a centenary gift. Some of the issues we have had with the NCA review have been resolved to our satisfaction under Prime Minister Gillard's watch. Under Prime Minister Gillard's watch, we have resolved the issues that we had not been able to resolve satisfactorily under Prime Minister Rudd. But we were able to finalise them under Prime Minister Gillard.

I will also say that the biggest threat to this city in its centenary year, the single biggest threat, Mr Smyth—and you know it as well as I—is that your portfolio of economic diversification will not have any answer when Tony Abbott waltzes into this town and tries to cut 20,000 jobs if he is successful in the federal election. No economic diversification strategy will deal with that, and that is the biggest threat to this city in the centenary year. You know it and I know it, and we all have a role to play in supporting this city in its centenary year. We should be talking up the city, despite the fact that we may have differences at times. But the centenary does give us the opportunity to get behind the work that Robyn Archer and her team have done and speak positively about the city. (*Time expired.*)

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Ageing) (4.39): I am pleased to be able to speak on this issue today. Being a long-term Canberran, I know that next year's centenary is an exciting year for this city and already there have been some tremendous events as part of the build-up. I think of the maps of Canberra exhibition at the National Library, which I attended, and the very interesting event held at Telstra tower or Black Mountain tower where one of the original Canberra design competition boxes was cut open and the old cycloramas were taken out very carefully.

Already there have been some tremendous events, and our centenary year will be 12 months of celebrations and observation and I believe it will somehow touch and enrich the lives of each and every Canberran, from those due to be born in the months ahead to those who have lived here for many decades.

I also endorse Mr Smyth's remarks about the necessity—and I have said this publicly on a number of occasions—of this being an event for all Australians. I know the centenary team are working hard to encourage the rest of Australia to join the celebrations and to share pride in everybody's national capital, because that is what this city is, and I hope that the tremendous program of events will draw a range of people from across the country to our city next year.

As the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, I would like to inform the house about a couple of special projects being pursued by TAMS for the centenary year. These include the centenary bus loop, which will provide a free loop-bus service from the city centre through to the parliamentary triangle to enable visitors and locals alike to visit centenary-related events within the city and the parliamentary triangle. This will operate from 1 February next year through to 31 December, on half-hourly trips, from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm, seven days a week. It is a free service and one that I am sure will be very popular with both tourists and locals alike.

Another project for next year that TAMS is instrumental in is the Canberra centenary trail. This arose from community submissions received in 2009 as part of the Canberra 100 call for centenary projects. The trail is intended to showcase Canberra, taking users on a seamless journey between urban, natural and rural environments and incorporating the iconic sites and hidden treasures of the ACT. The 140-kilometre trail will predominantly use existing trails that already permit pedestrian and cycle use. It will have a symbolic start/stop point within the parliamentary triangle and will be divided into daily legs, spaced to service walkers over seven days and bike riders over three days. And users will be able to join and leave the trail in many locations.

I have been pleased to see that there have been modifications from the first design. Certainly significant concerns were raised by some key groups around Canberra who care for our nature parks about the cutting of trails through new areas and particularly sensitive areas, areas of good-quality or high-quality woodlands and areas where significant restoration has taken place. I am glad to see that modifications have been made and certainly, as the new minister, I will be following through on ensuring that the trail is both a wonderful tourist drawcard that showcases some of the real

highlights of Canberra but at the same time is sensitive in protecting those very valuable areas. The trail is scheduled to be completed by July 2013 and a formal launch is programmed for October 2013 as part of the centenary celebration program of events.

As the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, I note that it will be a time of significant reflection for members of our city's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as well as all Canberrans. Indeed, Canberra's long history as a gathering place for Aboriginal peoples will be revisited and celebrated during the centenary year. Australia's first peoples will come together from across the continent to showcase the diversity of their vibrant living cultures. From the early planning stages, programming of Indigenous content has held a significant part of the centenary of Canberra itinerary. And I have been advised the content combines commissions, partnerships and community initiatives.

I will touch on a couple of the highlights particularly related to the Indigenous community. The National Multicultural Festival, which of course is a well-known Canberra event, will feature an enhanced Indigenous showcase in 2013. The Indigenous showcase is supported by the centenary of Canberra and will offer a platform to local and national performers. Over the three days, people will be entertained by traditional and contemporary performances, participate in interactive cultural exchange activities and sample foods from across Indigenous Australia. The Indigenous showcase provides a corroboree opportunity of a global nature, as it sits in the National Multicultural Festival which will attract over 260,000 visitors and feature, of course, the tremendous range of performers that we are all used to as well as the food.

