



Debates

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Wednesday, 27 February 2013

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

Government—green and progressive

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.01): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that recently, Government Minister Shane Rattenbury stated he wanted the ACT to have the “greenest, most progressive” government in Australia;
- (b) in response, the Chief Minister stated that “being a green, progressive government is a badge that we would wear with some pride”;
- (c) that a number of ACT Government policies and plans including renewable energy targets, emission reduction targets, and needle and exchange programs in the jail, are already at the extremes of “green progressive” policy;
- (d) that the ACT Budget is in deficit of \$575 million over the forward estimates;
- (e) that the ACT Budget reported an \$82 million blow out in the 2012-13 Budget Review;
- (f) that the ACT Labor Government’s costed election policies by Treasury total more than \$1 billion over the forward estimates; and
- (g) the \$1 billion of costed election policies do not include the construction cost of light rail or the University of Canberra Hospital; and

(2) calls on the:

- (a) Chief Minister to advise the Assembly if she agrees that the ACT Government will be the most “green” and “progressive” in Australia; and
- (b) ACT Government to outline to the Assembly the cost impacts of both the election promises and the push to become the most “green, progressive” government in Australia.

I commend this motion to the Assembly today because it is important for ACT residents to be aware of the government’s policy agenda and what it means to their hip pocket. Shortly after the 2012 election, members would recall that Shane Rattenbury was reported in the media as stating, “I want this to be the most progressive and green government in Australia and by having the responsibility of a minister I believe I can help achieve this.”

Katy Gallagher responded to those comments, saying, “The targets that we set in the election campaign were the targets that Greens had also set, so in that sense, being a green, progressive government is a badge that we would wear with some pride.”

Madam Speaker, I am not making an assessment today necessarily on the relevant merit or lack of merit of the ideological position being put forward by the Greens and the Labor Party, but I want to make an assessment of the cost and the priorities. Can ACT residents afford to have the most green, the most progressive government in the country, even if they wanted to?

I ask this because basic government services are failing. While the government has been busy implementing their green and progressive policies, what we have seen is Canberrans waiting longer than anybody else in the country in the emergency department, with those figures declining. We have been waiting longer for elective surgery for years.

House prices are some of the most expensive in the country. It takes 10 years to build a key piece of road infrastructure for the fastest growing area in the ACT, and so on and so on. The opposition has had much to say about the decline in basic services in this jurisdiction.

We are paying more and more to the government. The 2012-13 budget showed that the average Canberra household is now paying over \$9,000 a year to the government. This is already the highest taxing government in the country, with a deteriorating budget. The deficit in 2012-13 is \$363 million. The 2012-13 budget review saw the deficit across the forward estimates worsened by another \$82 million.

The review also showed that borrowings just this year alone have increased by \$100 million to a total of \$2.7 billion this year. This is on top of the more than \$1 billion in ACT Labor Treasury-costed election policies. That \$1 billion does not include the cost of the Greens-Labor parliamentary agreement. It does not include things like the Canberra university hospital, estimated at about \$340 million. That does not appear anywhere in the budget.

The government is prioritising expenditure on progressive green policies rather than essential public infrastructure, like health infrastructure. The government’s own policy document on health infrastructure states that progressing the University of Canberra public hospital including exploring delivery models is a priority, but when will we see some serious money committed to that project?

Given all the pressures on our budget—our deficits, debts and unfunded projects—I repeat: can we afford to be the greenest, most progressive government in Australia, even if we wanted to, which I would contend most people in Canberra would not?

I turn now to some of those policies as examples, and this is by no means the full extent. The 40 per cent emission target is going to be the subject of some debate later today. It is eight times higher than the national target of five per cent. Sixty-three per cent of ACT emissions come from electricity and 22 per cent from transport. So what

does it mean for changing consumer behaviour? What is the impact on Canberra residents?

The ACT's first greenhouse emissions inventory showed that carbon emissions in 2009 actually increased by 1.3 per cent. One option in the draft of the weathering the change action plan has a capital cost of \$2.7 billion. So what is the cost of meeting those targets? The government is yet to explain what that cost is.

Then there is the 90 per cent renewable target. Electricity bills have already increased by 85 per cent in the ACT since 2001. This year we saw another 17.74 per cent increase in electricity prices, with most of it attributed to federal Labor's and the Greens' carbon tax.

Research released by CHOICE in 2012 shows that electricity is the expense that household decision makers are most concerned about. Despite this, the government is pursuing the 90 per cent renewable energy target which will see electricity bills skyrocket in the ACT.

Based on current average energy consumption and the price of renewable energy, the 90 per cent target will add \$490 a year to household bills. The government believes that it will only cost \$60 a year between 2018 and 2020. However, this is based on a very bold assumption of households reducing energy consumption and renewable energy prices falling.

While the price of renewable energy may indeed go down, this is just an expectation. It is a guess. The federal government's own energy white paper states:

While many clean energy technologies are currently not cost-competitive, that is not expected to change ... over the next two decades.

We will have to wait and see exactly what that change is, but the government prices are based on a very bold assumption. Consumer behaviour would also need to change. The ICRC in the last year has increased the average energy electricity consumption in the ACT from 7,280 kWh to 8,000. There is also a cost to the government of running the street lights, the hospitals, the schools, and that is all going to be passed on to ACT taxpayers

We have things like the human rights compliant prison. An amount of \$140 million was expended on capital for that prison that we argue should have gone to health expenditure. But that prison is now costing an additional \$8 million a year because of the cost of housing prisoners in the ACT as opposed to the cost of housing prisoners in New South Wales.

What we are seeing in that prison as well is further ideological expenses. We have already had a number of reviews at whatever cost to try and put the needle and syringe program in, a needle and syringe program that the government's own report said would lead to the quasi-legalisation of drug use, and a needle and syringe program that is strongly rejected by the staff at the prison.

I refer to the feed-in tariff. Under the Greens and Labor government we have seen the pursuit of small, medium and large-scale feed-in tariffs which are expected to increase household bills by \$225. Low income earners in the suburbs are subsidising better-off residents to have solar panels on their roof. The ACT had the most generous scheme in the country for small-scale feed-in tariffs, as Mr Gentleman will certainly recall, with a premium of 45.7c per kilowatt hour. Simon Corbell dismissed calls by the ICRC to reduce that premium.

Despite having the most generous scheme in the country, in the 12 months leading up to June 2012, the 7,169 small and medium solar sites in the ACT produced a measly 0.28 per cent of the ACT's electricity requirement whilst adding approximately \$1 million to the cost of electricity in the ACT. That is passed on to low income families across the ACT.

On top of this, the entire small and medium-scale feed-in programs were completely bungled, resulting in Minister Corbell axing the program twice in the dead of night, as we will recall. To this day, it is not exactly known how much government overcommitted in its caps, but we know that it was a massive impact on small solar businesses.

Yet the government believe that they can run a large-scale feed-in tariff seven times larger than the one they have already bungled. Let me quote from the *Australian* about the feed-in tariff:

The real tragedy is that these arrangements cost about \$450 per tonne of greenhouse gas saved, an extraordinary amount with vastly cheaper alternatives available. The community is paying far more than it should to reduce emissions.

We have things like the plastic bag ban. That was a real feel-good policy that is yet to deliver any definitive environmental benefit, and it adds cost to the consumer of around 5c in the dollar for every bag purchased in the supermarket. That adds up. When asked whether shopping bags were an environmental issue, our own environmental protection agency responded that they "cannot say it has been one of any significance". So why are we doing it? The Productivity Commission found:

Based on the evidence available to the Commission, it appears that the Australian State and Territory Governments do not have a sound case for proceeding with their proposed phase out of plastic ... bags.

Britain's Environmental Protection Agency found that shoppers would have to use the same cotton bag every working day for a year to have a lesser impact than lightweight plastic bags. We know that does not happen and we now know that there are actually health aspects, health implications of doing so. Shane Rattenbury has now called on the legislation to be improved to ensure that fully compostable bags are the only kind allowed in the ACT.

We talked about parking yesterday. ACT Labor and the Greens are clearly anti parking. We heard that yesterday. Parking fees have doubled since Labor was elected in 2001. The 2012 increases for city parking were \$1.50 a day, far more than the CPI.

The government's still unfinished 2007 draft parking strategy shows their intent to make car parking harder by reducing the number of parking spaces from eight for every 10 workers to five, with more short-stay spaces but fewer long stay.

They are some of the policies that we know about, but what is there coming down the track? There is the car sharing policy that we talked about yesterday. The Greens-Labor parliamentary agreement includes that car sharing policy. Paragraph 2.8 of the policy states:

Introduce a 'car sharing' policy by the end of 2013 and complementary changes to planning and parking regulation ...

What are those complementary changes to parking regulations? You can bet your bottom dollar it will be a price increase. We have things like the stand-alone birthing centre. The Chief Minister has agreed to a stand-alone birthing centre study. It was in the Greens' policies. The Treasury costed that study at \$300,000. The minister, during the election campaign, said that she did not agree with the stand-alone birthing centre, but she is going to do a study anyway.

So she is being dragged along her merry way by our most extreme, most progressive government in Australia. We are doing a study, the outcome of which the government has already said it does not agree with, which has been costed by their own Treasury at \$300,000. What a bizarre piece of policy! And what is the cost of that, the cost of buying off the Greens in the parliamentary agreement? It is another \$300,000 that could have been far better spent in the community.

What else is changing? The Greens have stated that they do not support first home owners grants and that they are supportive of mileage-based car user fees, whatever that means. They are not just putting pressure on the budget. They are going to put pressure on families.

Light rail is coming down the track, pardon the pun, Madam Speaker. The \$1 billion that we see in the Greens-Labor agreement and in the costed Labor policies does not include the \$614 million for construction of light rail. If we follow any Labor government infrastructure project—we think of the GDE, we look at the dam—it is very unlikely that it will be delivered anywhere near that \$614 million.

What I would like to say to you is that this is going to be delivered at any cost. I will refer to recent hearings where questions were asked by Mr Smyth. I will give you a quote from the PAC committee hearing on 21 February on the cost of light rail. Mr Smyth, in speaking to Minister Barr, said, "So whatever the numbers turn up, it is going ahead?" Minister Barr replied, "Yes, we are committed to this project." Later, Mr Smyth asked, "Is there any price at which this project will not go ahead?" The minister said, "No."

So basically at any price, at any price regardless of the cost to the ACT community, this will be delivered. What is that cost going to be? We can extrapolate, we can guess, but what we do know is that it is going to put further pressure on our ACT budget and further pressure on households.

That is an extraordinary way to do business, Madam Speaker. We have seen other examples around Australia. For example, the Gold Coast light rail system is costing the Queensland government about \$20 million to \$30 million a year to operate. That is on top of about \$1 billion that it cost in construction. When we look at examples of where this is being done elsewhere, we can see the price tag going up and up. It gets to a point where it is simply not affordable but what this government is saying is that it will deliver it at any cost. It is not a cost to it. It is a cost to the community and it is a cost to ACT taxpayers.

At the election campaign we saw three Greens lose their seats here, but what we are seeing now is the price of keeping this Green in government is a cost that is going to be borne by ACT taxpayers for years to come.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (10.16): The government will oppose this motion. From just a quick glance at the daily program today, all the Liberal motions show a party that still has not come to terms with the fact that they have lost four elections in a row. We are opposing this motion today not because the government shies away from embracing the importance of progressive and environmentally responsible policies and programs—to the contrary. We believe valuing our physical environment does not go hand in hand with ignoring responsible economic and fiscal management.

Good government means leading; it means resisting the easy and the convenient. And the hallmark of good leadership is embracing the difficult, the hard road and mapping out a clear way forward. It means investing in the long term; it means thinking to the future; it means investing in relationships; it means embracing hard truths. This motion is, sadly, a foolish, ill-advised piece of empty posturing from the new Leader of the Opposition, and it should be seen as such this morning.

The new Leader of the Opposition has the responsibility to hold the government of the day to account. But in exercising his responsibilities he should avoid resorting to glib, half-baked assertions and exaggeration and instead should focus genuinely—

Mr Coe: Glib assertions, like “green” and “progressive”?

MS GALLAGHER: Well, we live in hope. And I acknowledge that Mr Hanson was heard in silence, Madam Speaker. I am one minute into my speech and I am being constantly interjected upon by Mr Coe—again.

Mr Hanson should focus on making a contribution to the quality of debate in the ACT’s political discourse. To ACT Labor, “progressive” is something to be proud of, not something to be ashamed of or, indeed, as Mr Hanson is attempting to do, demonised. No doubt it was considered extreme and radical when the notion of abolishing slavery was first raised or when progressive thinkers first advanced the idea of giving women the right to vote, recognising Indigenous Australians, or decriminalising homosexuality. These were progressive, positive moves that secured the freedom of many and helped to put us on a pathway towards a more equal and fair society.

Today, here we sit, with the first item of business and the new Leader of the Opposition cannot manage to articulate a coherent view about the future of our city and instead resorts to the stale, negative carping we have all become used to from those opposite. The Canberra Liberals do not want to be innovators or early adopters as to do so would involve taking a risk, having a belief in something, a desire to do the right thing, not necessarily the politically convenient thing, and—shock, horror!—perhaps developing a policy.

Remember that policy? What was it? Actually, it was legislation—a 30 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Who introduced that? I think it was Mr Seselja. That is right. Remember that? That was legislation brought into this place. Well, you have not stopped running a mile from that. That was actually genuine policy, a genuine contribution to the political discourse in this chamber. And what do we see? Running a mile and just resorting to these glib, half-baked politically convenient motions to waste the Assembly's time this morning.

The events of the last few weeks have made it very clear that the Liberals are not keen on anything they consider progressive. Gary Humphries—may he rest in peace—was the final progressive moderate in the Canberra Liberals' representation, and look what has happened to him.

We stand proudly by our initiatives. We stood proudly in the election, and, in case those opposite did not notice, the Labor-Greens vote was 50 per cent of the ACT community. We stand proudly by the initiatives we took to the election for renewable energy targets and the light rail project. Let us just recall the days after the election. Who was on the radio? Mr Seselja was saying, "Yes, no, very happy with light rail, actually." I think that was when he was trying to negotiate the support of Mr Rattenbury. "Very happy with light rail, actually." Apparently light rail had always been important to the Canberra Liberals. But we stand proudly by our initiatives around climate change. Again, the Liberals stood proudly by them for about five minutes before they worked out that it was not really the flavour of the day so, "Let's run away from that 30 per cent target."

We stand proudly by the issue of dealing with intravenous drug use in prisons. We stand proudly by the jail. Here we have the Leader of the Opposition basically saying, "Let's ship all our prisoners to New South Wales. It's cheaper. It's cheaper in New South Wales. Let's get rid of them." What a disgraceful point of view. Have you met a prisoner? They have families. They have kids. They have connections. "Right, so let's just ship them all off, our second-rate citizens. They haven't really made the grade. Got into a bit of trouble with the law. We actually don't want you in the ACT. We don't want a jail." Well, we stand proudly by the decision to build a jail.

We stand proudly by the decision to invest in health infrastructure—the women's and children's hospital and the new mental health unit. Are these all extreme policies? Walk-in centres, the integrated cancer centre, revitalised community health centres. Again, if they are extreme then I proudly wear the label. Kingsford Smith School, Harrison School, Namadgi School, Gungahlin College, Franklin Early Childhood School, Neville Bonner school, doubling the number of childcare places—are they

extreme? Well, again, I will wear that label. Securing \$144 million for the Majura parkway, making sure we are connecting our city and our region—extreme? Again, I will wear that label.

The arboretum, a visionary project, and what was the contribution from the Leader of the Opposition last week? “Well, the arboretum’s there, so we won’t stand in the way.” Actually, when you were standing in the way we built the arboretum. So I do not think it is going to make the slightest bit of difference the fact that you now belatedly acknowledge that the trees are growing. Everyone can see that when they drive past. Indeed, the thousands of people that have visited the arboretum since its opening see it for what it is—a visionary project, perhaps extreme, perhaps progressive, perhaps even green. Again, those on this side of the chamber proudly will wear that label.

I could go on and on with examples of what this government has delivered, but I have time, unfortunately, to list only a few. What about being the first jurisdiction to implement the national television and computer recycling e-waste scheme, the Parkes Way widening project, lights at Manuka Oval, even delivering the largest mowing season on record? Again, all extreme, progressive, perhaps even green. We are doing the work that needs to be done to keep this city growing, developing and ensuring we can meet the challenges of the future.

I do not know where Mr Hanson’s \$1 billion figure comes from. I would be interested to know. I am sure other speakers will allude to it and perhaps they can explain their \$1 billion figure. But we will deliver on the commitments we went to the election on and we will remain committed to our budget plan, as we have. And, yes, it will mean reshaping priorities and, yes, it will mean looking at the things we currently do and the things we need to do in the future. But we have done that in every single budget for which I have sat around the table—we weigh up the commitments we have made, we weigh up the resources available and we look at securing a surplus on time in accordance with our budget plan.

I am not going to stand here and get a lecture from Mr Hanson, the Leader of the Opposition who has failed to articulate his vision for this city. In the week he has been leader he has only managed to repeat the priorities that I have explained to the community. I will not be embarrassed by the commitments we took to the election. Every single one of those was developed in consultation with the community. They were subjected to community scrutiny, and the community have had their say. Now we will go and deliver on those commitments.

Again, Mr Hanson can sit there and carp on in the negative-style campaigning that we are so used to from the opposition, and what will we see? We will see what happened in 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2012—swap your leaders, swap your deputies, get rid of the progressives, ensure the takeover of the hard right of the Canberra Liberals is delivered. Congratulations, but you actually might have to come up with an agenda. You might have to stop rolling out the stories that you have been rolling out for 10 years that have not worked for you in the community and come up with your own policies and your own ideas about what is important for Canberra’s future.

We will, under the parliamentary agreement with the Greens, deliver on our election commitments. I imagine we will see derisory motions like this with Mr Hanson taking up the time of the Assembly. We will continue to govern in the long-term interests of this city. We will not avoid the challenges that face not just Canberra, not just Australia, but the world. We will not pretend that climate change is something we do not have a responsibility for. I am here to make a difference; I am here to make a difference so that my kids grow up in a city that is as good to them as it was to me when I was growing up.

These are the challenges. Yes, it may impact on some people's energy bills, but what about the legislation we have introduced to reduce energy bills by \$300? I did not notice that in your speech, Mr Hanson. What is the price of doing nothing? Seriously, what is the price of sitting there and doing what you do, Mr Hanson?

Mr Hanson: Well, several billion dollars by the sounds of it.

MS GALLAGHER: Just let it all go, let it all happen, do not respond to significant global challenges, pretend that you can do nothing and everyone will be better off for it. The evidence does not support that view. This motion is derisory. It is an embarrassment for you, Mr Hanson, that in your first week as Leader of the Opposition this is the best you can come up with—trying to create some scare campaign. Well, good luck to you. I am sure we will hear the words “green”, “progressive”, and “extreme” many times over the next four years, and we look forward to beating you in 2016 based on the success of your negative, carping campaigns of the past.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (10.28): I, too, am very concerned about the plans and the cost of this Labor-Greens majority government. It is a government formed on a big-spending, high intervention, grandiose and indulgent ideology; an ideology rejected at the last election. I do not like the idea of having a coalition government formed on the basis of being the most green and progressive as determined by Mr Rattenbury or, as the Labor Chief Minister said, “Being a green, progressive government is a badge that we would wear with some pride.” There is no doubt whatsoever that the Chief Minister would not have said such words in the campaign, so why did she say them afterwards?

During the campaign the Labor Party adopted much of the Liberal messaging of the past four or five years about local services, commitment to service delivery and concentrating on the things that matter to Canberrans. During the election, neither Labor nor the Liberals spoke about how progressive we were or how green we were. This is because the Liberals do not believe it and the Labor Party know it is bad politics. Yet when push comes to shove and Ms Gallagher is desperate to retain power, she says and will give away anything—including one of her own ministers—to hang onto power.

It must be said that there would be many in the Labor Party who are very disappointed with how the Chief Minister negotiated with the Greens. Many in the Labor Party, I am told, say that Katy Gallagher gave away too much and that she did not need to sell

out as much to retain the support of the Greens. Regardless of how much she needed to give away, the fact is that she gave away a lot to the Greens. The Greens went from an appalling result in the 2012 election—including losing their leader in amongst three casualties—yet they are somehow more powerful now than they were before. In some ways from a political level I congratulate Mr Rattenbury on driving such a hard bargain with the Labor Party, but it does not say much for the Chief Minister. It is no wonder people in the ALP are unhappy with her sell-out.

The Labor-Greens alliance is not just an irrelevant political arrangement with no tangible impact; it is and will continue to be a burden on families throughout Canberra. Their arrogant doctrine suggests that governments know best, that individuals are not equipped to make decisions. That is the state's role; the state should be determining how people should be living their lives.

A consequence of this excess is the fact that the ACT budget is in deficit of \$575 million over the forward estimates, as listed in paragraph (d) of the motion. This means we are loading up current and future generations with today's overspending. There are consequences to such spending. Canberrans in the future will have to go without to pay for today's current wastage.

Further evidence of the extravagance and mismanagement is the ACT budget report of an \$82 million blowout in the 2012-13 budget review. Regardless of the indicator, the annual report, the question on notice or the reporting measure, this government does not represent good value for taxpayers. The ALP's big spending election campaign saw them commit more than \$1 billion over the forward estimates, yet it somehow does not include the things people really want, like green bins, additional car parking, credit card parking machines, flashing lights in school zones et cetera.

The ultimate indication of misuse of government authority is the Labor-Greens commitment to build light rail without any real knowledge of the cost. Just last week in committee hearings we heard the government confirm that there is no price for which they will abandon the project—that is, regardless of the cost to taxpayers, the government will continue on the ideological crusade to build something which may not stack up by way of finances, patronage, engineering or any other measure. I am worried this course of action could be pursued by a government in a developed country. I am not saying we should not explore the options, but we should do so methodically and not without consideration of the facts.

In the last sitting week I moved a motion calling on the government to provide information on the light rail project—they could be firm numbers or estimates—about the following: the time line for the decision making and construction progress; the expected cost to taxpayers of pre-construction and construction; the predicted patronage, running costs and staffing; the population within reasonable walking distance of a light rail stop; plans for park-and-ride facilities; the financial models for funding the project; and what feedback was received from Infrastructure Australia as a result of the 2008 federally funded proposal, which failed.

Why is it so unreasonable to expect answers to those questions? Those questions were all amended out of the motion by the government. Those questions are now listed on

the notice paper, and I eagerly await the government's response. I believe they must have estimates on each of those. If not, it was irresponsible to commit to the project. Has the government considered other rapid transport options, such as buses? I am not sure—nobody is. The government is being secretive on this big ticket item.

Members interjecting—

MR COE: Mr Hanson is right on the money with this motion. It is worth while to call upon the Chief Minister to advise the Assembly if she agrees the ACT government will be the most green and most progressive government. I call on the ACT government to outline to the Assembly the cost impacts of both the election promises and the push to become the most green, progressive government in Australia.

I and many other Canberrans are very concerned about the government's commitment to being green and progressive. I would rather hear words such as "effective", "committed", "responsive", "efficient", "proactive", considered" and so on rather than "green" and "progressive". This government did not win a blank cheque at the last election, nor did it win a mandate to undertake a Greens agenda. It is irresponsible for this government to claim it did.

MADAM SPEAKER: Just before Mr Corbell commences, I think I heard an interjection that mentioned something about the Queen. I draw members' attention to the standing orders about the sort of language we should use, especially in relation to heads of state and people of that sort. Mr Corbell, you have the call.

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) (10.35): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Of course, what we hear from the Liberal Party today is the failure, as the Chief Minister has rightly identified, to come to grips with their fourth consecutive election loss here in the ACT. Instead of the new Leader of the Opposition seeking to carve out a new agenda that reflects his priorities as leader and his objectives as the alternative Chief Minister, we hear more of the same negativity, more of the same carping, more of the same lack of vision and lack of perspective on what can be achieved for this city and what challenges this city faces.

Interestingly, in the commentary from those opposite, we hear in particular the attempt to link progressive politics with some apparent fear around policies which are about responding to environmental challenges. This is probably the only opposition I know of in the country—perhaps apart from, of course, their colleagues on the hill whom they ape so successfully—who seem to think that cities do not have a role to play in climate change.

I refer to significant Liberal leaders and past Liberal leaders—people like Robert Doyle, the former Liberal Leader of the Opposition in Victoria, who is now the lord mayor of the second largest city in the country, Melbourne, and who is showing responsibility as a leader in tackling climate change for the city of Melbourne. The city of Melbourne is engaged in organisations globally and is taking actions on the ground to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Is someone like

Robert Doyle some reactionary progressive or a far left politician? No, he is not. He is a middle of the road, mainstream political leader—indeed, if anything, perhaps a conservative political leader—who nevertheless recognises the importance of developing policies and implementing policies at a city scale that respond to climate change.

Let me address a couple of the points that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned in his speech. The first of those was, of course, his critique of the plastic bag ban. He said, “Why are we doing this?” Why we are doing this is because the majority of Canberrans want it to be done. And that has consistently come through in all of the polling that the government has done with the community to gauge and to understand community expectations. It is a consistent trend that over the last four to five years a majority of Canberrans polled have supported action to reduce the wastefulness associated with lightweight plastic shopping bags. In the most recent surveys undertaken by the government, what we saw was that there continued to be clear majority support to maintain the ban.

Indeed, of those polled, 66 per cent supported measures to implement the ban nationally, and less than a third believed that the ban should be overturned. So that is what the voice of the community is telling the government. Those are the figures that Mr Hanson is blind to when it comes to that issue, and he fails to recognise that there is support in our community to make a shift away from a wasteful generation of waste and towards measures to encourage more sustainable practices.

The same is the case, of course, with measures to support the deployment of renewable energy. Mr Hanson asserts that the cost of renewable energy and whether or not it is going to decrease is simply that—an assertion. No, it is not an assertion. It is a fact. It is a fact that globally and in Australia the cost of renewable energy generation continues to decline.

Go and look at what the International Energy Agency says about that. Go and see what the federal government in its own analysis says about that. Go and talk to the industry about what it says about that. The cost of wind and the cost of solar continues to decline, and continues to decline at a dramatic rate. And at the same time the cost of non-renewable energy generation continues to grow.

The challenge for city leaders is to decide: are they going to lock this city in on a dependency path which will drive increasing costs and increasing levels of pollution, or are they going to seek to make a shift to a low-carbon future, a future where the technology will very soon be at parity with the cost of fossil fuel generation?

Those are the challenges for city leadership, and this government is leading the way on that front. Whether it is measures to encourage the deployment of renewable energy generation at a household level or whether it is ground-breaking measures to drive the deployment of large-scale solar generation through the large-scale reverse auction process, this city is leading the way and is attracting attention and support not just locally but nationally and internationally for the work that it is doing.

Of course Mr Hanson likes to claim that such measures are at a disastrous cost to consumers. In fact the cost of the large-scale solar power facility that is currently being developed by the successful tenderer of the first stage of the reverse auction is at a cost per week—the disastrous, apparently, cost per week—per household of 25c per household per week. It is a disastrous cost, isn't it, Madam Speaker? It is devastating. It is devastating on budgets, isn't it? Of course Mr Hanson fails to understand that the mechanism in place for the large-scale solar auction means that that price will continue to decline so that on a per year basis, per year per household, the cost of that facility in terms of the pass-through to consumers will decline from the astronomical sum of \$13 per year per household to \$9.50 per year per household.

Are these policies that are disastrous on household budgets? Are these policies that cannot be accommodated through sensible policy measures? No, they are not. They are rational policies designed to drive an uptake in the technologies of the future which our city needs to be a part of.

Of course Mr Hanson does not mention, as the Chief Minister said, the policies that the government has put in place that are actually driving down costs for households. The most notable of these, of course, is the energy efficiency improvement scheme. That scheme delivers savings to households, on average, over a three-year period of approximately \$300 per household off their electricity bill. It is a scheme that is in place in other jurisdictions like Victoria and New South Wales. It is a scheme that is supported by the Liberal Party's counterparts who are in government in those jurisdictions.

It is a scheme that in Victoria is being expanded by the current Liberal government to include more small and medium enterprises because they recognise that it helps businesses and households to save money and use energy more efficiently. Indeed, it is perhaps the most cost-efficient measure to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs to households. But those on the other side of this chamber have the shameful record of being a party that voted against a measure that will save households money on their electricity bill.

If we are progressive for implementing such a policy, we are very happy to stand by that title, because it means those households save money. It means those households save energy use. It means those households are contributing to reducing the greenhouse gas profile of this city.

Let us understand the complete failure of those opposite on this issue. Every other Liberal government in the country supports such a scheme. They do not. I fear, and in fact I am sure, that the only reason they do not is because they do not have the imagination and they live in ignorance of how these schemes operate.

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) (10.45): I rise today to speak in this debate mostly to comment on the journey of an individual, and I think it is a remarkable journey in 1,541 days.

Mr Coe: A point of order. I wonder whether the journey of an individual is directly relevant to the motion on the notice paper.

MADAM SPEAKER: I will keep your point of order in mind, Mr Coe, but I think with probably half a sentence issued I cannot actually make an assessment. I will keep a weather ear out for it, Mr Coe.

MR BARR: I will talk about the journey of an individual and the things that people say in this place. It is interesting that the new Leader of the Opposition moves a motion railing against progressive policy, progressiveness and sustainability. And yet I go back to that member's inaugural speech in this place, where he outlined his vision for the future of a vibrant, progressive and sustainable city. On 9 December 2008—

Mr Coe: A point of order, Madam Speaker. I do ask whether it is relevant for the Deputy Chief Minister to be going down this track when really it is not related to item 1 on the notice paper.

Mr Corbell: On the point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the point of order, Mr Corbell.

Mr Corbell: Madam Speaker, as I am sure you appreciate, this is a debate, and debates involve debating points, including contrasting what the proposer of a resolution says in that resolution and what his actions may otherwise indicate. There is nothing disorderly about that.

MADAM SPEAKER: It just so happens that as I had half an ear on this debate I was reading page 164 of the *Companion to the standing orders*, on relevancy, where it says:

The fundamental rule on the content of speeches, and that which underpins ... debate, is the relevancy rule.

It points to what standing order 58 says about relevancy:

... a Member may not digress from the subject matter ... under question.

I do take the point that Mr Corbell makes that there is some latitude in debating, but I would that ask Mr Barr, while he has some latitude in debating points, and we are a place where speechifying is our stock in trade, does keep in mind the content of the motion, which covers a range of things—not just the words “progressive” or “green” but issues like costs and calls on people to address the costs. Keep that in mind and get to the point of the motion, and all of the motion, not just one word.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The first two dot points of the motion refer to progressive government. If I am not allowed to discuss progressive government and people's views on that then—

MADAM SPEAKER: I did not say that. I said that you should be relevant to the motion.

MR BARR: I am, Madam Speaker. In my opening remarks I am coming to the first two points. In choosing not to stop the clock, you have denied me three minutes of speaking opportunity. I hope that that same principle applies to frivolous points of order, when I am sure I will be interrupted again, when all I am seeking to do is advise the Assembly of the words of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Seselja: On a point of order, Madam Speaker—and I would be very happy for you to stop the clock.

MADAM SPEAKER: I will stop the clock. Could we stop the clock.

Mr Seselja: I would just make the point that in his statements there—and I do not want to deny him time, and I am happy for the clock to be stopped—Mr Barr seemed to be critical of you for not stopping the clock. I understand that you have put in place procedures where people can ask for the clock to be stopped. I understand that most of the time that is adhered to when that is asked for. I do not think it is appropriate for Mr Barr to be suggesting that you have been denying him time when he could have asked for the clock to be stopped when points of order were being made.

MADAM SPEAKER: Actually, on the subject of the stopping of the clock—

Mr Corbell interjecting—

Ms Gallagher interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: If you would stop interjecting, Mr Corbell and Ms Gallagher, what I have actually said is that it is at the discretion of the Speaker. What I wanted to avoid was a whole swag of people calling out, “Stop the clock, stop the clock,” to the clerks. I perhaps should have stopped the clock but it did not cross my mind, but if Mr Barr had politely drawn it to my attention I would have stopped the clock. What I was trying to do was stop the chorus of “stop the clock” around the chamber. We will work with this. I do not want a chorus singing out, but if a member wants to draw my attention to the fact that the clock is running down and I have missed it, I will act on a polite and quiet reference of that kind.

On this occasion it was not drawn to my attention, and it was not the thing that was uppermost in my mind. What I am saying is that if someone is making a point of order, that is probably uppermost in my mind, and we will find a way of doing this in a sort of quiet and polite way. For instance, Mr Barr could have said it—and I make it very clear now that members can say quietly, “Could we stop the clock, please, Madam Speaker?”—and I will be happy to do so.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your guidance in relation to that matter. Returning to my observations on progressive politics, we have the stated position of the Leader of the Opposition in his inaugural speech that his vision is for a vibrant,

progressive and sustainable city. From what occurred this morning, it would appear that he has walked away from two of those three, and if the policies that he would put forward as an alternative government were implemented, I think the vibrancy of the city would be at great threat as well. So he would be three out of three. He came forward on that same day to say:

I come to the Assembly as a member of the Liberal Party and consider myself a liberal—

a small “I” liberal, I hasten to add—

by the definition of the word. I follow the ideal of Sir Robert Menzies, who said, “We took the name ‘Liberal’ because we were determined to be a progressive party, willing to make experiments, in no sense reactionary ...

In no sense reactionary, willing to make experiments and taking the term “liberal” to be a progressive party! Yet what we have heard this morning is an attack on progressive politics, particularly from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who, I would acknowledge, has at no point in his political career ever claimed to be progressive. So I do not particularly suggest that Mr Coe has had a miraculous transformation in 1,500 days. In fact, I know he wears as a badge of honour being conservative.

But to hear Mr Hanson give the speech he has just given is quite a remarkable transformation for an individual. On one level, I can understand it, because the only way he could get to that chair, the chair he has coveted since he has been in this place, is to sell out all of those progressive principles. As he looks down the line and to those who sit behind him, he knows there are no progressives in his party. There are no liberals. The now preselected Senate candidate did his best over the weekend to eliminate the progressive rump of the Canberra Liberals and has made it very clear that—

Mr Corbell interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, be quiet.

MR BARR: He has made it very clear that the elimination of the progressive rump within the Canberra Liberals is in fact one of the most important objectives of this mob over the next four years. And yes, Gary Humphries is the first victim of that, and Mr Hanson wants to ensure that he is not a further victim of that.

Mr Hanson: On a point of order—

MADAM SPEAKER: On a point of order, Mr Hanson. Can you stop the clock, please.

Mr Hanson: I seek a ruling on referring to the opposition as a mob. I would ask for your ruling on that, that the—

MADAM SPEAKER: I think that there is precedent for ruling that—

Ms Seselja interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Seselja! I think that there is precedent for ruling “mob” unparliamentary, and I would ask you to withdraw it.

MR BARR: I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Barr.

MR BARR: An organised group of conservatives aimed at eliminating progressives from their party—and that is what we have seen and that is what is manifesting itself in this motion. And we know that Mr Hanson will have to continue to walk away from everything he said in his inaugural speech, all of those fine and worthy ambitions—for example, improving the rights of gay and lesbian Canberrans. Yet, in this place, we have seen consistently every legislative advance for gay and lesbian Canberrans voted against en bloc by this Liberal opposition.

So if Mr Hanson wants to demonstrate some courage on this issue, the very least he could do would be to provide a conscience vote for his members on those issues as they come forward in the Assembly during this term of the parliament.

Mr Coe: Do you have conscience votes?

MR BARR: We certainly do. And it will be very interesting to see what position the Leader of the Opposition takes in relation to that. I know on a couple of occasions that he has expressed, not just in this place but in other forums, a desire to see those rights advanced. But it would not, of course, fit with his new position; that is, progressive government, empowering the individual, ensuring that every citizen of this territory has the same rights. That does not fit with the narrow, conservative agenda that is being put forward by his colleagues. It will be a very interesting question and we will await with interest the position that the Leader of the Opposition takes.

In the time remaining to me, I think it is important to put a couple of other facts on the record, most particularly the observations later in Mr Hanson’s motion around the cost of Labor Party election commitments. When Mr Seselja was the Leader of the Opposition, he put out a press release saying that the cost was \$2 billion. I am pleased to see that under the new leader they are getting closer to what the actual amount is. To date, it has gone from \$2 billion to \$1 billion.

Let me advise the Assembly that the net budget impact of the government’s election commitments is in fact \$193.9 million. The net impact is \$193.9 million over five years. For those opposite who were carrying on with \$7 billion in election commitments over four or five years, it is a bit rich to be arguing that today. (*Time expired.*)

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (10.58): I think what we have seen in this motion today is a typical example of the Liberal Party taking some perfectly well understood language, rewriting it in a way that suits their narrative and seeking to destroy it.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR RATTENBURY: There you go: I won the bet; I said it would take less than 15 seconds. They basically take what is a perfectly understood concept and make it something else. This motion is a blatant example of adversarial politicking and it has been quite unedifying for the chamber this morning. It does nothing for the people of Canberra.

I am quite comfortable, and in fact proud, about talking about wanting to deliver green and progressive policies in the territory. These are the sorts of things that will build a better future for our city—things like improved transport, a cleaner environment and looking after those that are most vulnerable in our community. Many people in Canberra like the things that are delivered under the parliamentary agreement between the Greens and the Labor Party. The sorts of things that are in that are the start of a light rail network for Canberra and cleaning up our lakes so that people can start to use them again. If that is an extremist agenda, I think that Mr Hanson is sadly out of touch with so many people in the community who want to see our lakes and waterways cleaned up. Another—

Mr Hanson: Eight times the carbon emissions tax, eight times the national emissions tax.

MR RATTENBURY: I am just coming to that. Another one is significant action on climate change—a 40 per cent reduction by 2020. It is not much past the 30 per cent promise that the Liberal Party made last term before they decided that it was more politically expedient to take cheap shots about not doing something serious on the issue.

The parliamentary agreement includes serious action on homelessness. I think universally it is understood that that is something that needs to be done. Certainly the census figures that came out in November last year, just after the election, underline the importance of tackling homelessness. That is part of a progressive and green agenda. If Mr Hanson has got a problem with that, he needs to go out and tell that to the Canberra community in an open and transparent way.

What about funding and implementation for the Gonski education reforms? Yes, that is part of our agenda as well, to ensure that we have an equitable and sustainable system of education funding going forward. These are the sorts of things that the parliamentary agreement covers, that the Greens and the Labor Party have signed up to deliver together over the next four years. That is the sort of agenda that we are talking about. I think that is an agenda that a great many people in Canberra are supportive of and that really delivers for the future of this city.

The Greens are a party that has grown through putting new ideas on the agenda—ideas like climate change that other parties often start addressing years or even decades later. These are the sorts of issues that come up out of academic research and community imagination. They are progressive ideas that help move us forward as a society. Of course, we are accustomed to attracting ire for some of these big ideas,

and that tends to mostly come from the staid conservatives. But for us to move forward and be prepared for the challenges of the coming century—this is the sort of thing that you often hear us say in this place; but as government, as leaders, we have a responsibility to be thinking about the future—is something that the Greens are very conscious of.

It is quite easy to sit in the place that Mr Hanson does and be very critical of endeavours to implement some of these strategies, but when you are used to being in opposition you do not have to actually take responsibility for some of these matters. It is very easy to put these sorts of motions forward, but the Greens have realised, and come to work with the fact, that when you have responsibility you need to use it wisely. Having now spent four years and a bit on the crossbench, we know we have to play a part in actually delivering some of these things; we have to have serious policies that can work for the community.

One of Mr Hanson's focuses today is the cost of some of these initiatives. Let us move to some of the rewriting of history that the Liberal Party is seeking to do. Let us go back to the ACT election. The Greens were the party that put all their policies to Treasury for costing. They are all publicly available; they have all been ticked off by Treasury. If we want to talk about being transparent about the cost of things, let us contrast that with the position the Liberal Party took: they waited and waited, and finally, in the last few days, put a rush of policies in, leaving no time for Treasury to work over them properly, leaving no time for the public to be able to access that information.

Where was the transparency to the community about cost? It sat with the Greens; we were the first ones to have all of our policies into the Treasury process. If we want to talk about costings, I am happy to talk about costings all day, because ours are still publicly available and they are fully transparent.

Mr Hanson: It was a billion dollars.

MR RATTENBURY: I will come to the billion dollars. Let us come to that; it is another—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, will you stop interjecting. You will have your chance to reply shortly.

MR RATTENBURY: It is another rewriting of history; it is another distortion. Mr Barr stole my thunder a bit on this, but I will make the point again, because I think it is one worth making. In his press release in November last year, Mr Seselja talked about the \$2 billion deal that had been done between the Labor Party and the Greens. Clearly that was done on the back of a beer mat, or an envelope or something. When you actually looked at the figures, there was some interesting double counting going on there. If I recall correctly, and I have not looked at it for a while, they put in light rail twice—once for the Greens and once for the Labor Party. That took up a lot of the figures.

Now we have seen Mr Hanson come in here and go, “Actually, it is really only \$1 billion.” Talk about rubbery economics!

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, I am going to be warning you soon if you do not stop.

MR RATTENBURY: But hey, what is a billion dollars between friends? And these people want to hold the treasury bench! You are kidding me. A billion dollar changeover in the space of a couple of months! Where is the economic credibility in that sort of public pronouncement?

Mr Coe brought up another attempt to rewrite history and distort what actually happened when he brought up his motion on light rail last week. If members recall that debate, they will remember that Mr Coe put forward a request for a whole series of information, much of which is publicly available. I do not know if Mr Coe has not looked for it, cannot be bothered or has not got the staff to do it, but much of the information he asked for last week is publicly available. I said that in my remarks, and that is why I did not support the motion. Why should we call on the government to release something that is already publicly available on a website? It is simply nonsensical. I take my vote seriously in this place: I cannot vote for something like that; there is no credibility to it. What we also did was amend that motion to say that information that Mr Coe was after that was not yet available because it had not been done would be made available in a public and transparent way.

For Mr Coe to come here and say that the ALP and the Greens are trying to hide this information from the public is simply disingenuous, and that is the most generous description I can give it.

I want to also reflect on something else. Mr Hanson brought back up yesterday’s parking matter of public importance. I was particularly amused that he brought back the car sharing policy. I think this reflects the fact that they have not asked or simply do not understand what that is about. In other Australian cities—as well as other parts of the world but here in Australia—car sharing is a notion whereby a private company comes along, and I am going to explain this in some detail because you clearly missed it, and makes a car available. Members join a club; they can then book on the internet to use that car when they want to use it—maybe for an hour, maybe for three hours. It is designed to go in high-density areas, such as, say, new Acton. This is not about forcing people to get in cars together; it is about observing that not everybody wants to own a car. It is actually quite expensive to own a car, but for a couple of hundred dollars a year you can join a club and then access a car for the odd hour or two if you need to drive to Fyshwick to pick something up but most of the time you do not need a car.