Also during the month of February, Craft ACT will present selling yarns, a conference, workshop, market day and exhibition program that promotes and showcases textile and fibre craft and design practices of Indigenous artists from across Australia.

The Indigenous theme will be prominent in the Canberra Theatre Centre's 2013 program as well, from the stage adaption of Kate Grenville's novel *The Secret River*, to new works by Stephen Page, Daniel Riley McKinley and a yet-to-be-announced special guest choreographer presented in a triple-bill program by the Bangarra Dance Co at the Canberra Theatre Centre.

These are just a few of the highlights of the Indigenous community and, of course, there will be many other events across the year. I think the significance of the land to the people and their descendants, who knew Canberra before the first sod was turned and the buildings constructed, cannot be underestimated. And I am pleased that there are so many significant and special events to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture during our centenary year.

Let me conclude by simply saying that I look forward to next year's centenary celebrations. I imagine all members of the Assembly are, and I think it will be a tremendous opportunity to both reflect on the history of this city and think about where we are going over the next 100 years.

Discussion concluded.

Committees—standing Membership

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Madam Speaker has been informed, pursuant to the Assembly's resolution of this day, of the following nominations for membership of the general purpose standing committees of the eighth Assembly in no particular order:

Education, Training and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee

Ms Berry
Mr Doszpot
Mrs Jones
Ms Porter

Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services—Standing Committee

Ms Berry
Dr Bourke
Mr Hanson
Mr Wall

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

Ms Berry
Mr Gentleman
Mr Hanson
Mrs Jones

Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services—Standing Committee

Dr Bourke
Mr Coe
Mr Gentleman
Mr Wall

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

Dr Bourke
Ms Porter
Mr Seselja
Mr Smyth

Motion (by **Mr Corbell**) agreed to:

That the members so nominated be appointed as members of the general purpose standing committees of the 8th Assembly.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Commodore Paul Berger

MR HANSON (Molonglo) (4.48): I rise tonight to commemorate the recent passing of one of life's true gentlemen, a great naval man and a great family man, Commodore Paul Berger LVO RAN (retired). Paul is survived by his wife Virginia, his sons Andrew and Simon, his grandchildren Tom, Hannah and Alice, and a great many friends. Brendan Smyth, Steve Doszpot and I attended Paul's funeral on 19 November at the Duntroon Chapel. It was clear from the number of people who attended, many of them ex-Navy, that Paul was held in high regard by the community and his Navy mates.

Paul spent over 40 years in the Navy and his full record of service is too long to read on this occasion. But after joining the Royal Australian Navy at 13, his service included acts of service in Korea and Vietnam and command of two Royal Australian Navy ships, HMAS *Torrens* and HMAS *Perth*.

The motto for HMAS *Torrens* "Faith and fortitude" could well be a motto for Paul's life. Paul's life was dedicated to service—service to his country, to his community and to his family. His love of his wife Virginia, his two boys and his grandchildren was central to his life and Paul was never prouder than telling people about the latest accomplishments of either of his sons or his grandchildren.

Virginia and Paul made a fantastic couple together. The way he looked at her, spoke lovingly to her, and spoke so lovingly about her is rare after such a long marriage. It may have had something to do with the fact that, based on photos, when Paul first met Virginia she was a gorgeous young redhead full of personality and charm and, I note, 13 years younger than Paul.

Virginia is still a beautiful woman who has been a very wonderful companion to Paul, and his passing has been very hard for her. Paul's absence will leave a huge gap in her life, but I trust that Virginia's sorrow will ease as time passes.

Simon and Andrew gave a moving and at times amusing account of their father's life at Paul's funeral—of how he took three jobs as a child to support his family, tales of his astute planning, be it for financial matters and family holidays, and of his sense of honour. One anecdote that resonated for me and summed Paul up was when the Australian Army Parachute Training School was transferred to HMAS *Albatross* shortly after he assumed command. Paul thought that if it was happening on his base he should do it.

Paul was 52 at the time, around 20 years older than the next oldest person taking the course, which was physically and psychologically demanding. In the military, parachuting is about getting to the ground quickly, not scenically, but the boys still remember the severe bruising and the way he hobbled with pain to his back, his knees and his ankles. To quote his sons, when it came to giving a serious commitment, his word was his bond.

Paul had a number of interests and passions, including golf, but it was his membership of the Liberal Party that caused me and others in this chamber to come in contact with the Bergers. They helped Mr Smyth out on many campaigns and were a friend to many members. I will never forget our first meeting. In 2008 at a meet the candidates event, recently after my pre-selection as a candidate, I found myself in a room full of people I did not know well.

The Bergers came up to me and went straight to the point. Basically I was ex-military, Paul was ex-military, and they would like to help me. And help me they did, with fundraisers at their home, with letterboxing, with their friendship of myself and Fleur and with their strong advocacy.

I think that Paul had an easier time convincing his ex-naval friends to vote for me than Virginia, who often bemoaned the fact that so many of her friends voted Labor. As you all know, when you start a political journey you need friends who put their faith in you, and I will never forget the faith that Paul and Virginia put in me.

I thank Paul for his friendship, and on behalf of all of the Canberra Liberals I thank Paul for his service to our country, to our community and to our party. Indeed, for those in this chamber who did not know him, I am sure all members, if they had had the opportunity to know Paul Berger, would echo my sentiment.

I will finish by quoting again Simon and Andrew, who finished the eulogy so beautifully.

Our family has mixed views about religion, but there is one thing about which we all agree—that people live on through the contributions they make and the people they influence.

As we say farewell to Dad and remember him fondly, it is up to us to carry forward his legacy of responsibility, selflessness, service and commitment—to our community, our country and our families.

If we do that, our world will continue to be a better place for all that he gave us.

White Ribbon

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella) (4.53): I rise tonight to talk about White Ribbon, the annual event which occurs internationally in regard to the elimination of violence against women. It occurs on 25 November each year. Of course, many of us in this Assembly have been part of White Ribbon and White Ribbon ambassadors for a number of years. Just for some background, I have not spoken about this since I was in the chamber last, but it began in Canada. It was originally formed as a reaction to backlash when on 6 December 1989 a young man walked into the Ecole Polytechnique university in Montreal, Canada and brutally massacred 14 of his female classmates.

Officially beginning in Australia in 2003, White Ribbon is part of UNIFEM, now UN Women, and was formed and had formally become a foundation in 2007. It is now Australia's only national male-led violence prevention campaign. White Ribbon believes in the goodness of most men. It believes that good men reject violence against women and are willing to act to prevent it. White Ribbon also believes in the capacity of the individual to change and to be able to encourage change in others.

The campaign is focused on prevention. With this in mind, it works to change our culture to stop violence before it occurs with activities in schools, workplaces and the broader community. This year White Ribbon is encouraging men to stand up to violence against women with the knowledge that thousands of good men have got their back. This new concept was the platform for this year's White Ribbon Day that occurred just last Sunday.

White Ribbon wants men to feel reassured that they can make a difference when it comes to stopping violence against women. As one of 144 White Ribbon Day ambassadors in the ACT, I personally believe the violence perpetrated by men against women must stop, and it is up to men to make a stand. It is up to men to speak up and step in when they witness violence against women, and it is up to men to condemn the indefensible actions of the few and assert the will of the many. It is also important to note that when you take a stand, there are over 66,000 men behind you. Whether it is me, the Attorney-General, Simon Corbell, the Chief Police Officer, Roman Quaedvlieg, our new ACT Australian of the Year, Dr Tom Calma, or even Jimmy Barnes, we have got your back.

One in three women over the age of 15 report physical or sexual violence at some time in their lives. Domestic and family violence is the major cause of homelessness for women and their children, and currently in Australia one woman is killed every week by a current or former partner. Violence against women also places a massive financial burden on the nation. In 2009, in the "Time for Action" report, KPMG estimated that violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion annually. This number is expected to rise to \$15.6 billion within the decade.

The ACT community held many great events this year and I had the honour of being able to attend several of these, starting with breakfast in the pub at King O'Malley's on Friday, followed by the UC White Ribbon brunch and the Navy White Ribbon bridge-to-bridge run and walk during the day. As well as these great events, many public departments had their own internal events.

I would like to acknowledge the men in uniform stands that occurred on the 24th in about 24 shopping centres across Canberra, including Bunnings. I did see Mr Smyth from the opposition at one of the men in uniform stands at Tuggeranong, so I congratulate him on his work there. I want to congratulate all of the foundation's volunteers and ambassadors that take part each year. I have had the honour to meet many of these in the ACT over my time. Without those people, none of what we have achieved would have been possible.