That is what a car sharing policy is about. The changes to parking regulations that go with that are about government creating the rules so that those companies can own a parking space where they can store that vehicle so that members of the public know

where to pick it up from. It is a really simple concept. If Mr Hanson and his colleagues went outside Canberra a little more often and looked at what is going on in the rest of the world, they would understand that innovation and progression are happening in other places.

I cannot speak for the Labor Party—I can speak for myself—but I think they are on board with some of these things, and actually want to bring that sort of innovation to our city so that our residents can benefit from bold new ideas and clever new ideas that make people's lives easier and less expensive. That is what that policy is about. Hopefully, now that I have explained it to them, the opposition will not make such embarrassing contributions in future debates. It demonstrates that they clearly do not understand the policy concept; it is actually quite a simple one.

Environmental and social issues are far from the labels that Mr Hanson keeps trying to put on them. They are in fact mainstream issues, and very real for people and families here in Canberra.

Renewable energy targets were an initiative of the Howard government, but I do not recall them generally being described as extreme, green or permissive.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR RATTENBURY: That suggests that Mr Hanson cannot even come to terms with some policies that a former Liberal Prime Minister was able to understand as being necessary for the future of this country.

Let us look at some of the issues around the cost impact. This is what Mr Hanson professes to particularly want to talk about today—the cost impact of some of these policies. The Greens have put modelling out on our 90 per cent renewable energy target. It is publicly available; you can go and read it any time you like. We have put into the footnotes the modelling assumptions, so again it is completely transparent. That showed that if you take a business-as-usual scenario for electricity prices over the next few years and compare it to the policies the Greens are putting in place, by 2020-21 the quarterly bill savings achieved under the Greens policy would be \$33.89. That is a full set of modelling that shows that if you put in place the energy efficiency issues we are talking about, and you look at the future price projections for green power compared to black power, then per quarter we would be looking to save households nearly \$34.

That is a significant saving. What that says is that the sorts of policies we are seeking to put in place are actually about protecting Canberrans. Whether it is families or individuals living in households—because they all matter—we are protecting all Canberrans against some of the vagaries that are coming down the line in the future. They are the sorts of policies that we are talking about. When people sit down and look at this modelling, Canberrans understand that these are good policies for their future that are about protecting our community.

They are the sorts of things we are talking about. They are the sorts of policies that are contained in the parliamentary agreement. These are policies that are representative of the aspirations of our community.

When it comes to talking about representing the community, it is worth turning our minds to the events of the weekend. It was interesting to read the numbers in the paper and observe that fewer Liberal Party members participated in the preselection than Greens party members. More than 250 Greens were to participate in our preselection processes, because we do not disenfranchise our members from the voting process. But that is for them to consider down the line.

Quite simply, this is a motion that is all about ideology. It is not about making a practical difference in the lives of Canberrans. In the parking motion yesterday, we saw Mr Hanson start talking about ideology. Again, this morning, it is all about ideology. What I am interested in is delivering green and progressive policies that are good for the future of this city and make a difference to the lives of Canberrans—make their lives easier and insulate them against future price rises coming along, whether they are in the energy or oil sector. These are the sorts of policies my colleagues and I brought to the election and are now seeking to implement during this term of the Assembly.

MR SESELJA (Brindabella) (11.11): I did just want to respond briefly to the Green member's contribution. It is always unclear to us when he gets his 15 minutes as to whether he is speaking as a member of the government or whether he is speaking as a member of the crossbench. Nonetheless, you would expect that, with a million dollar office, the contribution might be a little more serious than we just heard. I wanted to address a couple of the things that he has touched on there.

He talked about costings. The Greens, of course, made much about costings and having their election promises costed during the election period. I think Mrs Dunne highlighted in discussions that simply having a policy costed by Treasury does not, of course, make it affordable. We have heard those kinds of statements from Shane Rattenbury and others in the past—that somehow if it can be accurately costed therefore you can afford it. This is the economic policy of the Greens in action. Someone could come up with a plan for a very fast train as an ACT election promise. The cost could be in the billions, perhaps tens of billions of dollars. There may be a pretty accurate estimate of what it might be. It might be \$10 billion, it might be \$20 billion or it might be more. That does not mean that the budget could sustain it. Just because you can name the figure it does not mean that it is a good policy; it does not mean that it is an affordable policy.

I do not think we should allow to stand these nonsense comments that because you have had something costed it is therefore affordable. It needs to fit within the budget and it also needs to be something that is worth while pursuing. The Greens were obsessed with this issue. I recall Ms Hunter focusing significantly in her speech on election night on the fact that they had had their policies costed. I think that was just after she had confidently predicted they would hold four seats. Then she thought they would hold three and I think towards the end she was pretty confident they would hold two. Maybe those sorts of comments should be seen in the same light.

Mr Rattenbury also touched on this one billion versus two billion. I have read Mr Hanson's motion. It talks about \$1 billion that does not include light rail or a

hospital. I understand the hospital is around \$340 million. I do not think the government had that one costed, from memory. They could not actually put a figure on it, but we would expect that it is in the order of \$340 million. Light rail is something the government are going to magically build with no government funds. On their own numbers, the first stage of light rail is going to cost in the vicinity of \$600 million to \$800 million. We know that it is over \$2 billion already, but it goes further than that and it is more concerning than that. Mr Barr has pointed out that there is no cost at which light rail will not go ahead. This was one of the more extraordinary things we have heard from a Treasurer in recent times. It goes to the fact that the Labor Party were prepared to take government at any cost to the community, and light rail is an expression of that. They were happy to sign a blank cheque. If that costs taxpayers \$600 million they will do it. If it costs taxpayers \$1 billion they will do it. Based on what Mr Barr said, if it were to blow out to \$1.5 billion or \$2 billion, they will do it.

I think that this is at the heart of Mr Hanson's motion—that you cannot just have a blank cheque. In the end someone has to pay, and it is the taxpayers of the ACT who will be paying for this Green-Labor government. Parties like the Labor Party should actually have some standards when they are negotiating. They say, “No, we can't sign a blank cheque. We can work with you on this and this, but we're not prepared to sell our souls just in order to stay in government.” That is, unfortunately, exactly what they have done.

I commend Mr Hanson's motion. I think it is a very strong motion. It is a motion that highlights the serious consequences of deals that are done after an election. I do not think there is anyone in the community who would have voted for a blank cheque for light rail. That is what we are now being told. We are now being told that they have got a blank cheque for light rail. No doubt there will be blank cheques for all sorts of other things that people did not vote for.

Mr Hanson is spot-on in keeping the government to account and highlighting the serious costs that are coming to the community with every deal that is done between the Greens and Labor. Whether they have a sham divorce at some point in these four years, who knows? But we know that before that time, before the sham divorce or the sham break-up or the sham get-back-together, they will have cost taxpayers a hell of a lot of money. Mr Hanson has done very well to highlight that. I commend his motion to the Assembly.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.17), in reply: I would like to thank members for their contributions. It has been a lively debate. I think it has been a useful exercise in exploring the differences between this side of the chamber and the other side of the chamber. It is quite clearly a matter, when it comes down to it, of fiscal responsibility, of concern for the hip pockets of Canberrans, as opposed to an ideology being delivered at any cost and regardless of the consequence for Canberrans.

We on this side are very focused on making sure that the policies that we implement and the government implements are affordable, are within reasonable budgetary

constraints and are deliverable. Those on the other side are far more concerned with rolling out an ideological agenda that is at the extremes of the debate—to be, as Shane Rattenbury said, the most progressive, the most green, government in Australia.

The Chief Minister in her comments made a point about the votes and where the vote went. Let us be very clear about what happened at the election. The Labor Party and the Liberal Party got eight seats all. We actually beat the Labor Party on the popular vote. There were eight seats all. Then there was a choice. There was a choice for Mr Rattenbury to make in terms of which side he went with. We stood by what we had said in the election campaign. Mr Seselja, in those negotiations, stood by his values and stood committed to what we had been saying, which was about sound economic management and delivery of good local services to Canberrans. He did not step away from that.

What the government did and, in particular, what Katy Gallagher did was to basically say, “I’ll do what you want, Shane. I’ll give you a million dollar office. I will sign up to any target that you set. I will join you in being the most extreme green, the most extreme left, jurisdiction in Australia if that’s what it takes to secure government.” Not surprisingly, Mr Rattenbury is pretty true to his ideology. He is at the extreme of the Green left progressive movement. We understand that; that is where he sits. He is pretty happy. He has two options. Does he go with the Liberals, who have been consistent in their values and consistent in what they said to the people at the election or, having seen the eradication of three of the four Greens, does he go with the government, who have been saying certain things during the campaign and who have been talking about good local services, despite the lack of that over the last 12 years? Katy Gallagher basically promised him that blank cheque that we refused to sign. We refused to give Shane Rattenbury a blank cheque and the government agreed to it. The reality is that we have ended up in a position now where they seem to be, as a government, rolling out an agenda that is going to be very damaging in the long term to Canberra.

We on this side support sustainable growth. We do want to see Canberra grow. We do want to see it vibrant. We do want to see it develop towards the city that it can be. But we do not want to do it at any cost. We are not going to stand here and say, “We’ll just write blank cheques now to satisfy our ideology in this place that our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren will be paying off for decades.” We have seen that at the federal level. We have now seen Andrew Barr, out of the Wayne Swan economic playbook, when questioned in estimates by Mr Smyth with regard to just one element of the negotiations between the Greens and the Labor Party, say, “Yes, we’ve got a figure of \$630 million”—which I think we would all struggle to believe based on the way the cost estimates by this group go—“Yes, it’s \$640 million, but I will deliver this. This government will deliver this at any cost.”

This is the difference in approach. Government is about priorities; government is about setting targets. Mr Rattenbury and others have said, “Your government set targets, so you were extreme as well.” Government does set targets, federally and locally, in other jurisdictions. The problem is not the setting of the targets. It is what those targets are. If you set a target for renewable energy, that is fine. But if you decide to set a target of 90 per cent, that is a problem. If you set a target for carbon

emissions, that is fine—and nationally they have done it at five per cent. But it is when you decide to go eight times that national target that you have the problem. This is the difference between those opposite and us. We believe in sound economic management and we will not impose policies on the people of the ACT regardless of the price.

Would we like light rail everywhere in the ACT? Well, probably people would. I am sure everybody would like a light rail stop outside their house. What is the cost of doing that? We know what the cost is. It is any price, because that is what we have heard from the government.

All of us in our speeches went through some examples of this, but let me be clear about the position of the budget. If we have a surplus and if we have money just pouring out of the coffers then perhaps some of these projects might be achievable. Maybe they would be worthy of support because we have so much money. We have all the money that we need for health and the ED waiting times are just tickety-boo. We have no problems with our road infrastructure. There are no problems anywhere and there are rivers of gold. But there are not.

The deficit in 2013 is \$363 million. Just in the last sitting week, that went up by \$82 million over the forward estimates. This year alone borrowings have increased by \$100 million and now, this year, borrowings total \$2.7 billion. Then we have got all these policies on top of that. We know that the financial situation globally, nationally and in the ACT is fragile. We have seen employment figures in the ACT of recent times deteriorate. So we know that we have to be cautious. We need to be cautious with our precious dollars. They are not our dollars; they are the community's dollars. They are taxpayer dollars that are paid for by the sweat and hard work of people in our community. We need to say to people, "Where do you want your money spent?"

There are some items that we need to spend money on to make this a vibrant city. But ultimately what people want to see is hospitals that function. They want to see roads that they can drive on that are not congested. They want parking that is available and is not so prohibitive in cost that they cannot afford to park there. But what we are seeing from this government is something very different. The population of Canberra said loudly and clearly that they do not want to be going on this path that the Greens are taking us. They said, "We experimented with that in 2008 and we do not like it. We do not want to be at the extremes of a hard left Green agenda." Their vote reflected that and, as a result, three of the four Green members lost their seats.

When I talk to people in the community—and I have a lot since the election—the Green members are pretty happy. They are not happy they lost three of their representatives, but they are very happy that their narrow left Green ideological agenda is being rolled out by the government. So they are pretty happy. There are probably some on the hard left of the Labor Party that are pretty happy too. But when I speak to a lot of people in the Labor Party or, I should say, Labor Party voters; they are perhaps from the more conservative end of the Labor Party but they have got those Labor values that we hear so much about, what they say to me—

Mr Seselja interjecting—

MR HANSON: We sometimes wonder, when we see what is happening in New South Wales, what those Labor values are. What I hear from those voters is this: “I simply don’t understand how during the election when you had the Liberal Party and the Labor Party talking about good service delivery, economic management and so on that we have ended up in a position where we now have a government that is a combination of Green and Labor that is rolling out an unaffordable agenda that is not something that I voted for.” They do not understand that.

Katy Gallagher in this place over the last couple of days has been making much of her electoral position. We have seen much arrogance and hubris from those opposite. They say, “We won this election, we won the last election and we’ll win the next one.” Well, she needs to be very careful because out there in the community that is not the message I am hearing. What I am hearing is that the people that essentially won this election are the Greens. When you look at the agenda that has been rolled out, it does not reflect the will of many Labor voters. It certainly does not reflect the will of many Liberal voters and it does not reflect the will of the majority of Canberrans. What we are seeing is a narrow agenda that is going to cost the residents of the ACT for years to come.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 8

Noes 9

Mr Coe	Mr Seselja	Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher
Mr Doszpot	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.

Motion negatived.

Lanyon valley—community facilities

MR SESELJA (Brindabella) (11.31): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that the people of Lanyon Valley do not have reasonable access to community facilities like a pool, community meeting areas, a public library and recreational facilities;

- (b) that the ACT Labor government has failed to provide community facilities to the people of Lanyon Valley over the last 10 years;
 - (c) that the people of Lanyon Valley have endured 10 years of rates increases, but have not been given adequate community facilities in return; and
 - (d) that the Canberra Liberals promised at the 2012 Election to build an indoor pool for the residents of Lanyon Valley; and
- (2) calls on the government to:
- (a) review the community facilities available to the residents of Lanyon Valley;
 - (b) provide a plan for the development of facilities for the people of Lanyon Valley over the next four years;
 - (c) build a pool in Lanyon Valley; and
 - (d) report back to the Assembly on the review and plan by the last sitting day in May 2013.

The Canberra Liberals fundamentally believe that there are many parts of Canberra that are not getting the services that they deserve from their government, and one of those areas which we would like to focus on today is Lanyon valley.

In September 2012 the Canberra Liberals announced that if elected to government we would build an indoor pool for the residents of Lanyon valley. This is an important facility for the people of south Tuggeranong that I believe is warmly embraced by people in Tuggeranong. People in Tuggeranong are still scratching their heads as to why the Labor Party and the Greens would be so hostile to the idea of some facilities for the people of Lanyon valley.

This announcement was submitted to Treasury, it was costed and approved by Treasury in terms of the costing process. It was part of a comprehensive plan to improve local services for the people of Canberra and in this case the people of Tuggeranong.

There is no doubt that the people of the Lanyon valley are amongst the most neglected people in the ACT. They are neglected by their local government. If you look at the facilities that the people of the Lanyon valley have, you will see that they have not kept pace with the growth in the area and they have not kept pace with the amount that those people are paying for their rates and charges every day. We have seen massive increases in rates in the Lanyon valley. They are paying far more; in many cases their rates have more than doubled since Labor came to office, and what they are getting for it is very little in return.

This was part of a range of announcements to ensure that the people of Tuggeranong, the people of the outer suburbs of Canberra, got better facilities than they have. This included things like an urgent care clinic in Tuggeranong, fixing up the issues at

Erindale and upgrades of our local sports grounds. These are the kinds of things that people would expect from their local government, the kinds of things they are not getting from their local government at the moment. There is no doubt about it. Tuggeranong residents have endured 10 years of massive rates increases. They have not been given adequate community facilities in return.

This policy was based on listening to the community. It was based on looking at where the gaps are, where the areas for improvement are, and responding to that. It came from my colleagues and me doorknocking, having shopping centre stalls and listening to what the community was telling us. Not only did we listen; we then came out with the policies that reflected the needs and the desires of the community.

We still cannot for the life of us understand why the Labor Party and the Greens are so hostile to this idea. Why are they so hostile to this idea? We hear from Katy Gallagher today, in quite an arrogant fashion, claiming this overwhelming electoral mandate. Let us be clear: the Labor Party got fewer votes than the Liberal Party and it was only by selling their souls to the Greens that they ended up in government.

But putting that aside, no-one could doubt that the people of Tuggeranong voted for a change of government at the last election. If the Labor Party do not want to listen to that, they will get a worse result in four years time than they had at the 2012 election. No-one could doubt the message coming from Tuggeranong to the Labor Party; no one could doubt the strength of that message. But they did not—

Ms Burch: And how are you treating them, Zed? Walking away.

MR SESELJA: Ms Burch interjects. She somehow thinks—and this is the problem with the Labor Party: they somehow think that that result was all about Zed or all about one individual factor. It was not. It was a rejection of what the Labor Party and the Greens have stood for, for years. It is the culmination of the people of Tuggeranong saying enough is enough. If you think that somehow you are going to be able to get them back just because I might not be on the ticket at the next election, you have another think coming. This is where the Labor Party does not get it. This is where they simply do not get it.

A senior member of this government said to me after the election, with some amount of shock and surprise, “Richardson, 46 per cent; what’s going on there?” I will tell you what is going on there: the people of Richardson, the people of Chisholm and the people of the Lanyon valley right across the board have seen this government in action for a long time and they no longer want anything to do with them. It could not be a clearer message.

This motion today is about saying, “Perhaps, having done your deal with the Greens, having squeaked back into government, you might actually listen to the areas of Canberra that overwhelmingly rejected you.” And Tuggeranong valley is a prime example of an area that overwhelmingly rejected this government.

We are giving you the opportunity now to actually deliver for them in a way that you have not. That might be the key to winning some of them back, rather than arrogantly ignoring them and claiming it is all about personalities. It is not all about personalities; it is about policies. It is about what people in Tuggeranong believe the various parties can offer them. When the Liberal vote is bigger than the Labor and the Greens vote combined, and by a reasonable margin, perhaps you need to look at that. And in the Lanyon valley, that was even stronger. That sentiment that was expressed in Kambah and Wanniassa, that was expressed in Fadden, Chisholm, Gilmore, Theodore and Richardson, was expressed even more strongly by the people of Conder, the people of Gordon and the people of Banks. They absolutely rejected what they were getting.

I think that the Labor Party, having neglected it, having bagged the policy of better facilities for the Lanyon valley, then said, "What we'll do is we'll have a water play area at the Tuggeranong pool." Again, they are simply not getting it. Mr Smyth, Mr Wall and I, along with Nicole Lawder and Val Jeffery, heard from so many residents in Tuggeranong. We heard from single mums living in Banks. If you are at the low end of the income scale and you are living in Banks in a single parent household, there is a significant degree of isolation there. And anyone who does not recognise that simply has not been there.

The Lanyon valley has a broad demographic spread. It has some of the lowest income earners in our community and it has some medium and high income earners as well. But particularly for those at the lower end of the income scale, they can experience significant isolation where they are. What they were saying to us was, "We need something in our area. We need something for our children to do here in our area, in our local area. We shouldn't have to go far away in order to get the kind of facilities we need."

With respect to the response we had, I remember we had it from Mr Rattenbury on behalf of the Greens, saying there was no need, that there were far more important areas for swimming pools. We had the same message from the Labor government. This motion says, "You should do the work. You should actually deliver these kinds of facilities."

Ms Gallagher: Yes, because you won't.

MR SESELJA: Again we have the arrogance from the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister should heed what the people of Tuggeranong said. I do not think she would deny—maybe she wants to get up and deny that the people of Tuggeranong have delivered a clear message. Have the people of Tuggeranong delivered a clear message? They have. A big part of that was about a government that stopped interfering, a government that was taxing people too much and a government that was not delivering services, despite taxing people too much.

The people of Tuggeranong feel neglected, and the further south you go in Tuggeranong the stronger that feeling is. We should, as local representatives, be addressing that at every opportunity. A better built environment produces

improvements in health, wellbeing and contentment and, as a consequence, underpins the development of community spirit and a sense of belonging. The ACT government claim that this is important. There are all sorts of statements that they have made around the place. They claim that this is important, but this is about putting it into practice.

Going back to 2004, the community facility needs assessment for Tuggeranong, Weston Creek and Woden said:

The provision of accessible community venues is seen to contribute to the development of a strong community spirit.

The study also reported back from its public consultation:

The community in general raised concerns over a lack of 'community spirit', which was seen as being mainly due to the non-existence of 'night life' and shared public places.

According to the participants at public consultations, there is a shortage of low cost meeting space, halls and community centres, and office space for community groups, which places considerable pressure on existing community space ...

Other types of venues such as youth facilities, childcare centres and recreational facilities will also need to be prioritised for future generations. A number of services that were interviewed have pointed to a lack of activities and services, which recognise the diverse needs of young people and young families.

A swimming pool is particularly important. It provides low impact exercise for a range of abilities. It is especially beneficial for people with health and cardiovascular problems. It helps to teach children water safety at a young age, which we all know is so important. Having a pool within reasonable access of people's homes, workplaces and educational facilities is an important part of preventive health strategies.