I would like to conclude tonight by reiterating a sobering fact that one in three women will suffer violence from a man in their lifetime. I had the opportunity to meet one last night, Anj Barker, who was terribly bashed by her boyfriend when she was 16 and became a paraplegic. She is a lesson to all of us, in that she spends most of her time now teaching people that instruct on domestic violence and those that give advice—with the support of her family, of course.

I want to congratulate Lifeline and their DV response team for the event last night and the continuing work they do to make sure that violence against women is stopped.

Commodore Paul Berger

MR COE (Ginninderra) (4.58): I too want to record my deep admiration for Paul Berger. I have known Paul, Virginia and their sons, Simon in particular, since I joined the party in 2000. Virginia and Paul were always very supportive of me as a young person in politics, and other Young Liberals here in the ACT.

Paul was a valued husband, father, friend, naval officer, party member and more. Mr Hanson has already recorded much of his contribution to the party and other ventures, but I too would like to acknowledge his ongoing support and friendship and commitment to all his endeavours. My thoughts and prayers are with Virginia, Simon and Andrew in their time of loss.

West Belconnen Health Co-op

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (4.59): Tonight I rise to talk about an important organisation in my electorate of Ginninderra. West Belconnen Health Co-op is a community success story. It had its beginnings in 2004, after the failure of the private medical practice model to attract any GPs to work in west Belconnen. Community activists surveyed the needs of residents in Charnwood and surrounding suburbs and, with a grant from the ACT government, were able to develop a feasibility study and business plan. The community formed the West Belconnen Health Co-op at the end of 2006, with the assistance of the ACT and federal governments.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me tell you about some of the successes of the West Belconnen Health Co-op. Eight years ago there were no GPs in west Belconnen. Last financial year the co-op more than doubled the numbers, growing from four to 10, and there are even more clinical nurses as well. The total number of consultations grew from 29,510 in 2010-11 to 42,721 in 2011-12.

The cooperative is a member-owned business. Impressively, membership grew from 8½ thousand to 14½ thousand over the last year. Members pay a low annual fee which gives them bulk-billed medical appointments with their doctor of choice. Other services offered by the co-op include a dietician, mental health outreach, pathology, a breastfeeding support group, speech pathology, hearing tests, diabetes education, ACT Heart Foundation's programs and the lifestyle modification program through project funding from the ACT government.

Furthermore, I congratulate West Belconnen Health Co-op's CEO, David Bailey, who in October won the national practice management award for excellence in chronic disease management from the National Australian Association for Practice Managers. The award recognised the innovative and popular lifestyle modification program that included a highly skilled nurse practitioner to further build expertise of clinical staff and extend the range of health services the co-op can provide.

Last financial year the number of co-op sites doubled from two to four, with the opening of clinics in aged-care facilities at Page in March this year and Kangara Waters in April. The co-op has announced the establishment of two new sites in Belconnen, at Kippax and Evatt. In announcing the new clinics, co-op chair Michael Pilbrow said:

The Co-op is keen to support suburbs where there is a shortage of low cost local doctors, and we greatly value our new partnership with the Bendigo Bank which is helping us open in two areas of need, Kippax and Evatt.

With assistance from Bendigo Bank and the ACT Government, a new Co-op will be established on the West Belconnen model in Tuggeranong in Chisholm.

National attention has also been drawn to the co-op. In October this year the west Belconnen co-op presentation at the International Year of Cooperatives conference in Port Macquarie attracted particular interest from regional areas suffering from a lack of health services. The west Belconnen co-op is run by dedicated, talented staff and a committed, voluntary board of directors who are giving back to the community. The co-op's board is elected by members at the co-op annual general meeting, which is this Wednesday night. The members on the board represent the great collective spirit in west Belconnen in looking for opportunities to do the best for their community.

Health Directorate—accreditation

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (5.03): I speak tonight about the Health Directorate and the accreditation process that they have just been going through in the week of 12 to 16 November. This is a process that all hospitals go through with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards; experienced surveyors come from a whole range of other clinical backgrounds and a whole range of different hospitals across Australia, and indeed there was one clinician from Hong Kong in the group of surveyors that came and assessed Canberra Hospital.