The draft report on ACT aquatic facilities was released in early October 2012. It referred to a severe shortage of modern aquatic facilities in southern Canberra. Despite what the government says, there is a severe shortage. Why wouldn't we be doing something about that?

Look at this government's priorities, at how much they have spent on so many other things that are less important. They spend it all the time. That was the other area of feedback that we got, right across Tuggeranong, and I am sure right across other parts of the community. The Chief Minister defends the investments in public art and the like. The reality is that it was a symbol for people of where the government did not have their priorities right. The number of times that I would be doorknocking and people would say to me, "They spent \$400,000 on that monstrosity on Drakeford Drive, yet we have to have private fundraisers for humidicribs." That was direct feedback from the community, and they would say the same when it came to their local facilities. It was symbolic of this government's inability to prioritise properly for the community whom they are meant to serve.

This motion asks a number of things: for the government to review the facilities available, to establish a plan for the development of facilities over the next four years to meet community needs, to build a pool, and report back to the Assembly. That should be largely uncontroversial. If the government are going to claim to be reconnecting with these people whom they have lost, who have clearly walked away from them, I would say to them that the people of Tuggeranong walked away from Labor not because of their own desires; they did it because Labor have walked away from them. That is why they have walked away from them.

This used to be an area that the Labor Party took for granted. In fact it has been an area they took for granted. They believed that Tuggeranong was their area, that they would always get the support in Tuggeranong, that they did not really have to deliver anything. And they have been sent a very clear message. As I said earlier, if the Labor Party think this is about personalities then they will continue to neglect the people of Tuggeranong. This is about policies. This is about delivery of services. This is about a government that actually cares for these people. The people of Tuggeranong have given the absolutely clearest message that that is not what they are getting from this government.

As I said, for senior Labor figures to express shock and horror that the Liberal Party can pull a very strong vote in a place like Richardson shows that they still do not get it. It shows that they take these people for granted. I think that they should now take on board this motion and support this motion. They should support at least the calls for action, and commit to actually taking this action. I think that would be important for the people of south Tuggeranong. I think the people of south Tuggeranong would welcome that. I think that they would say that that is the government demonstrating that they will now look to serve the community, whether they voted for them or not. Whether they voted for them or not, they will look to still deliver for those people.

I commend the motion to the Assembly, and I commend better facilities for the people of Tuggeranong, and particularly in this case for the people of the Lanyon valley.

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) (11.46): I move:

Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) the Parliamentary Agreement between ACT Labor and the Greens commits the Government to ‘Undertake a community needs analysis of government services in southern Tuggeranong, including a feasibility study for a library in Lanyon’;
- (b) the people of Lanyon Valley have a reasonable expectation that those they elect to represent them will stay the course for their term of office; and

- (c) the planned movement of Mr Seselja to the Federal Parliament represents a betrayal of the trust placed in him by the voters of Lanyon Valley; and
- (2) calls on members of the Government to deliver on the commitment to a community needs analysis as set out in the Parliamentary Agreement, and continue to serve the people of Lanyon Valley for the full term of this Assembly.”.

I am a little surprised that Mr Seselja should bring this motion on today, given that he is seeking to get away from the people of Lanyon as quickly as he can, given that he has really only just discovered them, given that in 2004 after living in Tuggeranong, as he said, born and bred and raised his family there, he chose not to represent them in 2004, chose not to represent them in 2008. But I am surprised that he would draw attention to his hypocrisy, draw attention to a trail of broken promises to the people of Brindabella that paved his election result and draw attention to his betrayal of his former friend and mentor, Gary Humphries.

Mr Seselja today has chosen to draw the Assembly’s attention to the people of Lanyon, a community that, as a Tuggeranong local, I know very well. So let us talk about the people of Lanyon and their wants and expectations. The ACT Labor Party went to the election with some very strong policies to deliver enhanced services to the people of Tuggeranong, including Lanyon. The government have a proven record of delivering on our commitments, and we will continue to do so.

During our last term of government, we successfully delivered on our election commitments and the commitments made under the parliamentary agreement. As my amendment reflects, we have made a firm public commitment under the parliamentary agreement to undertake a community needs analysis of services in south Tuggeranong, including investigating the feasibility of a library at Lanyon. We will be honouring that commitment, and my amendment affirms that. We have also made a number of election commitments that represent substantial investment by this government in the future of Tuggeranong, and we will be honouring those commitments.

The ACT Labor government have made a number of substantial election commitments, and we will implement them, particularly in Tuggeranong and the Lanyon valley, and a number of Tuggeranong folk will share the benefits, along with the rest of Canberra. The government will commit \$19 million for stage 2 of the upgrade and duplication of Ashley Drive between Erindale Drive and Johnson Drive, and this follows the \$7 million investment just made for stage 1 from Sternberg Crescent to Erindale Drive. The government is committing \$8.7 million to construct a new purpose-built centre of excellence and numeracy at the Caroline Chisholm School.

The government is committing \$7½ million in capital funding to construct a new Canberra Institute of Technology Tuggeranong learning centre. The uptake of training in the Tuggeranong area is on the increase and while at the same time we have significant innovations in learning delivery, this will allow a local centre for local people.

We will help fund a new structure at the Greenway enclosed oval to improve player and spectator facilities. We will commit \$600,000 to establish a family water play area as part of the Lakeside Leisure Centre at Tuggeranong. This funding will deliver a water play area similar to that at Dickson.

We are committed to delivering local shops and strong communities. We will deliver upgrades to local centres in Banks, Theodore, Kambah and Tuggeranong. ACT Labor has made a number of commitments that will benefit the whole of the Canberra community. Unlike the Canberra Liberals, we do not believe in dividing the community, as Mr Seselja's motion intends.

There is \$4.5 million to create an additional hundred childcare places by upgrading childcare centres across Canberra. We will be increasing the community bus services provided by Regional Community Services, by committing an additional \$2.3 million to cover six new wheelchair accessible vehicles. There is \$62 million over four years to upgrade and improve community facilities such as parks, playgrounds, cycle paths and footpaths and bus stops.

In the last term of government we also delivered major initiatives for the people of Tuggeranong, such as the new Namadgi School, the Tuggeranong Seniors Centre, funding for improved community access at Lanyon Homestead, a record growth in investment in childcare centres, government support for a new bulk-billing GP clinic in Chisholm, improvements and extensions to the Mura Lanyon centre and older housing tenant units also located in Lanyon.

Let us contrast that with what Mr Seselja promised at Lanyon.

Mr Smyth: Yes. In detail?

MS BURCH: Mr Smyth does not know where the social housing complex for older people at Lanyon is—it is just extraordinary—and does not know the voters of Brindabella.

We have heard a lot of rhetoric from Mr Seselja. Apart from an under-funded pool with no detail of its location and operations, what we did see from Mr Seselja was a plan to upgrade Gowrie oval. This is the oval, quite literally, probably where his children play. So this is to look after himself, not the people of Lanyon. We will be delivering upgrades to Bonython and Isabella Plains neighbourhood ovals and continue to support all our young kids having access to improved ovals over time.

But let us consider part 1(c) of my amendment. I think we need to go back in history with regard to Mr Seselja and his motion and the connection to Lanyon valley. Eighteen months ago Mr Seselja announced that he was switching seats and contesting the seat of Brindabella in 2012. Mr Seselja had ample opportunity to represent the people of Brindabella before that but, instead, contested two elections for the seat of Molonglo. And why was that? Because it was convenient for him. It was suitable to him. But in 2011 he announced that he was swapping, as he claimed, to represent the community he lived in, to represent them in the Eighth Assembly.

I think it is worth reading an extract from Mr Seselja's open letter to the people of Brindabella in the *Valley Voice* issue of September 2011. Mr Seselja said:

I'm passionate about representing the people where I live, where I grew up, and where I am now raising my own children. As a born and bred Tuggeranong resident, I am proud to seek pre-selection in the electorate of Brindabella ...

He then concluded:

Representing Tuggeranong, everything I do will be about local solutions, local services, local answers and local commitment.

But that passion has faded. How quickly that passion has faded. We now know that those promises were not worth the paper that they were written on. We know that there should have been a small print in there to say that this contract will be torn up "as soon as it suits me". Mr Seselja neglected to mention, as he promised the world to the people of Lanyon, that he would stick around for as long as it took him to find something better.

The deception was put on record on 13 November, when the *Canberra Times* posed the question directly to Mr Seselja about whether he would seek federal preselection. Mr Seselja's emphatic denial is startling in light of what has since unfolded:

I have no plans to enter federal politics.

But of course we know that is just a bald-faced lie. We know that it is not just the people of Brindabella that he failed to communicate his true intentions to. We know that even Senator Gary Humphries, once a friend and mentor to Mr Seselja, has also been kept in the dark about Mr Seselja's real plans for his career.

Mr Smyth: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ms Burch, sit down.

Mr Smyth: Ms Burch just said "bald-faced lie". If she is accusing the member of a lie she should do it through a substantive motion or she should withdraw.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Burch, it is unparliamentary. Will you withdraw?

MS BURCH: I will withdraw the word "lie". I think the truth speaks for itself.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, unreservedly.

MS BURCH: I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker. But as we know, Mr Seselja's comment "have no plans to enter federal politics" was not the case, that he clearly had plans to enter federal politics, which now his former friend and mentor Senator Gary Humphries knows only too well. So there were a number of people with whom Mr Seselja had not been quite clear with the truth. This does beg the question that

even if a trusted friend and colleague cannot trust Mr Seselja then how can the community of Canberra trust him? And I note that Mr Seselja has dismissed this outrage from his party members as a disaffected rump. I wonder how those party members feel about being described as a disaffected rump.

Today we hear that, should there be another preselection process, Mr Humphries will contest that. So I do watch with interest because we do know that Gary Kent has quickly got a hundred signatures together from party members, that disaffected rump that they are referring to, and each one, each—

Mr Smyth: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ms Burch, sit down. Yes, Mr Smyth, on a point of order.

Mr Smyth: I do not know whether Ms Burch has actually read the motion, but perhaps you could make her relevant to the people of Lanyon and the provision of the new pool.

Mr Gentleman: On the point of order, the amendment to the motion which the minister is talking to directly discusses Mr Seselja's move to the federal parliament.

Mr Seselja interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Seselja, I am not having a dialogue across the chamber. Yes, the amendment does in fact go to the matter of Mr Seselja's move to federal parliament. So she is speaking to her amendment, I believe.

MS BURCH: Thank you, Madam Assistant Speaker. And I will just finish on that note, that the Liberal Party, the disaffected rump that Mr Seselja is on the public record as describing them as, are so disaffected that they may choose to overturn that preselection process. It will be interesting what Mr Seselja will do after that. After not bothering to stand for his local community over two elections, he comes in and within a matter of weeks or months he has turned his back on them.

Madam Speaker, if you look at the size of that disaffected rump, about 15 per cent of his party base do not stand for Mr Seselja's behaviour or what he stands for. I think that is a sizeable rump and it would cause most folk great concern. But, Madam Assistant Speaker, do not take my word for it. Let us revisit this after—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ms Burch, you have been alternating between "Madam Speaker" and "Madam Assistant Speaker".

MS BURCH: I do apologise.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am actually Deputy Speaker; so if we could just get it right.

MS BURCH: I will get it right from here on in. I will do my damndest, Madam Deputy Speaker. But do not take my word for it. Let us look at the words of the Liberal Party colleagues, perhaps that disaffected rump, and what they have said about him. Let us firstly go to the federal shadow attorney-general.

Mr Smyth: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, even with the amendment, this is hardly relevant to the amendment let alone the original motion, and I would ask you to call the member to order and to be relevant to the debate.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: I actually missed what she said, Mr Smyth. So I will ask you, Ms Burch, to be directly relevant. But I actually missed exactly what the sentence was that you are objecting to, Mr Smyth. I apologise. Please remain relevant, Ms Burch. You have just over two minutes in which to do that.

MS BURCH: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. And the amendment does go to:

... the people of Lanyon Valley have a reasonable expectation that those elected to represent them will stay the course for their term ...

And what we have seen unfold over the short term is Mr Seselja turning his back on that commitment to the people of Brindabella, including the people of Lanyon valley, to serve the term of his office. He has done that in double time. He has done that in what was described by his own party or members of his own party as a way that causes great concern. The strong criticism of a Liberal Party member, who was so outraged by Mr Seselja's conduct that he resigned from the Liberal Party, was:

It's completely wrong. They're all just looking after Zed Seselja. When you tell people not to go to the media, you are hiding something.

And that was his comment, that Mr Seselja, Mr Coe and Mr Doszpot all told this Liberal Party member not to go to the media.

But I think some of the Canberra Liberal Party's members who turned up for the weekend's vote at Eastlake football club summed it up best with their makeshift placards "shame Zed". I echo those words: "shame Zed". You have not, Mr Seselja, fulfilled your honest commitment that you made—it was not an honest commitment. You made a commitment to the people of Brindabella that you would serve your term in this Assembly. We have not even got to an Easter break. Over Christmas he was concocting a move to not represent them. I just want to make the comment that my amendment clearly states:

... the Parliamentary Agreement between ACT Labor and the Greens commits the Government to 'Undertake a community needs analysis of government services in southern Tuggeranong, including a feasibility study for a library in Lanyon' ...

The people of Lanyon valley have a reasonable expectation that those who are elected by them will stay the course of their term. The amendment also states:

the planned movement of Mr Seselja to the Federal Parliament represents a betrayal of the trust placed in him by the voters of Lanyon Valley ...

The amendment also calls on the government to deliver on its commitment to a community needs analysis. I know that I will deliver on my commitment to serve the full term and support the people of Lanyon valley and to do all I can to ensure—(*Time expired.*)

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (12.02): I am pleased to speak about the needs of residents of the Lanyon valley today. This was a continued interest of my former colleague Amanda Bresnan, who worked hard to represent her constituents in Brindabella, and especially those in the Lanyon valley. The Greens agree generally that the Lanyon valley does not have as many community facilities as northern Tuggeranong. One issue in particular which Ms Bresnan worked hard with the community on was pursuing a library for the residents in southern Tuggeranong. Indeed, this was an ACT Greens election commitment last year—to undertake a feasibility study into a library in the Lanyon valley area in 2013-14. The Greens understand that a library would provide an important service and resource for the community, including older people and families in the area—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop the clock, please. Members, I can hardly hear Mr Rattenbury for the noise from the opposition benches. Please keep your voices down. If you need to have an ongoing conversation, please use the room outside. Mr Rattenbury.

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, the Greens believe a library would provide an important service and resource for the community in the Lanyon valley area, particularly for older people and families and particularly for the outer suburbs such as Conder, Banks, Gordon, Theodore and Calwell. As a result of this, item 7.2 of the 2012 Labor-Greens parliamentary agreement, which is noted in Ms Burch's amendment, requires a broader analysis of what additional government services are needed in southern Tuggeranong but which will also include a feasibility study for a library. This is a very clear and concrete signal that the Greens take the needs of the community seriously. As part of our agreement with the Labor government we will be taking real steps to address the needs of southern Tuggeranong and not just pay lip-service to it.

I was surprised when Mr Seselja's motion came forward. He obviously has not read the parliamentary agreement. I guess that is his will. But he has called on the government to review the community facilities available for residents of Lanyon valley when, in fact, that is already part of the agreement. That is why I will support Ms Burch's amendment, because it reflects the plan that is already in place which Mr Seselja has sought to conveniently ignore.

The Liberals, of course, had an election promise on the Treasury website—one of the ones that made it—that calls for an audit of community facilities to be fitted into a

master plan. The Greens and the ALP are already undertaking this audit task through the needs assessment, and there will most likely be a community infrastructure plan for southern Tuggeranong forthcoming from the project.

In looking at the demographic trends, it seems that the population will age, as it has in northern Tuggeranong. I believe the biggest demand for community facilities is likely to be aged care in coming years. That is something the needs analysis will spell out, but it is an observation I would make at this stage that I think will be identified in that process.

With regard to a pool, which is specifically spoken of in Mr Seselja's motion, I am certainly open to the findings of the needs assessment. If it identifies that the pool is the issue or the particular priority of the community, the government will need to look very closely at that. As I said in the election campaign when this policy was announced, I was surprised that the Lanyon Valley was identified as the place of greatest need for a pool when one looks across the aquatic needs of the entire Canberra community.

Certainly in Tuggeranong we have the leisure centre at Erindale. The main leisure centre in the town centre is a very large and excellent facility and is one I enjoy using at times. We would also need to look at areas such as Woden where, through the closure of a number of pools, we have seen a significant decline in available services. If we are talking about whether a new pool is needed, a discussion probably needs to be had about where in Canberra that might be.

I was also surprised in the election campaign to note the Liberal Party was promising a pool at a cost \$15 million and it was a 25-metre pool. This was odd because members will recall at the time there was the discussion about the development of a facility in Gungahlin the Liberal Party vehemently opposed a 25-metre pool and considered it to be short-changing the community. I agreed with him on that; I thought Gungahlin definitely needed a larger aquatic facility, and I was very pleased that that is how it has turned out. But I am interested that what was short-changing the Gungahlin community was good enough for the Lanyon community. I was really unsure about the rationale behind saying a 25-metre pool was okay. I would be happy to hear comments on why what was short-changing one community was okay for another.

While we are talking about the needs of Tuggeranong residents, we should talk about the respective parties' position on wood heaters. Wood smoke pollution affects Tuggeranong residents in particular.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR RATTENBURY: I am glad you find this a laughing matter, but it is a very serious issue for many of the residents of your constituency, Mr Wall. I am surprised you are laughing that I would bring this matter up in debate. You claim to have doorknocked a lot of the community. The residents I meet are really concerned about this issue, and I am surprised you laugh at this matter.

Wood smoke pollution affects Tuggeranong residents in particular. It causes harm ranging from irritation to serious health problems. In fact, the Tuggeranong valley is noted as one of the worst places in Australia for wood smoke pollution. We all know it is a particular factor of the geography of the Tuggeranong valley; the way it sits makes it a particularly problematic area. That is something I hope all members in this place are well aware of.

Certainly, every winter the government receives complaints from the Tuggeranong public about this—regularly it is more than 50 complaints and in some years over 100. Despite this, when the Greens started a community consultation about reducing wood smoke pollution, suggesting measures such as phasing in more efficient heaters, the Liberal Party ridiculed it. They would not have a bar of it. This is despite support for the proposal from many Tuggeranong residents, including groups such as the Lung Life Support Group and the Asthma Foundation. This is a serious issue, and there has been a policy discussion led by Minister Corbell when he said potentially wood heaters would not be allowed in the new Molonglo valley development, which faces similar geographic issues to Tuggeranong, in order to prevent similar problems eventuating—

Mr Seselja: Are you going to ban them in Tuggeranong as well?

MR RATTENBURY: The difference, of course, is that if you set a policy at the start, everybody moves in with a clear expectation. We cannot simply move back through Tuggeranong and say to people, “You can’t have them anymore.” But we certainly need to start putting in place policies that attack this very serious health problem that affects children and older people particularly. Those two groups are particularly vulnerable to smoke pollution in Tuggeranong. The derisory attitude the Liberal Party take on this issue reflects on them very poorly.

Another issue I would like to touch on is Tuggeranong waterways, particularly Lake Tuggeranong. Of course, it is not in the Lanyon valley, but many people in the Tuggeranong area use this as a key recreational facility. The Greens are very keen to see significant work done to improve the water quality of Lake Tuggeranong.

That is why the parliamentary agreement seeks to address the issue of water quality in our urban lakes and waterways. We all know there are major problems with the quality of the water in Lake Tuggeranong. As was pointed out in question time in the last sitting week, there have been closures of Lake Tuggeranong on too many occasions to my mind. That is why we are keen to get on with the sorts of projects that will enhance the quality of water in Lake Tuggeranong and also in the creeks that feed into it.

This is an issue right across Canberra with our other lakes, but it is particularly the case with Lake Tuggeranong. I know many people are very concerned, so we need to do things like build wetlands on the creeks that flow into Lake Tuggeranong so that we slow down the water and strip some of the nutrients out of it so that by the time it gets down to the lake it is in a better state and we can ensure that the waterway is in a better state.

Where exactly in Tuggeranong those wetlands need to go is not yet known, and I think it is best to leave that up to the water experts to determine. But I am certainly looking forward to seeing those important environmental improvement facilities installed in the Tuggeranong valley. They have been very successful on Sullivans Creek in helping to address the water quality issues in that waterway, and we now need to take those successful policies and expand them to the rest of Canberra, particularly Tuggeranong.

In summary, let me simply say that the Greens are very keen to see the provision of government community facilities improved in southern Tuggeranong, and we will keenly await the outcome of the community needs analysis that is in the parliamentary agreement to give us an indication of what are the priority services. We might find that a library is on top of the needs lists, but, then again, we might find that it is actually a pool, or perhaps a basketball court is the answer. We might find that it is all of them or it could be something else entirely which I have not mentioned. It is really important that there is a level of engagement with the community to ask some of those questions.

I was surprised at the time frame in the original motion to have a report back by the last sitting day in May 2013. That would negate the ability of the community to contribute to a needs analysis. It is far better to use a time frame that enables community contribution to that discussion. Certainly, that is an approach that is being taken with the Tuggeranong park master plan at the moment. Again, whilst obviously not in the Lanyon valley, it is a facility used by many residents nearby, including those from the Lanyon valley. A very good process of community consultation has gone on, and that has identified particular issues of interest to the community. It is essential that we take both community desires and local community knowledge on board in order to ensure we get the best plan for the town park as we move forward.

The Greens look forward to the outcome of the analysis identified in the parliamentary agreement and look forward to continuing to improve life for the residents of southern Tuggeranong. I will be voting in support of Ms Burch's amendment.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (12.13): One gets the sense that Mr Rattenbury is kind of gleeful to be the only Green here. Unrestrained by his colleagues, he can be the progressive Green. It is interesting that he virtually missed Lanyon in his speech. From memory, I think the Greens got about five per cent of the vote in Lanyon; five per cent. They were actually outpolled by the Motorist Party. So the lone Green talking about the people of Lanyon and doorknocking the people of Lanyon is somewhat of a joke.

Mr Wall and I doorknocked every house in Lanyon. Zed was there. Nicole was there. Val was there. We did not meet too many Greens out on the trail. The interesting thing is that when you go and talk to people you get a sense of what they want. Yes, the issue of wood smoke was raised with me when I was doorknocking, I think by one person. It might have been by two people.

But the things that the people of Lanyon were most interested in were a green bin and a pool. Why? It was because they were relevant to what they wanted and what they needed. The Liberal Party have a proud tradition of supplying community facilities to the Lanyon valley. You only have to reflect on the youth centre down there, a Liberal Party initiative. It is a Liberal Party initiative. We will continue to keep up the pressure to provide more facilities for the neglected part of the electorate that the Labor Party took for granted. That electorate showed the Labor Party what they thought of them.

It is interesting that we hear the call for the library. In one of the articles from the *Canberra Times* that I have been able to find, a TAMS spokesperson then said that there were no current plans for additional libraries in the ACT. The government have consistently said since they came to office that there should not be more libraries. On a number of occasions I have raised the issue of everybody being within five kilometres of a library. The standard that we were moving towards was that everybody should be in proximity of a library down to a three-kilometre range. That, of course, would make a library necessary in Lanyon.

But the Greens did not bid for the money. The person who made that promise did not get a seat and the Green vote in Lanyon collapsed because the people of Lanyon told us, because we went out and spoke to them, that what they wanted was a pool.

Ms Burch, who found Lanyon 43 seconds from the end of her speech and spoke about it to 21 seconds from the end of her speech, asked whether I know where the aged-care facilities are in Lanyon. Yes, I doorknocked them all. They were surprised. Guess what, Madam Deputy Speaker? Nobody from the Labor Party had bothered to go and doorknock there. They were quite shocked and disappointed.

But a number of them said to me that that is what they expect from a government that had grown tired and arrogant. If you want to know where this comes from, it comes from the people. How do we know that? We know it because we were out talking to them. You can ask Mr Wall. I am sure he will get up and talk about his doorknocking experiences. You can ask Zed about the afternoon. There we were doorknocking Banks together as a team because we had a team in Lanyon. We were working as a team. All of us were at the Banks shops listening to what the people were telling us. The constant feedback was, "Give us a bin and give us a pool."

Why did they want a pool? It was because they knew that southern Canberra was unrepresented. It lacked the necessary pool lanes to allow them to get their swim classes and to exercise. Indeed, we know the government have got a report on pools because they sat on it for 11 months. Again, I quote from the *Canberra Times*,

The document ... suggests that the southern side of Canberra has a "substantive deficiency" of appropriate modern aquatic facilities ...

You have got this deficiency. We propose an answer to it and all we get is ridicule from the government and from the lone Green. It is interesting. Mr Rattenbury says

we were against a 25-metre pool at the Gungahlin town centre. I am surprised they were not. He said that he backed us up. I will go back and check the votes from the Greens when we talked about this. At the town centres it should be a 50-metre pool. You can actually see a hierarchy of pools in areas where each of the town centres should have a 50-metre pool, but then there is no reason why you cannot have a network of smaller pools.

There might be a network of more 50-metre pools, but it is reasonable that you might have smaller pools to meet the local need. What is the local need in Lanyon? We know from the older people down there that they wanted a pool—in effect, a hydrotherapy pool—where they could go and exercise. We know, for instance, that the big facility that is going into Gordon will provide a lot of accommodation for older Canberrans in the Lanyon valley. They will need those services.

We know that there is an existing aged population in Lanyon. They were certainly telling me that they thought the idea of a pool was good situated one bus ride away from where they lived or perhaps a short walk if they were lucky enough to live in the area of the Lanyon shops.

We know from the families down there that they said they had trouble accessing swim classes or that they faced the inconvenience of getting the kids from school and then getting up to Erindale or getting up to Tuggeranong. If you are a single car family and you do not have access to that car, that means buses, which for most of them means it is impractical.

This is about delivering services. This is about a good government delivering good services to people where they live. Surely that is what we should be about. That is certainly not what this government is about and that is why this motion is important today. What it says is that it is time to get on with the job.

Mr Rattenbury says that he is shocked that we would ask for it to happen so quickly. I am not sure why he should be shocked. All we have asked for is a review of the community facilities. Surely, minister, your department has a database of community facilities in Lanyon. Surely, Ms Burch, the government knows what these facilities are and can collate them reasonably quickly and identify the deficiencies. One of those deficiencies for the people of Lanyon is an appropriate place to swim locally.

It was interesting to hear from Ms Burch. It always is. Of course, there was not much to say. If you really do look at what happened in Lanyon, the people of Lanyon said, “We have had enough.” In her speech when she was rattling off all the things that were supposedly good for the people of Lanyon, the only one in the area was an upgrade to the local centre in Banks.

We would welcome that. I am not sure what it means. She did not tell us what it meant. I wonder if she actually knows. Ms Burch was able to speak about anything but Lanyon; anything but Lanyon. I do doubt sometimes whether she knows her way down to the Lanyon valley.

What happened in the election quite clearly was that the Lanyon valley responded to the initiatives and the policies from the Canberra Liberals, led by Zed Seselja. What they responded to was the fact that we had listened to them. They were telling us that they were suffering from cost of living pressures. We had policies to address those cost of living pressures. You only have to look at the gouging, I guess you could almost call it, that has been going on in respect of water and sewerage prices that was outlined in the ICRC report yesterday. It shows that people in the ACT have been paying too much for too long for basic services under this government.

What they told us was that they wanted to help with the environmental effort. They thought that the best way they could contribute to that was to give them a green bin. They want to be part of that effort. It is odd. The government in 2001 had a commitment through Ms MacDonald, who of course is no longer with us, to give us a green bin. Here we are, 11 years later, and we still have not got that green bin. We promised that. The people of Lanyon enjoyed that promise. They want it. They want that green bin.

They told us that they thought a pool, as the basis of a community facility that might also have some meeting rooms, is what they want. They want to have a sense of community. Lanyon is distinct. It is discrete from the rest of the Tuggeranong valley. They enjoy their status as the Lanyon valley. But they wanted places for themselves. They have not even got a scout hall because this government is not interested in the far reaches of the electorate.

You only need to look at the outcomes. Lanyon voted for the Liberal Party because we listened, we heard, and we promised to meet their needs. This is a reasonable motion. It is quite a simple motion. If you look at facilities around the country, there are a number of facilities along this model of smaller local pools. Wangaratta city council built an aquatic centre that has a pool; it has got a gym; it has got childminding centres; it has got meeting rooms.

These things allow people to exercise in their local area without having to travel great distances. The Greens and the Labor Party will have you believe that we all should get out of our cars, but if you want to access the facilities that currently exist in Tuggeranong, for most families after school it is a car trip. It is very hard to do on a bus—get the kids, then get down to Lanyon, get a bus up to Tuggeranong. If you are learning at Erindale it is a different trip altogether.

What this is about is better local services. This is a good motion. The amendment will not be agreed to by the Canberra Liberals. Good try. Yes, we hear what you are saying. Good luck to you on that. But we have listened to the people. We promised them the things that they want where they are, and that they want now. This motion sets out to help them achieve their aspirations to have a pool in their part of their world. (*Time expired.*)

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella) (12.23): My colleague has stated that the government will not be supporting this motion, as this government is fully committed to the assessment of community needs in south Tuggeranong, including Lanyon, in

relation to its commitment 7.2 under the current parliamentary agreement between ACT Labor and the Greens. Also, a number of commitments by the government to deliver better infrastructure and services to the Tuggeranong community are well underway or have been implemented.

On community needs in the Lanyon valley, the government is well aware that demographic change is placing considerable challenges on retaining services within Canberra's districts. Pressure is being placed on urban infrastructure and services. Meeting this pressure and continuing the efficiency and liveability of our districts is an important issue.

The government has always been committed to effective planning and the delivery of local services based on good information and sound assessment processes. The government carried out a community facility needs assessment of the Tuggeranong, Weston Creek and Woden areas in 2004. The report made a number of recommendations with respect to the demand for and supply of community facilities in those areas that have informed decision-making.

The ACT planning strategy has identified the importance of managing population and demographic changes in the community. Overall, while Canberra's population is relatively youthful, it is an ageing community. The act planning strategy commits the government to preparing a community facilities strategic plan. Initiative 7.2 of the agreement is also consistent with the objectives and strategies of the ACT planning strategy. The outcomes of the community needs analysis will provide input into the development of this community facilities strategic plan.

The government will undertake a community needs analysis that will cover all government services in southern Tuggeranong. The needs analysis will involve the collection of data and information from key stakeholders within the ACT, in government and in the community, including community sector agencies, about services provided. This will include considering earlier work and other relevant studies that have been carried out.

The needs analysis will also involve establishing how and where these services are delivered to establish a spatial representation for the delivery of services; analysing the 2011 census data to develop a profile of the community in southern Tuggeranong and understand demographic trends and population projections; seeking the views of government agencies and community organisations about future trends, needs and demands for community services; conducting a gap analysis between the existing services and trends and desired needs and demands; determining the priority for addressing the gaps between current and desired needs and outcomes, based on future trends and desired needs and demand; and establishing priorities based on maximising community benefits as measured by meeting government outcomes.

The government looks forward to undertaking this study with the community so that we can all be better informed about both the challenge and the opportunities that lie ahead in providing better services for south Tuggeranong.

In recent initiatives for the Tuggeranong community, the government is proud of the services that are provided to the Tuggeranong community, including south Tuggeranong. We strive to make improvements, but I am confident that the community needs study will also point to many improvements that the government has undertaken.

For example, the use of library services that we discussed here today in Tuggeranong is now very high. There are currently two library branches in the Tuggeranong valley, at Erindale and the Tuggeranong town centre, with 42,541 registered borrowers in the Tuggeranong valley for the approximately 90,000 residents of the valley, with the two libraries open for 99 hours a week—over 14 hours per day on average.

The mobile library makes regular fortnightly visits to local areas in Tuggeranong, including the Goodwin village aged care facility at Monash, the Lanyon Marketplace at Conder, and Tharwa outside the preschool. The home library has 31 registered members in the Tuggeranong valley who receive a delivery of books, DVDs, magazines and audio books every four weeks. The Read Around Canberra private reading group program provides multiple copies of special titles to 21 groups who collect their titles from either Tuggeranong or the Erindale library.

And the government has made substantial contribution to housing in the Lanyon valley. In April 2011, 52 units were opened at a complex in Conder which provide accommodation for older public housing tenants. The complex, which cost \$10.3 million to construct, has provided new homes to public housing tenants while at the same time freeing up larger properties to house people more quickly. The properties are owned and managed by Argyle, a community housing provider that manages almost 2,000 properties across New South Wales. Argyle's entry into the ACT supported the ACT government's objectives of growing the territory's community housing sector while continuing to provide the rebate rent to persons on low incomes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have a lot more to say in this speech, but I realise that we are—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will just consult with members. Mr Gentleman has only 4½ minutes to go. Are people happy for him to finish? Then we will go to lunch.

Mr Doszpot: Let him finish.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, you can finish, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker and members. I will continue. Down in the Lanyon valley we have also the YWCA Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre, which I think we have all visited. It has recently undergone a \$1.5 million refurbishment funded by the ACT government. It was reopened in August 2012 by Minister Burch. The YWCA has recently opened a food co-op at the Mura centre which sources food from donations from Woolworths and the Yellow

Van, which I talked about last night, and purchases from Sydney Foodbank. The refurbishment has also allowed for the establishment of an enterprise training cafe.

Construction work to renew the giant slide at the Point Hut district park and a number of other local parks in Tuggeranong was completed last year.

Across Tuggeranong a number of larger initiatives have been or are currently being implemented that will benefit the entire community. For example, \$1.5 million was provided for the new seniors club. Expansion and refurbishment of the Tuggeranong health centre are well underway. Construction of the first phase of the Tuggeranong town park stage has been completed. The Tuggeranong town park master plan is underway. Following completion of the master plan, a construction program will commence in 2013-14 which will deliver new pedestrian cycle paths, a covered play area and upgrades to car parks, barbecues and picnic areas.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, you can see that there is a lot of work that the government is doing in Tuggeranong and the Lanyon valley.

On residential growth, it is vital that the Tuggeranong community have a vibrant heart that supports the needs of people who live there. Residential growth is continuing to occur in Tuggeranong, with high and medium density housing being built in the town centre in order to ensure that housing choice for all households is available.

To support and continue this growth, the government has released a revised master plan for community comment. The master plan recommends up to 7,800 new dwellings in the Tuggeranong town centre to support the viability of existing retail and other services and facilities. As it grows, Tuggeranong will become an increasingly desirable place to live. That was reflected in the comments of the last Tuggeranong Community Council, which Minister Burch, the Chief Minister and I attended—as well as some of the members of the opposition, but of course Mr Seselja was not at that meeting.

That brings into light the real reason for this motion here today—so that Mr Seselja can assert that he still cares for Tuggeranong. I talk to the people of Tuggeranong every day, and more and more of them are saying that they are unhappy and they feel betrayed by Zed—that he is walking out on them.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will Mr Gentleman refer to Mr Seselja by his full name, please.

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes; sorry. They are unhappy with Mr Seselja; they feel betrayed by what he has done. Since the last election, as I said, I have been talking to Tuggeranong people every day. I do not see Mr Seselja down there. I do not see him at Lanyon; I do not see him at Calwell; I do not see him at the Tuggeranong Community Council.

It is interesting to look at a quote from Mr Seselja earlier in the discussion this morning. He said, “In case there is a Labor-Greens sham divorce over the next four years.” The only divorce I see is Zed Seselja’s divorce from his constituents in

Tuggeranong. As I mentioned, I believe he has left Lanyon; so do the people in the community. The good ship *Lanyon Zed Seselja* has sailed. The berthing dock at the shopfront down in Lanyon is there, but there is nobody home.

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 12.33 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Water—prices

MR HANSON: My question is to the Treasurer. The Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission states in its draft report:

... the Commission proposes to exclude the \$238 million revenue catch-up sought by ACTEW and to not include such mechanisms in the future.

Treasurer, were previous warnings about severe increases in water prices purely based on the need to recover revenue shortfalls?

MR BARR: As I am sure the Leader of the Opposition is aware, the ICRC sets prices independently of government, so the answer to that question would be found in previous ICRC reports.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Treasurer, what effect will the decision to exclude the revenue catch-up have on the government's dividend?

MR BARR: Again, the impact has already been felt, and I refer the Leader of the Opposition to budget updates and budget papers in the last few years.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, what effect will the exclusion of the revenue catch-up have on the ACT budget?

MR BARR: That is exactly the same question that Mr Hanson just asked me, so I refer to my previous answer.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, why have water prices included a substantive revenue-gaining proportion over recent years?

MR BARR: Again, the price of water is set by the independent regulator, so I would refer the shadow treasurer to the ICRC's price determinations.

Water—prices

MR SESELJA: My question is to the Treasurer. The ICRC, in their media release in relation to the draft report, stated:

This conclusion underpins the Commission's proposal for significant reductions in both water and sewerage services prices from 1 July 2013 with per kilolitre charges for water falling by 16.9 per cent.

Treasurer, were water prices set higher than necessary throughout last year?

MR BARR: Again, I refer the Senate candidate to my previous answers. The ICRC sets prices independent of government, and Mr Seselja would be best served—

Mr Smyth: A point of order, Madam Speaker. Under standing orders members are only to be addressed by their correct title or name. I ask you to bring the minister to order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Smyth. Last sitting we had this discussion—that members are referred to by their name, or, if they have a title, like “Leader of the Opposition” or “Treasurer”, that is the way that you refer to them.

Mr Gentleman: Senator.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Gentleman, that does not include “senator” or “senator-elect”. It is not a title that is used in this place, and I do not expect you to interrupt or interject like a little kid when I am making a ruling. So, Mr Barr, could you refer to Mr Seselja by his name.

MR BARR: As I was saying, Madam Speaker, Mr Seselja would be best to look at previous ICRC price determinations.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Seselja.

MR SESELJA: Treasurer, will the ACT government submission to this report recommend that prices be reduced by the amount stated in the draft report?

MR BARR: As I said yesterday, the government will consider the issues that have been raised. There are a number of very sensible recommendations contained within the ICRC's draft recommendations, and we will consider those and make our submission in due course.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Treasurer, what impact have these high water prices had on the cost of living for Canberrans?

MR BARR: That would depend on the amount of water consumed.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Treasurer, did you have any concerns prior to the release of this report that water prices were set too high?

MR BARR: The setting of water prices is done independently by the ICRC.

Health—organ donation

MS BERRY: My question is to the Chief Minister and Minister for Health. Minister, as this is DonateLife Week, from 24 February to 2 March, can you update the Assembly on the important work of the DonateLife team at Canberra Hospital?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Ms Berry for the question. Yes, DonateLife Week is running from 24 February until Sunday, 3 March. It is part of a national awareness week to promote organ and tissue donation. Over the course of this week, the organ and tissue sector will be holding a range of events to encourage Australians to set time aside, if they have not already decided, to talk about organ and tissue donation.

As a result of the generosity of organ donors and their families, in the last year a large number of lives have been transformed. Twelve families gave the gift of life to 30 grateful recipients through solid organ donations. Another 47 families consented to eye tissue donations that resulted in 66 recipients receiving the gift of sight. We had two heart valve donors, and the bone bank managed 111 femoral head donations. Importantly, I need to acknowledge that one organ donation of those 12 multi-organ donors can transform up to 10 individuals' lives.

DonateLife ACT coordinates all the organ and tissue donor activities across the ACT and this region. It works across our hospitals and hospital-based organ and tissue donation medical specialists and nurses across the ACT to provide professional donation services and encourage best practice to increase donation rates. The agency aims to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation, encourage discussion about donation, offer compassionate support to donor families and manage the effective services in organ and tissue donation.

The DonateLife ACT team's role is to work closely with the families faced with the death of their loved one when donation is being considered. The medical specialists and organ and tissue donor coordinator provide information to assist the family to make a decision that reflects their loved one's wishes and what is right for them. The team also supports the donor family, following the decision to donate, through the whole donation.

The organ and tissue donor coordinator also collects the information required for the transplant teams and surgery. The team offers bereavement support and follow-up, including 24-hour support for families; information for families about the outcomes of transplants, within the privacy laws; and follow-up care packages for families.

The DonateLife team also works with non-government organisations and a team of volunteers to ensure appropriate education and awareness in the ACT and region. It has good regional connections with Transplant Australia, the Eurobodalla Renal Support Group and the Heart and Lung Association.

DonateLife has also established a connection with quilting associations in Canberra and the region, who provide individually crafted quilts for organ donors and their families. The quilts soften the clinical environment and allow the family to sense the gratitude and warmth felt by the community for their generosity. Families are then provided with a quilt when they leave the hospital as an ongoing reminder of the gratitude of our community. This program is reliant entirely on the generosity of quilters, but I think it really does beautifully reflect the community connection that occurs through the organ and tissue donation sector.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: In this DonateLife Week, Chief Minister, what is the key message that you would like to get across to the ACT community about this important issue?

MS GALLAGHER: Each year the DonateLife Week has a different theme. In 2013 it is “make your wish count—discover, decide, discuss organ and tissue donation”. A lot of members in this place talk about organ and tissue donation. I think there is tripartisan support for the program that is being rolled out nationally. Essentially, you have a conversation with your family and friends to make it easier for them if they are put in the position about whether or not to consider organ donation, but also, once you do decide, that you take the next step and then register your intentions. Hopefully all members in this place will consider that and, if they are not already on the organ donation register, will take the opportunity to sign up. It is very easy to do.

Also in this week it is about taking part in the activities. I know there were a number of members at the walk this morning, despite the rain. I think Ms Berry, Dr Bourke, Mr Hanson and Mr Humphries were there. Minister Rattenbury and Mr Wall were also there. I think that shows the level of support for organ donation across the ACT community and the work that has gone in, particularly by DonateLife ACT. There were a huge number of volunteers there again today making sure that the walk went well. My guess is that probably around 2,000 were out there very early this morning to make sure that we are continuing to talk and encouraging people to discuss and decide whether or not to become organ donors.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, what has been the result so far from the national effort to help increase organ donation rates?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Mr Gentleman for the question. In 2008 COAG endorsed the Australian government’s national reform agenda to improve world’s best practice approach to organ and tissue donation. The Australian government committed \$151 million over four years to establish a nationally coordinated approach to organ

and tissue donation processes. This funds the doctors and nurses in 74 hospitals to work specifically on organ and tissue donation.

In times gone by, it was a thing that medical specialists and nurses did in addition to their own duties, often being managed out of the intensive care unit. This has given capacity for specialised staff to be available should a person come to the hospital and that decision has to be made by their family.

We have fully implemented the national reform package here in the ACT and the organ donation rates have been gradually improving from four multi-organ donors in 2006, to five in 2008, eight in 2009, 10 in 2010, and in 2011 there were eight organ donors and their families in the ACT. Twenty-four people received live-saving transplants.