They spend a week with the organisation and they meet with staff right across the organisation. They visit the sites, not just the hospital. They went out to the jail, they go to community health centres, they go to speak with staff who provide services within homes and they also speak to consumers, to general practitioners and to volunteers that work at the hospital. I attended the feedback session at the end of that week. What the surveyors do is come and present on their initial findings. It then goes away for report writing. We will not get the report of the accreditation process for a couple of months, but I just wanted to put on the record what we have seen with this accreditation survey, because in this place, particularly from those opposite, we hear a lot of talking down of the health system here.

The process involved 14 surveyors, highly experienced clinicians from around the country, coming to look at our hospital. I attended the feedback session and the words they used to me were words like “exceptional”, “remarkable” and “excellence”. A couple of the surveyors spoke to me and said that it was unusual to see a hospital and health service providing the level of service and standard of service that we are lucky enough to receive here in the ACT.

Some quotes from the surveyors were that the care given by staff is of the highest level, that some of the programs in health promotion are spectacular, that the clinical care is simply very good and that the new facilities, the NICU, the women’s and children’s hospital and the adult mental health unit, are simply stunning.

There are 47 criteria that people are rated against. There is a self-assessment process and the Health Directorate had self-assessed as meeting the “extensive achievement”, which is virtually the highest award, 11 times. But the survey came back from the surveyors saying that they believed the directorate had achieved 19 extensive achievements, so eight more than the directorate had assessed for itself, and they also awarded it an “outstanding achievement”.

I think it is important to put it on the record because, despite what some will say in this place, I will take the word of 14 highly experienced surveyors going through every aspect of our health system—from the clinical care to the policies and procedures, to the patient safety processes that underpin it, to the organisational structure, to feedback from the staff on the ground, to talking with consumer organisations—and take their response, and their response was that we have an excellent health system.

Yes, the health system is under some pressure, but probably no city of our size has a health system that is as good, and it is a credit to the staff and a credit to the director-general, who has led extraordinary change across this organisation in her time as the head.

At the end of the accreditation process she was given cheers and claps from the staff. The staff had packed out the auditorium. They had also packed out the staff cafeteria at Canberra Hospital. That does not tell me that those staff are unhappy in that workplace. That tells me they are staff that are very proud of the work they do and they are proud of the work that Dr Peggy Brown and the executive that underpins her have done in addressing areas where there needs to be improvement but also in creating excellence within the health system.

It is not very often you get to attend sessions like that and to hear people from outside the ACT really compliment the health system that we have here and also compliment the leadership of staff from the bottom to the top of an organisation that, whilst we will always continue to improve and need to improve, is already performing at the highest possible standard. It is a credit to be their minister.

Ms Therese Vassarotti

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (5.08): I would like to take this opportunity to offer condolences at the passing of Therese Vassarotti. Ms Vassarotti was the first executive officer of the Australian Catholic bishops commission for women. She died in Canberra after a long battle with cancer.

She was 62 years of age and a funeral mass was held today at St Christopher's Cathedral in Manuka. She is survived by her husband, Kevin, a former executive officer of the National Catholic Education Commission and currently a member of the ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, and six children: Rebecca, Meagan, Sophie, Mark, Andrew and Patrick.

During her term with the Catholic bishops commission for women from 2001 to 2005 she encouraged and promoted the participation of women in the Catholic Church and was considered by many to be a pioneer in her field. Prior to her appointment to the bishops commission, Ms Vassarotti established her credentials within the Catholic Education Office and the Catholic Women's League of Australia, where she served as the national communications officer.

Her executive appointments included director of education and formation at Catholic Health Australia and director of religious education at St Edmund's College here in Canberra. She was a highly respected educator and mentor within Australian Catholic education and served as a teacher for over a decade in ACT Catholic colleges, including Merici College and St Clare's College. Until her diagnosis late last year, Ms Vassarotti lectured in theology at the Australian Catholic University, where she coordinated education and formation programs to assist in the transition of leadership from religious to the laity in the Catholic health sector.

Ms Vassarotti has been described by many within the Catholic Church and the wider ACT community as a person with exceptional personal qualities and strength in her Catholic faith. She radiated warmth and compassion, possessed a giving nature and was vibrant, passionate and determined in her many pursuits within the fields of Catholic education, health, theology and the advancement of women within the Catholic Church of Australia.

The order of service at her funeral today was inscribed with these words: "Therese Vassarotti, a builder of community, an educator, scholar and reformer, a leader in all spheres of life". And the Canberra community is the lesser for her passing.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.12 pm.