As I noted earlier, 12 families gave the very generous gift of life to 30 grateful recipients through organ donation. I think it is for those families that we acknowledge and respect the decision and thank them very much for their generous gift of life.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what are the main reasons that people do not donate their organs and what can be done?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Dr Bourke for the question. I think the main reason is that often people are unsure about the wishes of the individual donor, and that is where the focus of the national reform package has been—on raising awareness, educating the community, making it easy to register to be a donor and making sure that those decisions, once made, are respected at the hospital level.

But I think overwhelmingly, when you talk to families who have been put in the position of making that decision, and I have spoken to a number of them over the years, the decision is made so much easier when they are aware of what their loved one's wishes would be. Again, as leaders in the community, we can encourage in our material that goes out to the electorate and in our discussions with the community the importance of organ donation, and certainly lead by example and make sure that we are all on the organ donation registry.

Water—prices

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Treasurer. In the draft report released yesterday by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission, it states:

An unregulated monopoly service provider may abuse its market power by charging prices for its services that are higher than necessary.

Treasurer, has ACTEW abused its market power by charging prices for its services that are higher than necessary?

MR BARR: I draw Mr Smyth's attention to the opening few words of his quote—"an unregulated monopoly" provider. ACTEW is regulated by the ICRC.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, to what extent were water prices set higher than necessary?

MR BARR: Obviously a theme is emerging in question time today. Do I need to remind the shadow treasurer—I should not need to remind the shadow treasurer—that the ICRC undertakes periodic price path setting exercises for ACTEW? It is a regulated monopoly and we commission the ICRC to undertake this work, and they determine the price path. So if the imputation in Mr Smyth's question is that the ICRC have not been doing their job, I do not think that is the case. In the context of the consideration of this particular draft report, we have an opportunity over the coming six to eight weeks to consider all of the issues that are pertinent and that have been raised by the ICRC in their draft report.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Treasurer, to what extent were sewerage service prices set higher than necessary?

MR BARR: Well, I think, Madam Speaker, regardless of the answer I provide to any of these questions, they are all premeditated.

Mr Doszpot: You don't seem to be providing too many answers, Andrew.

MR BARR: For your benefit, Mr Doszpot, I do not set the sewerage price. We have the ICRC, an independent commission, that do that work. They set the price for the last period, and they have now made a draft determination that that price can fall in a future period, and they have put that out there for consultation.

Mr Hanson: And you agree with it. Or you don't?

MR BARR: We will look forward to that consultation. As I indicated yesterday—and I will repeat it again for the Leader of the Opposition—I broadly support the positions put forward by the ICRC, but there are a number of specific issues that need further consideration. I want to hear from ACTEW and I want to hear from the community in relation to those issues before having a final government position. Obviously, the ICRC, through this well-established process, will look at the views of ACTEW, of the community and of the government in reaching a final determination.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Treasurer, what action will you be taking to ensure that prices will not be set higher than necessary in the future?

MR BARR: We have in place a robust process where the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission is tasked with this specific role. So if Mr Doszpot's position is that we should not have an ICRC and that the government should just set prices, let him say that. But we have the process, so I am at a bit of a loss to explain why it is that the opposition appear to have no faith in the independent regulator.

ACTEW Corporation Ltd—management

MR COE: My question is to the Treasurer. On ABC radio yesterday, the following occurred. “Presenter: ‘Has there been problems with how ACTEW has been managed over many years?’ Gray, ‘Yes.’” Today, in the *Canberra Times* the Chief Minister has stated in regard to governance, “There hasn’t been any major concerns that I’ve had as shareholder.” Treasurer, as the other shareholder, do you have any concerns about how ACTEW has been managed over many years?

MR BARR: I have only been a shareholder for about 18 months, and in the period that I have been a shareholder I have had no concerns.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Treasurer, what evidence did your government have that you can confidently state there are no major concerns, and why is this the opposite view to what Mr Gray said?

MR BARR: There have been independent regulatory processes undertaken over the time since self-government, I believe.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, you seem to be causing difficulty for the Treasurer, who cannot answer the question while you are speaking. If you would like to hear the answer to the question—

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I cannot even get a word out before another question comes, but in terms of the ICRC’s oversight of ACTEW over a period of time, I am comfortable with that oversight.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Treasurer, to what extent does the management of ACTEW have on the effect on service prices?

Mr Barr: Could you repeat the first part of the question, please?

MR WALL: To what extent has the management of ACTEW had an effect on service prices?

MR BARR: Prudent and effective management of ACTEW over a number of years has certainly assisted in the efficient delivery of water and sewerage services to the territory.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Treasurer, how can my constituents have a say in this process?

MR BARR: I thank Dr Bourke. As I indicated yesterday to the Assembly, there is a public consultation process that runs until the middle of April. There will then be a period when the ICRC considers all of the submissions that it receives before it makes its final determination in June, I understand. Your constituents, Dr Bourke, will have the opportunity through the ICRC's processes in terms of written submissions, and I believe they may undertake a further public consultation.

Roads—Ashley Drive

MR GENTLEMAN: My question is to the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services. Minister, can you advise the Assembly of the progress and benefits of the first stage of the duplication of Ashley Drive that is currently underway?

MR RATTENBURY: Regarding Ashley Drive, this is a project the duplication of which has been under development for some time. As members may be aware, Ashley Drive is a single-lane arterial road that carries over 23,000 vehicles a day, and congestion is an issue.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members! It is very difficult to hear Mr Rattenbury.

MR RATTENBURY: Congestion is an issue on this road, particularly around the Erindale shopping centre and the surrounding intersection of Ashley Drive and Sternberg Crescent. The Ashley Drive stage 1 upgrade is in the final stages of design. Stage 1 will improve the intersection of Erindale Drive and Sternberg Crescent at the circle there as well as duplicate a section of Erindale Drive. The design suggests that this will provide significant improvements to traffic flow in the area.

There will also be some public transport priority measures and walking and cycling facility improvements within the Erindale centre as part of this project. These are consistent with the overall Erindale centre master plan. Roads ACT expects that it will be able to call a tender for construction of these works in March this year. That should allow stage 1 improvements to go to construction around June this year, using \$7 million of funding that was allocated by the government as part of the 2012-13 capital works program. I am informed that the construction of this project will take around nine months.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, what will stage 2 of the Ashley Drive project deliver to Tuggeranong residents?

MR RATTENBURY: As is the case with many of the road projects, the works for this upgrade are staged. Stage 2 elements are one of the options that are under consideration for the upcoming budget.

Mr Seselja interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Seselja, it is very hard to hear.

MR RATTENBURY: The stage 2 upgrade includes the duplication of Ashley Drive from Erindale Drive to Johnston Drive, with a number of intersections in that area being upgraded. These improvements increase the capacity of the road network to feed northbound Tuggeranong traffic onto Erindale Drive.

It is intended that these works will reduce travel times during the peak periods and will also include safety improvements at the intersections along the route. There will also be improved off-road cycle path connections, which will be included as part of the scoping of the works.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, how does the government ensure that priority road projects are included in this capital works program and what processes are in place to deliver the best value for money?

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you, Ms Porter. There is a series of measures that are used by the government to assess what becomes a priority road project. Roads ACT looks at a number of measures, including, obviously, congestion, growth of new suburbs and then, as we have discussed in recent times, issues such as crash data and other feedback that is provided by members of the public. So there is a whole series of factors that go into assessing where works need to be undertaken.

There is a series of stages. There are one-year construction projects, three-year forward design and five to 10-year indicative priorities for road improvements. That is an ongoing process. That is also guided by advice from the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate. As I mentioned before, they provide advice regarding particularly growth in population, employment levels and the sort of planning kind of issues that you would expect to come out of that directorate.

A project which has been identified as a priority project within the TAMS directorate is put forward as part of the budget process for consideration in the capital works program. That then becomes a matter for budget cabinet. In terms of value for money, that is achieved through project costing. Financial and economic assessments of each project are completed, including an assessment of the risks associated with any of the options. Again, there is a series of steps that are put in place by Roads ACT to ensure that, in the prioritisation of the projects, the resources are delivering the most urgent and most necessary projects.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, can you assure residents surrounding Ashley Drive that traffic flow will be managed while the project is underway to alleviate the need for rat-running through surrounding suburbs?

MR RATTENBURY: All road redevelopment projects, roadworks projects, have traffic management plans put in around them. They vary from project to project, as you can imagine. We discussed in annual reports hearings the other day the issue of how speed limits are set around roadworks projects. There is a whole series of things that need to be put in place. I do not have the specifics on this project yet because it is still in the design phase, but those factors will be taken into account.

Budget—superannuation

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the Treasurer. In the budget review on page 51 it is shown that ‘Other Superannuation Expense’ was revised upwards for the current year by \$116.9 million, to a total of \$359.9 million. Treasurer, can you please explain this increase?

MR BARR: It would relate to the discount rate on 30 June.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Treasurer, why has it increased by \$117 million in six months?

MR BARR: The policy setting for our superannuation liabilities is to take the long-run 10-year commonwealth bond rate as the default setting. When interest rates are lower—perhaps we are in that period at this point—and the prevailing commonwealth bond rate is therefore lower, that impacts on that valuation. It is of course a long-term liability and there will be periods when the prevailing interest rate is above the long-term average and one would then see a reduction in that particular line. So I think it is important, when considering a long-term liability, one that has, from the period of self-government until the 2030 current date, run over a 40-year period, to consider that that liability needs to be considered in that context rather than on an annualised basis.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, what steps is the government taking to ensure that all current and future superannuation liabilities will be paid when they fall due?

MR BARR: The government make provision in each budget. We have rolling actuarial reviews of our superannuation liabilities and of course we take a long-term view rather than a short-term view of that liability.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, given the current state of superannuation liabilities and expenses, how can we be assured that the government has this under control going forward?

MR BARR: As I think I have responded to this question previously, possibly not asked by Mr Smyth but by another colleague, every Australian jurisdiction is

experiencing this at the moment because they all set their discount rate to the long-term average of the 10-year commonwealth bond rate.

Mr Smyth interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: That was not your question, Mr Smyth.

MR BARR: So this jurisdiction, along with every other jurisdiction, has experienced a write-down in this particular area of budgeting because the current 10-year commonwealth bond rate is lower than the long-term average.

But there will be times in the future over the period between now and 2030 where it will be reasonable to presume that that rate will be above current long-term average. So the issues that Mr Smyth and others are so concerned about today will seem less pertinent.

Schools—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Minister, I refer to the report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education tabled yesterday. The report identifies 31 ACT primary schools as “focus schools”, which means they have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population with the greatest need. The report also states that these schools were identified in 2010 and will not change regardless of any fluctuation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments. Minister, given this, how can you be sure resources are being directed to the students in need of the most support and effort?

MS BURCH: I am glad that Mr Wall has read this, and I reflect on his participation in the annual reports hearings where he showed a genuine interest in the achievements of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

There is a list. To say that these are chiselled in stone and will not be moved in any way, shape or form is not a premise I accept. This report reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education matters from 2012 to 2013. There will be another plan to make sure that we target our efforts to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait students beyond that.

These schools reflect a higher than average enrolment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These are the schools that have the right focus. If you look at our achievements today, there is still more work to do. But if we look over a number of indicators, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve well when we compare them to other states and territories. I think that is reflected because we have this targeted approach with personalised learning plans and efforts into particular schools. These schools are listed on page 23 of the report. I am glad Mr Wall has read it, and I look forward to his continuing interest in what we do with these students.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, did any of the 31 “focus schools” report any change in their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment numbers at the end of 2012?

MS BURCH: I do not have that detail, but what you can see when you look through this are the activities that these focus schools have done over time. They have established good networks with the Aboriginal local communities and families and they have had homework groups established. All that is reflected in our NAPLAN results. If you look at a table earlier in this report it shows that the achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is certainly ahead of the achievements of our non-Indigenous students. It does show a good piece of work is being achieved from these efforts.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what consideration has been given to including either the newly opened Neville Bonner Primary School or the Franklin Early Childhood School in the “focus schools” group?

MS BURCH: When we look at these two schools, we will see the enrolments, particularly at Bonner. It will enrol over a period of years as those years come through. But there are certainly already strong connections to the local community through Bonner. We have spoken with the local Aboriginal community where we have established the Indigenous service there, the Indigenous centre there, which is having a focus on Indigenous culture in the area more broadly.

In Franklin school, that is an early education school, so that is from child care and preschool up to year 2. We would certainly have a look at the enrolments and the demographics of the area and see what effort we need to put in there to target our Aboriginal students should that warrant a particular target.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, will you undertake to review these “focus school” enrolments and requirements more frequently in the future?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Doszpot for his question. We look at a range of data each and every year. The census for enrolments through government schools will be coming through; I think within the next month we get that information. So we do routinely look at a range of data and points so that we can focus our effort, Mr Doszpot.

Child care—places

MS PORTER: Madam Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister for Community Services. Minister, during the last ACT election Labor committed to deliver even more child care places in the ACT. How is the government progressing on this commitment?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister for Community Services.

MS BURCH: That would be the Minister for Education and Training, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Porter's question was to the Minister for Community Services.

MS BURCH: Child care; it is Education and Training.

MADAM SPEAKER: Could you sit down for a second, Ms Burch? When Ms Porter asked the question I thought it was going to be a question directed to Mr Barr. Can we just clarify that the question is to Ms Burch in her capacity as Minister for Education and Training.

MS BURCH: There has been a change. Early education and care has moved over to the Education and Training Directorate. That was clearly explained at the most recent annual reports hearings. I thank Ms Porter for her question. As the member noted or reflected in her question, the ACT government investment has helped the education and care sector grow quite substantially over the last decade.

Indeed, since this Labor government came to office the number of available places has doubled, with more than 8,200 education and care places now offered to families in the ACT. This contrasts with the stagnation, and indeed in some cases the reduction, under the previous Liberal government. However, we are very aware that more work needs to be done, which is why the government has committed to continuing the programs and policies that have grown the number of places and will continue to extend these programs.

We have committed to extend for three years the scholarships for cert III in children's services to support the workforce in that sector to get the skills they require for high quality child care. This policy will provide for a further 90 students to gain the necessary qualifications. We are also committed to scholarships for early education teachers.

We have committed a further two years funding for the ACT education and care capital upgrades; indeed, the \$9 million we have already invested is continuing to progress. This investment not only increases the number of places in the program but also helps centres refurbish to modern standards. A further 116 places are expected to be created in government-owned facilities during 2013-14, with additional places being created in Campbell, Narrabundah, Greenway, Fyshwick and Forrest.

These projects are in various stages of design. For example, Campbell cottage is under construction and will be completed in a year. Extensions and upgrades to Narrabundah cottage and Fyshwick early childhood care are progressing under developmental approval. Capital upgrades at the Greenway Child Care and Education Centre and the Forrest Early Childhood Centre are in the final design phase. Two new family day care services have recently been approved to commence operation in the ACT and the number of places offered by family day care services is not restricted and is dependent on the number of educators employed to reflect the demand of families.

Apart from directly funding childcare capital works, we have also ensured that our land release policies recognise the importance of this vital service. To this end, land was sold recently, last year, in Holt, Gungahlin and Oxley for new education and care centres. The government is also aware of new centres being planned for Giralang, Taylor, Crace and Gungahlin. In addition, the government funds the provision of 76 public preschools. This ensures that each and every child has access to preschool education in the year before attending primary school. The two new preschools commenced operations this year, servicing young families in the newly established suburbs of Franklin and Bonner.

There is more work to do, but we are getting on with it, despite the negativity of those opposite who have no childcare policy. Delivering high quality child care for Canberra's families may be considered too extreme for them and too progressive, but we see it as important. That is why we invest in child care and support Canberra families.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: What further expansions to—

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members! Minister Burch, I cannot hear Ms Porter asking you a supplementary question because you are interjecting across the chamber.

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot, you are not helping.

MS PORTER: Minister, what further expansions to the sector can we expect in the near future?

MS BURCH: The ACT government supports education and care providers to establish new centres through the direct sale of land and advisory support during the planning and regulatory approach processes.

Opposition members interjecting—

MS BURCH: The interjections coming from that side show that they seriously have no interest in Canberra families and our growth in childcare centres. I remember being asked about what we are doing for childcare centres in many, many question times, I think under your direction, Madam Speaker. They have no interest, no policy brought to the election, no investment. Not one dollar, not one word—

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister Burch, answer the question directly, please. This is not a conversation with the opposition. If you respond to the opposition's interjections, I am sure you will only just encourage them to interject more. The standing orders

require you to be concise and directly relevant. The question was about what future expansion would be. The interjections of the opposition are irrelevant to that and you should answer the question.

MS BURCH: We have further expansions and support to our childcare services. A 124-place centre will be constructed by the government in Holder. This will be on track for 2014. Since the election, a site in Oxley has been sold and representatives from the Education and Training Directorate and the Environment and Sustainability Directorate are meeting in the very near future to progress identification of further sites for Woden, Belconnen and Tuggeranong.

This proves that we continue to expand. In the ACT, 75 per cent of our services are community organisation managed. So we have about 30 per cent being privately managed. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Regarding the expansion of child care, can the minister please outline what has been done to increase non-centre-based child care in the ACT?

MS BURCH: I refer Mrs Jones to the fact that I noted a minute or so ago that two new family day care services have recently been approved to commence operation in the ACT. The number of places offered by family day care service is not restricted and is dependent on the number of educators employed to reflect the family demand.

Family day care is a great service and is an alternative to centre-based care. Centre-based care, by its structure is, in many ways, limited. Even the early starts near Calvary hospital are 6.30 and they close at 5 or 6 in the afternoon, so for shiftworkers and families with longer hours that is sometimes clearly inconvenient. That is why family day care is such an important asset. I know when I had my younger children, as a nurse and shiftworker, family day care was a great asset and a sanity saver for many families.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, are you considering any other alternative policy proposals on child care, including any proposed by the ACT Liberals at the last election?

MADAM SPEAKER: Just hold that for a second, please. I would like to consult with the Clerk. Minister Burch, I will rule Dr Bourke's question in order but I will remind you that the standing orders do not allow you to announce new policy, and the standing orders are clear that you are not responsible for policies of any other party.

MS BURCH: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I do thank Dr Bourke for his question. I am happy to consider alternative policies at any time. The second part of his question was about looking to policies that might come from this place in a cooperative, bipartisan manner. But I do not have to look very far because there are none. There was no childcare policy brought forward from the Canberra Liberals for anyone in this community to consider. I do have a memory that, a couple of budgets back, with great fanfare the then Leader of the Opposition—

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister Burch, I have actually just said to you that you are not responsible for policies of other parties, so could you confine your comments to—

MS BURCH: I will confine myself to a reflection on a policy that was a dismal failure and it has been—

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister Burch, sit down. Questions without notice.

Mr Rattenbury: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I want to seek your clarification on the earlier observation you made to Minister Burch around her responding to interjections across the chamber. You pointed out to her that standing order 118 requires that she be directly relevant. Standing order 39 also requires that members not interject. I am seeking your clarification on the balance of those two standing orders.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the point of order or the clarification, there is no conflict between those. As I said here before, I believe that a certain amount of interjection is part of the cut and thrust of debate at any time—equally in question time, and I do not expect that question time will be conducted in silence. As you may have noticed on a number of occasions during this question time, Mr Rattenbury, I have specifically spoken to individual members of the opposition and members of the opposition generally about their interjections.

With standing order 39, it has never been the practice that it has been applied so that there is silence in this chamber. It has never been the history of this place. As I have said on previous occasions, if you think that the rough and tumble in this place is too much, you need to go and get a lesson in how other chambers work, because this is pretty mild. On a number of occasions, and it has been the practice of previous Speakers, I have drawn members' attention to the fact that they should not be engaging in conversation when they are debating or answering questions and responding to interjections. That is what I asked Minister Burch to be mindful of.

Mr Rattenbury: If I might indulge in a further clarification, I accept your view of standing order 39. As you know, I held a similar view around having some latitude on that issue. I am unclear why the same latitude is not applied to standing order 118, when provoked, in the rough and tumble of question time, which I think is your description of the matter.

MADAM SPEAKER: The thing is, Mr Rattenbury, I think—

Mr Seselja interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Thanks, Mr Seselja. I am trying to give some clarity here. I think there is a fair amount of scope for rough and tumble in debate, and rigour in debate. But sometimes interjections are about extraneous matters. I have drawn Ms Burch's attention, and I would draw the attention of every member who answers a question, to standing order 118, which requires them to be concise and directly

relevant. I have been a bit of a stickler for being directly relevant because I think that we instituted this standing order and I think that it should be observed as much as possible.

Royalla solar farm

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development. You have been on the record, regarding the solar farm in Royalla, as saying:

Once people see the details of the proposal, understand exactly what it will look like and how it works they will see that solar farms are good neighbours.

However, residents in Royalla have characterised the farm as a “solar monstrosity”. Minister, what discussions did the government have with local residents prior to awarding the contract to FRV to develop the solar farm?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mrs Jones for the question. The development of the solar farm at Royalla is a private development which is supported by the allocation of feed-in tariff support under the relevant government legislation. To that extent, the siting decisions and the location decisions are not a matter for the government; they are a matter for the private developer, in this case the company FRV.

FRV will, as part of its development application process, have to engage with all potentially affected stakeholders, explain the proposal to them and listen and respond to feedback received from those parties, including people who are resident in nearby Royalla.

For that reason, the government is not directly engaged in that process except through the work of the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate when it assesses a development application when it is lodged by FRV. FRV have not yet lodged a development application.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, given that this is a private development, as you have outlined, did you nonetheless receive an invitation at any stage to meet with concerned residents? If you did—or if you do—did you attend?

MR CORBELL: I am aware that a letter was sent to me from a resident who I think purported to represent what I think was called the Royalla residents committee. That letter was sent to me during the caretaker period last year. Consistent with convention, the letter was referred to my then director-general for response. All correspondence to ministers on those matters was dealt with by directors-general and not by ministers. So I was not aware of the invitation at that time. Obviously, given it was the caretaker period, the director-general responded as best he could given those circumstances. I have not since that time received a subsequent invitation. However, if I do, I will be more than happy to accept it.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, what impact studies have been conducted as to the effect on surrounding properties?

MR CORBELL: Those matters will need to be canvassed by FRV when they lodge their development application. I am not privy to material that they may have in development but which they have not yet lodged.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, can you explain the government's policy in relation to large solar projects?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Porter for the question. The government's commitment is to help the city make a transition to renewable energy generation. The development of the FRV solar project will be the largest solar power facility built in Australia to date when it is up and running in accordance with the time frame FRV have agreed with the government, the first quarter of next year.

The project is supported by a reverse auction feed-in tariff which ensures that large-scale renewable energy generation can be delivered at the cheapest price for consumers. I think that members opposite would have to acknowledge that a cost of only 25c per week per household, declining to an even lower figure as the cost of renewable energy moves closer to parity with fossil fuel energy, means that it is extremely good value for money for our community.

Of course, what it also does is make our city an early adopter. It makes our city a leader in deploying renewable energy generation for our own needs, it helps to contribute to our greenhouse gas emission targets and it also helps contribute to developing a new knowledge base in our city in this very important part of the new economy, which is the deployment of and the knowledge in how to deploy large-scale renewable energy generation.

The government is progressing with the next stage of its solar auction process, with a further 20 megawatts of renewable energy generation due to be determined for potential allocation in the coming months. That will potentially see at least one more plant equivalent to the size of the FRV plant established or, in the alternative, a number of smaller plants that may add up to a total of 20 megawatts in capacity.

Of course, this is contingent on the government receiving competitive bids from the market. We look forward to seeing those results.

Australian tourism awards

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Events. Could the minister update the Assembly on Canberra's recent success at the Australian tourism awards in Hobart?

MR BARR: I thank Dr Bourke for the question. The region had entrants in nine categories at the tourism awards held in Hobart. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that Floriade won the silver award in the major festivals and events category, Questacon won bronze in the tourist attractions category and the CIT tourism and hotel management faculty won bronze in the tourism education and training category. We were well represented across the range of categories.

We were unlucky perhaps for Floriade not to win back-to-back awards in that major festivals and events category. However, it would appear that the Tamworth Country Music Festival was in fact the more compelling submission this year, and Floriade had to settle for second place. Nonetheless this should not detract from the quality of the application that was put forward this year and the strength that Floriade has in that major festivals and events category, regularly being a finalist and having won the category, and this time in Hobart finishing as a runner-up.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what support is the ACT government providing so that our tourism attractions and events can continue to be some of the best in Australia?

MADAM SPEAKER: Sorry, I am just trying to think how that relates to the first question, which was: can you update us on recent success at the tourism awards in Hobart?

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: I am sorry; it has to have something more in common with the subject matter than it is to the same minister.

DR BOURKE: Madam Speaker, it actually refers to the substance of the minister's answer to my previous question with regard to the attractions and events that are hosted in the ACT.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think you have a good point. I was just contemplating whether it was there.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It would have been an extraordinary position to not have been able to talk further about support for tourism attractions and events.

Mr Smyth: To what? Read the answer to your dixer?

MR BARR: Mr Smyth, yes, I know of your long-running interest in the tourism portfolio, so I would have thought you might have been interested in this. The government will, of course, continue its support for the annual blockbuster fund, committing \$1 million a year to help market major events in the city. We will continue our support for the Enlighten festival. We are establishing an international marketing campaign for new direct international flights into Canberra.

We are providing additional support for the Canberra Convention Bureau and additional support for the national capital education tourism project. We are providing funding for the Mount Stromlo science centre and planetarium, and I know Dr Bourke was particularly involved in that initiative. We will continue the work of the red tape reduction panel with a particular focus on licensing, which certainly impacts on the tourism and hospitality area. Cuts to payroll tax in the last budget have been well received in the tourism and hospitality sector, and, of course, we are abolishing all tax on insurance. That makes a big difference to all of the small business who are currently paying tax on, for example, the motor vehicle insurance they have for vehicles they use as part of their businesses.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, why is it important for the ACT government to continue its support for events and tourism in the ACT?

MR BARR: Tourism and hospitality and the events sector are, of course, one of the largest employers in the territory. Around 15½ thousand people are employed in that sector, contributing about \$1.5 billion to the territory economy, an economy that is roughly \$50 billion. It is one of the larger non-government contributors to the territory economy and certainly a very large employer.

So it is important that we continue our partnership with those national institutions and other government agencies at a federal government level that are key to our tourism industry but also invest in new tourism infrastructure and provide the capacity for the private sector to invest in new tourism infrastructure. It has been particularly pleasing in recent years to see the investment at the airport, to see new hotels in the city, to see new tourism attractions, some supported by the ACT government—for example, Stromlo Forest Park and the arboretum—but also private investments.

I particularly welcome the National Zoo and Aquarium's plans for further expansion and the National Dinosaur Museum under new ownership. There are a number of private sector operators who are making significant and very important investments in tourism in the territory. That is to be encouraged. We look forward to continued investment across the range of investment opportunities that there are in what is a growing and dynamic tourism market.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, is it not true that there are many events during the centenary that will be of a standard to be nominated for the tourism awards?

MR BARR: Yes, Ms Porter, there certainly are.

MADAM SPEAKER: That is probably an expression of opinion, but it is the last question of the day.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence. It is indeed a big year for Canberra, a year in which we are seeing a number of firsts in terms of tourism events and opportunities. One only needs to look at the success of the one day cricket international and the women's Australian golf open to show just how strong the sports program is this year. There are opportunities for a number of major events that we have in our usual event calendar, with the additional support they are receiving this year, to do more than they have done in years past. The National Multicultural Festival is a great example of that. This year's event set new records and showed that with that boost in the centenary year we can aim higher with our existing events as well as bring new events into the calendar. That is an important opportunity and an important legacy from the centenary year.

Of course activities will continue to build towards that one very big day in March, but it is a year-long program and the government's objective is for there to be a considerable legacy from this year. We have already been successful in bidding for future events, in the sporting arena in particular, in the years ahead. Through the infrastructure that has been developed for the centenary year, I think we have put the city on a very sound basis to continue to host major national and international events that will be able to enter the tourism awards in years to come.

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

Legislative Assembly—staff

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, it was drawn to my attention that before we came up for lunch there was a member of the Assembly staff in the press box for a period of time. I draw members' attention to page 333 of the *Companion*, which says that the press box in the Assembly chamber:

... may be used only by representatives from newspapers and radio and television stations to report proceedings of the Assembly.

I ask members to remind their staff of this requirement. I also remind members of the public that the press box is for the use of members of the press who hold an appropriate press pass.

Paper

Mr Corbell presented the following paper:

ACT Criminal Justice—Statistical Profile 2012—December quarter.

Lanyon valley—community facilities

Debate resumed.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (3.33): Firstly, I would like to thank Mr Seselja for bringing the initial motion to the Assembly today, ensuring that the residents of

Tuggeranong get a fair go. This is an issue that Mr Seselja, Mr Smyth and I are all extremely passionate about.

Over the past year or so I have become well acquainted with many residents in the Lanyon valley. I personally knocked on the door of several thousand homes in Tuggeranong, with a good portion of these homes being within the suburbs of Gordon, Banks and Conder. One of the most common comments that residents raised with me was that they were sick of being treated like poor second cousins to residents of Gungahlin. Year after year Lanyon residents have seen the cost of living in the south go up and up, yet government services and community facilities have been forgotten.

Between 2001 and 2012 rates increased by 84 per cent in Conder, 99 per cent in Gordon and 152 per cent in Banks. That is, residents in Banks are now paying over 1½ times what they paid in 2001. Most home owners are willing to pay their fair share for local services, but they expect a few things in return. They expect that the basic local government services will be delivered in an economical manner and that increases in rate payments will equate to increases in local services. The question this government needs to ask itself is: have the residents of Banks seen local facilities improve by over 150 per cent? Sadly, we all know that the answer to this question is no.

As a new member in this place I thought it best to look at the budget papers to become aware of the spending priorities of the government. On the back page of budget paper 2 there is a fantastic little map that highlights areas that have been identified for investment. In the bottom left corner there is a small box with the heading “Tuggeranong and surrounds”. I note that Tuggeranong is the only box that has the “and surrounds” suffix added to it. Whilst reading the 14 points, I realised why this is the case. Of the 14 initiatives that are identified, four are not even in Tuggeranong. One of them covers a program that is also spread over various other parts of the territory. In fact, only one of the only items that are listed is an upgrade or rectification project; it is the new cemetery. It is clear that this government has no understanding of the needs of south Tuggeranong residents—nor does it want to.

There is a real need for community facilities in Lanyon—particularly a pool. Whilst doorknocking in Gordon, I met a mother whose children are heavily involved in the Tuggeranong swimming club. She explained to me the difficulties that she and the swim club were experiencing while trying to secure lane time at the Tuggeranong pool. The Tuggeranong pool is a popular facility utilised by learn to swim schools, aqua aerobics, swim clubs and the general public. With the ageing population in Tuggeranong and the increase in the number of independent living developments proposed or under construction, the demand for pool facilities is only going to grow. Clearly Lanyon is the obvious location for a new swimming pool facility.

I note that Ms Burch’s amendments make mention of the Labor-Greens parliamentary agreement, but this still fails to deliver the swimming pool for Lanyon. It fails to meet the needs of Lanyon residents and continues to fail to outline a time line for these plans to be delivered. All this does is simply illustrate the disconnect that members opposite are experiencing between what they perceive to be good policy and what the true needs of residents in Lanyon are.

I also make note of Mr Rattenbury's comments in relation to wood fired heaters. The reason that I had a smirk on my face when he made mention of it is that it sparked memories of a conversation I had with a constituent whilst doorknocking down in Lanyon—another example of the disconnect that this government is experiencing when they talk about policy implementation.

Ms Burch interjecting—

MR WALL: I have spoken to numerous people in the community. This one constituent that I was speaking to runs a small business locally. Its primary business model is installing wood heaters in ACT homes. Wood fired heaters provide an exceptional form of renewable energy to heat homes. They provide choice to Canberra residents. I understand that there are some concerns by some parts of the community with the wood smoke. I feel that efforts could be best concentrated on educating home owners and people that are choosing to use wood heaters about the best ways to use them, and also offer some incentive for them to upgrade. Simply laying a blanket ban or a moratorium on the installation of wood fired heaters is only restricting choice by the residents of Tuggeranong.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (3.38): I commend Mr Seselja for bringing this motion forward. It reflects his longstanding and ongoing commitment to the people of Tuggeranong, in particular the people of the Lanyon valley.

Ms Gallagher interjecting—

MR HANSON: The Chief Minister sits there making snide comments across the floor. I wonder when she last visited down in the south of Canberra—when she went down to the Lanyon valley herself. It is reflective of the performance of her government and the neglect that we have seen from this government of the people of Lanyon. It is pretty clear that she has not been there enough. We know that the Chief Minister spends a lot of time around in the north, but we do not see her or her ministers, or the efforts of this government, focused on the people down south. That is pretty clear.

I would like to turn my attention to the amendment that has been put forward by Ms Burch and a couple of aspects of it that are just grubby and politically motivated, to be honest. Rather than focusing on the substance of the motion, which is about delivering services for the people of this town, particularly Lanyon, what we have seen from those opposite is political game playing—what basically is political opportunism and an attempt to distract from the main purpose, which is better service delivery down in Lanyon, better facilities for the people of Lanyon. What we are seeing is a grubby attack.

When I look at this, it says that Mr Seselja betrayed the trust placed in him by the voters of Lanyon valley. Why is that the case for Mr Seselja—who will be, if successful at the elections, stepping up as a senator with responsibilities across Canberra? We know, given his performance in this place and his interest in the people of Lanyon, that that will continue. If he is successful as a senator, that commitment, I am sure, will continue in this place. There is no betrayal. The betrayal—

Ms Gallagher interjecting—

MR HANSON: You have to ask: why is it that there was no motion from those opposite when Mr Stanhope left this place? When Mr Stanhope left this place—

Members interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Doszpot): Chief Minister and Ms Burch, we are not in question time now.

MR HANSON: Where was the argument that Mr Stanhope has betrayed the people of Ginninderra? I did not see the indignation from those opposite then. No, I did not. No. It was all: “Congratulations, Jon. Good luck. Well done.” It was a pat on the back and a welcome to Dr Bourke. And what a success that was! If ever we have seen a betrayal of the people of Canberra, it was when Jon Stanhope left here and it ended up with Dr Bourke being the representative of the people of Ginninderra. Now that, members, is a betrayal.

We see the hypocrisy of those opposite. “No, he retired.” He went off to wherever he went—to a job at the University of Canberra, a government job at the University of Canberra, and then off to Christmas Island, an appointment by—

Mr Wall: By his Labor mates.

MR HANSON: Labor mates, exactly right. But no, that is all right. He can do that and we can bring in a dud like Chris Bourke, but if someone wants to step up and fight for the people—

Ms Burch: Point of order.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Ms Burch.

Ms Burch: A dud? Given the other language that has been ruled out of order as being unparliamentary, I ask that that be withdrawn.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, I would like to ask you to withdraw.

MR HANSON: I happily withdraw it, Mr Assistant Speaker.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, before you continue, let me say this: members, this is not question time; let us give the speaker a go. Chief Minister, you will have an opportunity to respond.

MR HANSON: I could use some other language that probably is parliamentary, but the fact that Dr Bourke was on the frontbench and was sacked to the backbench probably suggests that my sentiment is shared by those opposite, whether they would use the word “dud” or not. Obviously, they would not, because that would be unparliamentary.

What about Mr Quinlan? Remember him? He left so that Mr Barr could come in here. What did Mr Quinlan do? He went off to greener pastures and he gets the odd job to do. There was the Quinlan review—triple your rates. It was: “Back us up; we want to have an attack on the family home and we will get Mr Quinlan to come in and write our stuff for us.” That was all good then. That was not a betrayal, was it? No, it was not back then. It was all, I imagine, a pat on the back: “You have done a great job, Ted.” It was: “We love you. You are a Labor mate; we will give you jobs in the future. Don’t worry about it.” There was no betrayal then!

But here is somebody who is saying, “I want to step up and represent the people of Canberra.” And that will continue to be the people of Lanyon. I think that what we will see—

Members interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, can I ask you to sit down for a minute. Members, could I ask you to listen to the speaker. No discussions across the chamber, please. Mr Hanson, please continue.

MR HANSON: I think what we will see, if Mr Seselja is successful, is a continued focus on the things that matter to the people of the ACT—to the people of Lanyon, the people in Belconnen, wherever it may be. He will take a broader focus. Instead of the sort of work that he has done here, the focus on service delivery and infrastructure will continue on, be it here or elsewhere.

While we are reflecting on this motion, I would also like to make it very clear that there have been a number of attacks on Mr Seselja. This is one of them—this grubby, politically motivated attack. I have asked Mr Seselja to stay on in this place on my frontbench because I would take Mr Seselja over any of those members opposite—any of those. I would certainly take him over Dr Bourke or anyone who left the Assembly, like Ted Quinlan or Jon Stanhope. I would take Mr Seselja over any of them.

In this place, over the coming weeks and months, he will continue to do what he has done previously: stand up and represent the people of Lanyon. He will do that. Then at some stage he will leave this place and he will contest the Senate. I am sure he will be successful. And then he will continue to do that. If you lot opposite think that that is a betrayal, you are misguided. You know it is. This is politically motivated.

Unless you want to move an amendment that calls for a condemnation of Jon Stanhope for betraying the people of Ginninderra or Ted Quinlan for betraying the people of Molonglo, everybody should see this for what it is. It is a disingenuous, grubby, politically motivated attack on Zed Seselja. What it is doing is detracting from what we should be about in this place: focusing on the people of Lanyon.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (3.45): I will briefly respond to some of the issues that have been raised in the debate. I acknowledge Mr Hanson,

the Leader of the Opposition—the person that has got the position of Leader of the Opposition precisely because Mr Seselja has made the career decisions that he has—and his belated defence of Mr Seselja's honour. But I have to say, for you to bring a motion lecturing us about our commitment to the Lanyon valley from a person who, three months after being significantly endorsed by that electorate—no-one is denying that—is walking away from them is a barefaced, shameless approach. But I must say we should not be surprised about that from Mr Seselja. We should not ever be surprised about shameless stunts and appearances. We have learned something from you, Mr Seselja—

Mr Hanson: You are grubby. You are very grubby, Katy. It is grubby.

MS GALLAGHER: I will respond to those interjections of “grubby”. I have just sat through yet another question time where every single one of the frontbench team demeaned and insulted every member on this side. So for you to sit there and talk about grubby attacks when we should be actually looking at the big issues is simply laughable, Mr Hanson. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. You cannot sit here and say that after the way you have just behaved in question time—indeed, all of your frontbench—laughing, sneering, trying to undermine. That is what you do. If you want to do that for the next four years, Mr Hanson, good on you. Welcome. We expect nothing less from you.

The difference I draw between Mr Quinlan's departure from the Assembly and Mr Stanhope's departure from the Assembly is that they certainly were not three months after they went to an election wanting to serve their community. And they certainly were not attempts to knock off a political colleague to go to another job in the federal parliament. That is the difference here. That is what we see and that is what we are responding to.

This is the man that wanted to be Chief Minister. This is the commitment he gave to Canberra: “I want to be Chief Minister. Zed for Tuggeranong.” Remember that? Stickers everywhere. “Chief Minister from Tuggeranong. We've never had a Chief Minister from Tuggeranong.” The whole of the Liberal campaign was in Tuggeranong, and when the Liberal Party did not get their way at the election, when they did not make it, Mr Seselja started assessing his options. “Well, what can I do now? I want to win something. I want to be the winner, so where can I win? I know. I can win in the Liberal Party. That is where I will win, and I will get the number one Senate seat and then I will be a winner again.” That is what has happened here. Everybody knows that is what has happened here.

The barefaced, shameless audacity to walk in here and lecture us about what needs to be done in the Lanyon valley over the next four years is laughable. It is derisory; it is wasting our time. We will get on and respond to the needs of the Lanyon valley, and we do take lessons from the election. That is what responsible governments do. We do not ignore what we saw in Tuggeranong. We do not want to see a divided city. I do not like the fact that we have these subregions in Canberra where suddenly Lanyon valley is pitted against Molonglo and Molonglo gets everything and Lanyon gets nothing. They are the debates that you guys are driving, and you are very happy to drive them.

I grew up in a Canberra where, yes, there were new development fronts. I grew up in Weston Creek when Tuggeranong was getting everything and everyone in Weston Creek was going, “Well, what is it with Tuggeranong? They’re getting all the infrastructure.” Do you know what it was? At the time there was an acceptance that that was a new part of Canberra and that was where the new infrastructure had to grow. Now we have a lot of effort going into Gungahlin, and soon we will have a lot of effort going into Molonglo with new infrastructure. That is the way a city grows.

But we take lessons from the election; we do not ignore it. But you know what? The difference between me and Mr Seselja is that I will hang around and implement it. I have not assessed my options to see what the best job is. I will do my job here for the next four years and we will see Mr Seselja in the Senate, if he is lucky enough to get that privilege to represent the people of Canberra.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Doszpot): Chief Minister, hold on for one second. Members, those opposite gave Mr Hanson a fair run, so I ask you to respect who is speaking at the moment. Chief Minister, have you concluded?

MS GALLAGHER: Thank you.

MR SESELJA (Brindabella) (3.51): I thank members for their contributions and refer particularly to the hysterical contributions from across the chamber. It is unfortunate that the Chief Minister, in professing her desire to serve the community and the people of Tuggeranong, did not address the issues at all. She did not touch on the issues and what the government are going to do. If any lessons were learned from the election by this Chief Minister, that was not evident in any of her contribution to this debate.

Mr Hanson has summed it up very well when, according to the Labor Party, seeking to serve the community in the Australian parliament, in the Senate, is somehow worse than someone leaving the Assembly and picking up government jobs. So that is the Labor Party standard. It is apparently good to walk away from your electorate and no longer serve them as an elected representative if you are a Labor Party member and can pick up some good government jobs, as we have seen with Mr Quinlan and Mr Stanhope. I am putting myself up for election by the very same community. Let us be clear: if I am elected to the Senate, if I am privileged enough to be elected to the Senate, it will be because people in Tuggeranong, people in Belconnen, people in Gungahlin and people across the territory have given me their support. I am very hopeful that I can get that support. But I take nothing for granted, Mr Assistant Speaker. I will be seeking their support as I have in the past.

The issue, though, the government continue to ignore is that people in the south of Tuggeranong have not been well served by their government. They expressed that very clearly at this election, and the Labor Party seems obsessed with the personalities of this and seems to be ignoring that people were voting for the policies. They were

voting for the policies the Liberal Party put forward, and those policies will continue regardless of who is here. There will be policies that deliver for the people of Tuggeranong from the Liberal Party. There will be policies that deliver across the ACT.

We have highlighted one part of the ACT which has been particularly neglected. It is palpable when you go to the south of Tuggeranong just how much the residents there are feeling that their government does not deliver for them. It is perfectly reasonable for us in this place to be putting that forward and to be advocating for them. As I said, Mr Assistant Speaker, if I am honoured to be elected to another place, I will serve the people of Tuggeranong, I will serve the people of Gungahlin, I will serve all of the communities of Canberra and the entire ACT. That is what I would like to do.

What the government have refused to acknowledge is that services need to be delivered, and if they do not deliver them, if they go another four years continuing to ignore these people, the result for them at the next election will be worse in these areas. The message from the people of Tuggeranong will be a stronger one even than was delivered at the 2012 election.

The Canberra Liberals will not support this amendment. As Mr Hanson has pointed out, by this amendment they are condemning their former colleagues, and we certainly will not support the amendment. The motion as drafted as moved by me should be supported by this Assembly. We should simply acknowledge that the people of south Tuggeranong deserve better than what they are getting and that this government should now set about learning those lessons and delivering for this community.

Question put:

That **Ms Burch's** amendment 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 agreed to.

Question put:

That the motion, as amended, 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.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Environment—greenhouse gas

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (4.01): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) cities have a key role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to addressing the critical economic, social and environmental consequences of climate change;
- (b) that the ACT has established greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets—targets of zero net emission (carbon neutrality) by 2060 and a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2020; and
- (c) the Government has established a comprehensive strategy to achieve its reduction targets, and is already implementing important initiatives including:
 - (i) the Royalla 1 20mW solar power facility to be built by Fotowatio Renewable Ventures, the largest solar power facility to be built in Australia to date; and
 - (ii) the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme which will help Canberrans save money while also making substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and

- (2) resolves that Canberra as a city must continue to implement a comprehensive strategy to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

This motion is about climate change and the important work being done by the government to tackle this issue on behalf of the community. Unfortunately, the latest scientific evidence clearly shows that climate change is not an abstract problem in the

distant future. Climate change is real. It is happening now and its effects are likely to amplify over the coming decades with serious risks to the world's natural systems and the societies around the world, including our own community, that our delicate planet supports.

We know that this problem is being driven by the rapidly increasing release of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere. The accumulation of these gases is the only viable explanation for the observed warming over recent decades—not sun spots or volcanic activity, as some of the friends of the Liberal Party would have you believe, but greenhouse gas emissions from our homes and our cars, from our offices, from power generation and from heavy industries. And there certainly have been plenty of emissions coming from across the chamber this morning, Mr Assistant Speaker.

In 2010, with the passage of the greenhouse gas reduction act, this government showed that we are informed of the latest evidence about global warming. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is charged by the nations to critically examine and report on the scientific evidence on climate change, presented a range of possible warming scenarios linked to global emissions trajectories.

The world, we were informed, was warming and, unabated, global average temperatures would rise by between 1.8 and four degrees by the end of this century. The IPCC's advice was that in order to stabilise global warming and avoid the most severe and possibly irreversible climate impacts forecast by the international scientific community, industrialised countries needed to target a 40 per cent reduction in emissions from 1990 levels by 2020, and zero net emissions by 2060, if we are to remain within a two degree warming scenario.

In November 2010, the then Labor government enshrined these targets in legislation. They were, after all, a level of effort no more or less than that advised by the science. The need to achieve these targets has underpinned subsequent policy analysis, leading to the publication of the climate change action plan 2 late last year.

First, however, I need to update the Assembly on the scientific evidence that has emerged since those legislated targets were set, which reinforces the government's commitment to act on these issues. Reports published in the prestigious international science journal *Nature*, and in a report by the World Bank, bring to light advice and further evidence that the challenge we face with respect to climate change is not hypothetical but one that must be acted on as a matter of urgency.

The World Bank's report *Turn down the heat—why a 4°C warmer world must be avoided* states that the projected impacts from a four degree warmer world could lead to large-scale displacement and have adverse consequences for human security and economic and trade systems. The report reaffirms that a warming beyond two degrees risks crossing tipping points in the earth's system, increasing the chance of abrupt climate change impacts and unprecedented high temperatures, drastically impacting ecosystems, rivers, agriculture, energy production and livelihoods, and potentially exacerbating 21st century global warming.

The scenario of a four degree warmer world is one of unprecedented heat waves, severe drought and bushfires, and major floods in many regions. Climate change and

high CO₂ concentration are driving a transition of the earth's ecosystems into a state unknown in human experience, according to that World Bank report. Clearly, we must act now and act decisively if we are to avoid these scenarios. Indeed, I believe that we have a moral imperative to act now.

Recent weather conditions across Australia show how devastating the effects of extreme weather events can be on our lives, our lifestyles and our livelihoods. Since the beginning of 2013, only eight weeks ago, Australia has experienced devastating bushfires and widespread flooding rains with devastating loss of life and property, pushing the nation's emergency services to their limits.

As the climate change continues for the worse, some of these extremes are likely to become more frequent and more intense, placing added strain on emergency services, health services and critical infrastructure, let alone the impacts on the community and governments.

It is important to stress that these scenarios are not played out in a distant, abstract future. The impacts that we are starting to see will be magnified in the future. Children born today, our children, will live this future and hold us to account if we fail to take responsible action now. I am often astounded by the moral poverty of those who argue that as the ACT's ability to impact global warming is small, due to our size, we should hold off on action, or ride on the coat-tails of larger communities should they commit to responsible action.

This position denies the fact that global warming is a shared responsibility that cannot be shirked due to the inaction of others. Addressing the challenge posed by climate change requires action by everyone in our community—government, business, community groups, households and individuals. We must all understand that, while the impact of our individual choices may be small, together we can make a difference to enhance the future wellbeing of people and our environment.

One of the key priorities of Labor and this government is to ensure that, as our community addresses this issue, we should enhance social equity and provide practical support and assistance to low income households and other vulnerable members of our community. These are, after all, those who are at the greatest risk from climate change.

In September last year this Labor government released *AP2—a new climate change strategy and action plan for the Australian Capital Territory*. The development of this plan was informed by the most up-to-date climate science at that time, as well as professional economic and energy modelling. The draft strategy was overwhelmingly endorsed by ACT residents and businesses following comprehensive community consultation conducted over a three-month period.

The plan contains 18 actions to achieve four primary outcomes: ensuring a fair society in a low-carbon economy, minimising the ACT's impact on global climate change by achieving the ACT's legislated greenhouse gas reduction targets, strengthening the ACT's capacity to respond to a changing climate, and creating a more sustainable future.

The primary focus of the plan is to set the territory on the path to meet the 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target. Achieving the 2020 target will establish a strong foundation for the achievement of the overall target of being carbon neutral or having zero net emissions by 2060. The implementation of the territory climate change strategy is already underway. I understand that Mr Corbell will provide an update on these actions shortly, but I note that key measures such as the government's energy efficiency improvement scheme have recently commenced, which will reduce our emissions while also reducing energy bills for Canberra households.

Our policies to develop large-scale renewables in the territory are being implemented, as demonstrated by Mr Corbell's announcement in September last year of Australia's largest solar power generator, Royalla 1, due to be completed and generating emission-free electricity in a little over 12 months.

The ACT government acknowledges that placing a price on carbon, and ultimately a cap-and-trade emissions trading scheme, is the most effective mechanism to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions in the Australian economy. The carbon pricing scheme will support the efforts of the territory to reach our targets by reducing the emissions intensity of electricity supplied to the territory, increasing the competitiveness of renewable energy sources and increasing incentives for energy efficiency because of higher energy prices.

There is some talk at federal levels that a change of government might wind back carbon pricing. While this would be a significant setback for climate change policy in this country, notwithstanding that risk the ACT has put in place effective mechanisms to either support continuing carbon pricing or to continue to meet our own obligations, thus keeping pace with the rest of the world who are taking action.

The challenges posed by climate change are faced by everyone around the world and require concerted action by governments, businesses and households if we are able to avoid serious adverse environmental, economic and social consequences. Ultimately, climate change action will require cooperation and action at a national and international scale, but there is much that local jurisdictions can do.

This Labor government is committed to responsible and far-sighted action, informed by science, that will transition the ACT towards a carbon neutral territory that can adapt to a changing climate. Ours is a leadership role, not because we are doing more than we should, but because we are one of the few who are doing what we must.

We are demonstrating that an effective emission reduction pathway is achievable and that our efforts, although small in a global context, can and will have a positive impact in addressing the challenges of climate change. We know that to be true to our commitment to fairly contribute to the required global greenhouse gas abatement effort, the ACT must reduce emissions by 40 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020.

We also know that since 1990 our emissions have substantially increased to the extent that a 40 per cent reduction on 1990 levels requires an estimated 56 per cent reduction from current levels. Modelling for the plan shows that this reduction can be achieved.

It shows, for example, that 16,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions a year can be saved by recovering organic material from our waste streams that would otherwise go to landfill.

Just implementing cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities across our economy can save over half a million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. Nearly 1½ million tonnes can be saved each year by transitioning to large-scale renewable energy sources using abundant solar, wind and biomass resources in our region. Combined, these three strategies have us meeting our targets in 2020 while growing our city, supporting jobs and continuing to care for low income families across the community.

One of the great features of the plan is the unprecedented level of transparency it provides regarding estimated costs and savings from the various energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. The modelling and key assumptions are there for all to see. What does it tell us? Firstly, it tells us that the move to 90 per cent renewable energy to achieve our 2020 abatement targets results in an estimated 16 per cent increase in household electricity bills.

Secondly, it tells us that this increase is unlikely to diminish the large electricity price advantage we maintain over all other jurisdictions, including the 53 per cent price advantage we have over NSW household electricity consumers. Even after achieving our 2020 targets, we are still likely to have the lowest residential electricity prices in the nation.

It tells us that the economic impact of achieving our 2020 target by pursuing renewables, before energy efficiency benefits are taken into account, is equivalent to delaying the achievement of our business usual economic output in 2050 by three months. That is a three-month delay over 37 years.

But, most importantly, it tells us that the value of energy savings for the community through improving the energy efficiency of our homes and businesses, and embracing better public transport and innovations in low emission vehicles, can more than offset the cost of renewables. We can and must achieve our targets, and the government, through the plan, has the plan to do it.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (4.14): The Canberra Liberals will not be supporting this self-congratulatory motion from the government. I go straight to paragraph (2) where it says:

resolves that Canberra as a city must continue to implement a comprehensive strategy to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

When you look for a comprehensive strategy it is hard to find. If you look at the first seven years of this lot in office, they did not even have a strategy. Suddenly in 2007, when Kevin Rudd declared climate change as the great moral challenge of our time, Minister Stanhope and his government woke up. Until that time nothing happened, unlike the previous Liberal government that signed up to Kyoto. It was the first government to put out a draft greenhouse gas strategy and indeed the first government to actually have a strategy in place.

You only have to look at the results of the latest state of the environment report to see what actually happened during those seven years of inactivity, followed by four years of coalition government under the Greens-Labor government. What were the results? The results were quite humiliating. Greenhouse gas emissions increased eight per cent over the last five years. That is what Labor and their comprehensive policy delivered for the ACT—an increase, Ms Berry. I guess they did not write that in the notes for you. You need to get your facts accurate.

If we look at the report of the Commissioner for the Environment, what happened under the Greens-Labor government of the last four years? Canberra's ecological footprint was 13 per cent above the Australian average, the second highest in the country behind Perth. The commissioner determined that Canberrans are using 14 times the land of the ACT to support their lifestyles. As I have said, greenhouse gas emissions increased by eight per cent over the last five years, waste generation was up 28 per cent, faster than the rate of population growth, and green space decreased by nine per cent over the last four years. It is a good thing Mr Corbell did not run that referendum to lock all that green space away back in 2001 as he promised.

Mr Corbell interjecting—

MR SMYTH: There you go: green space decreasing by nine per cent over the last four years and, of course, only a 4.9 per cent take-up rate for green power by Canberra residents. This government's commitment on the environment, in conjunction with the Greens' support for their policies, is a joke. In a moment of startling clarity and a moment of honesty from Mr Rattenbury, what was his response to the state of the environment report? This is what he said to the media: "The Gallagher government's policies are driving the territory in completely the wrong direction." That may be why there is only one Green left out of four. What was that Green-Labor alliance doing? Driving the territory in completely the wrong direction. He went on to say, "The government's business as usual policies are driving the ACT in the wrong direction."

Now we are being asked to endorse this as a comprehensive strategy. It will be interesting to see how Mr Rattenbury votes. We look at what the independent assessor of the state of the environment says, where Mr Rattenbury backs up that person, but will he vote for this comprehensive strategy? It will be interesting to see what happens. Mr Rattenbury went on to say, and I am paraphrasing here, "The good news stories coming out of this report are mostly all community-based actions. The failings are largely on the government end." You are right, Mr Rattenbury.

He also said words to the effect, "The government's inaction on sustainable transport, organic waste and protecting biodiversity are the clear lowlights." We have got to the bottom—we are at the lowlights—and what we need the government to do now is to implement recommendations rather than writing more strategy documents. Your cabinet colleague blows your assertion that you have a comprehensive strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions out of the water.

The government's initiatives that Ms Berry is applauding in her motion really amount to very expensive ways to achieve very little. If the government in 2001 had followed

on with what we had started we might be in a far more advantageous position than we are now. We might be able to stand here and say, "We can have some confidence because you've actually achieved something." But the reality is that is not true.

Let us look at the feed-in tariff. This initiative will cost Canberra households an extra \$225 every year in their power bills. It has been so badly managed. The small and medium elements of this scheme were cancelled not once but twice in the dead of night by Mr Corbell. That is how successful they have been, Ms Berry. There we go: we will just shut it off tonight; nobody will notice.

Legislation for the large-scale feed-in tariff did not even require the solar facilities to be located in the ACT. When we asked earlier in the week how many direct jobs this initiative would create for Canberrans, the Treasurer did not know or would not answer the question. We still wait for the answer. How many jobs are we getting from all of this money that we are paying? When asked how much this will cost Canberrans, he said \$13 a year, decreasing to \$9 a year, which is approximately \$1.8 million and then \$1.3 million, but that is for households only.

There is the government's support of the carbon tax. There you go: "No government I lead will ever introduce a carbon tax." \$189 a year slugged on Canberrans. This is accounting for 78 per cent of electricity price increases for Canberra families from 1 July 2012. There is no concern whatsoever for the cost of living. We have seen it go up. Rates have gone up, water has gone up, electricity has gone up; the cost of living across the board goes up. It was only the initiative of the Canberra Liberals that got the cost of living statement, Ms Berry, in this year's budget where it shows what it went up. In this year's budget it went up \$600. It will be interesting to see, when we get more accurate reporting in the coming year's budget, how much it goes up. That is how much worse off they are under the initiatives of your colleagues that you laud today. You really need to dig a bit deeper and not just read the speech provided.

We know that three in five Canberra families will be worse off paying a portion of this \$189 tax. A family of five can expect to see their electricity bills increase by \$478 from 1 July, of which \$370 is attributed to the carbon tax. A family of four can expect to see their electricity bills increase by \$333 from 1 July, of which \$258 is attributed to the carbon tax. A family of three can expect to see their electricity bills increase by \$297 from 1 July, of which \$230 is attributed to the carbon tax. It will add at least \$73 million to the cost of running the ACT government over the next four years which will be passed on to taxpayers, because it is taxpayers' money in the end. This is between \$110 and \$140 per household each year just to cover the government's existing activities. We know that it is so easy when you are only spending taxpayers' dollars. How do we know this? Because we are going to build a light rail no matter what the cost. Full speed ahead and damn the torpedoes. There is Treasurer Barr on the bow wave of the light rail just crashing through because there is no number which is too large to stop the light rail.

That is not responsible budgeting and that is not responsible government. Do the work, make the documents public, show us the return on the investment and then make a judgement. Do not just say, "We think it's a good policy because it's progressive and therefore it doesn't matter what it costs." I can assure you that the people of Lanyon,

the people of Kambah, the people of southern Woden, the people of east Tuggeranong and the people of Wanniasa all care about the cost of living and all care about what their share of this government's initiatives will be.

Of course, residents will have to collectively pay up to \$1 million a month to support the ACT Labor-Greens energy efficiency improvement scheme. Then we go to the flagging ACTION bus network which Canberra residents pay approximately \$321 per person every year to maintain, regardless of whether they use the bus service or not. So let us ask the minister: what will the subsidy be for the light rail? We will build it—that is one cost—but then it has to run. We do not make money on the buses. We all know that most public transport systems around the world tend not to make money, but the degree of subsidy after the fare box is somewhere between 45 and 55 per cent. Not in the ACT; it is well below seven or eight per cent. In fact, we know that growth in the number of people using the bus service is not really happening. Again, Ms Berry, that is another effect of your colleagues' policies. Again, they did not write in the speech for you the true nature of what these policies cost because it is all handed on to the taxpayer.

Let us not forget about the plastic bag ban. Yes, this will change the world; the earth will be a better place because we are going to ban plastic bags. The government cannot show a single tangible environmental benefit of this scheme. The interim review of the Canberra plastic bags ban noted that the Rawtec review concludes that there is insufficient data to determine whether the ban has had an impact on the number of plastic shopping bags in the ACT litter stream.

When asked whether the shopping bags were an environment issue, our own local environmental protection agency responded by saying that they cannot say it has been one of any great significance. There you go: the policy gurus leaving the reality, instead of actually doing the work and finding out what the effect and the costs would be. Britain's environmental protection agency found that shoppers would have to use the same cotton bag every working day for a year to have a lesser impact than a lightweight plastic bag.

The Productivity Commission found that, based on the evidence available to the commission, it appears that the Australian state and territory governments do not have a sound case for proceeding with their proposed phase-out of plastic retail carry bags. In South Australia, bin liner sales have doubled the national average since free plastic shopping bags were banned more than two years ago. It is cause and effect: environmental policies that downstream do not save the environment but hinder the environment.

That is where we go back to where we started from. Where did we start? The state of the environment report. What has happened in the last term of this Assembly? Canberra's ecological footprint 13 per cent above the Australian average; Canberrans using 14 times the land of the ACT to support their lifestyles; greenhouse gas emissions increasing eight per cent over the last five years; waste generation up 28 per cent, faster than the rate of population growth; green space decreasing by nine per cent over the last four years and only a 4.9 per cent take-up of green power by Canberra residents.

It is hardly a startling endorsement that would lead one to read Ms Berry's motion and say, "Jeez, I'm going to vote for that. Yes, they've got it right. I can see this; I can just feel this. I feel so much better off because we have had these schemes from the Greens-Labor coalition." The independent adjudicator, the Commissioner for the Environment, gave you a fail.

At the same time, let us look at all the other things that have gone wrong under the Greens-Labor coalition. Let us look at the state of waterways in the ACT. Let us look at the \$62 million bill that the expert panel said would be needed to clean up Lake Burley Griffin. Let us look at the indecision on waterways in Tuggeranong, for instance. I started the urban waterway projects. I know how they work. I have worked with—

Mr Corbell: You did one.

MR SMYTH: Yes, we did one. We did a test and it worked. We started, Mr Corbell. But all of yours have cost monumentally more than was anticipated. The north Watson one: how much extra did that cost?

Mr Corbell: How much have prices escalated over the past decade?

MR SMYTH: I look at you standing up and saying, "How much—

Mr Corbell: How long has it been since you were a minister, Brendan?

MR SMYTH: Well, you followed, Mr Corbell.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Doszpot): Mr Corbell!

MR SMYTH: What I like, Mr Corbell, is you are just a follower; you are a sheep.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Smyth!

Mr Corbell: Eleven years? Twelve years since you were a minister?

MR SMYTH: You are a sheep. You are just a sheep, Mr Corbell.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Smyth, would you sit down for a minute?

MR SMYTH: You are a sheep and you are fleecing the people of the ACT.

Mr Corbell: Eleven or 12 years since you were a minister?

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, Ms Berry was listened to in silence. I would expect the same respect from you.

MR SMYTH: There is the sheep bleating, bleating. He has reared up now and he is bleating on his feet.

Mr Corbell: On a point of order, I note the Speaker's instruction that members should be referred to by their proper title. I would ask you to uphold that in relation to Mr Smyth's recent comments.

MR SMYTH: How did you know I was referring to you, Mr Corbell?

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Smyth, can I ask you to refer to Mr Corbell by his correct name?

MR SMYTH: Mr Assistant Speaker, we started a process and we did a test because we had an inner city development. We started the densification that has stalled under this government that would lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas effects on the ACT. We started those projects because we understood. Indeed, the Canberra Liberals were the first government to sign up to the Kyoto protocol. As I said, we were the first government to put out a draft greenhouse gas strategy. We were the first government to put out a strategy and to start to implement that strategy.

Mr Corbell can bleat all he wants but the reality is that our projects, when they were put in place, worked. They did not blow their budgets by tens of millions of dollars, as the northern ponds did and now the new Molonglo ponds have. They actually delivered and are being enjoyed by people. There are not too many that Mr Corbell can point to that have had the success of that initial rejuvenation of Sullivans Creek. Why? Because we worked with the community, we listened and we acted appropriately within our means.

This is just typical of a standard government motion where really they have got nothing else to say. The interesting thing will be whether or not Mr Rattenbury either attempts to amend it or actually votes it down. Given his stinging criticism of the government's support for the Commissioner for the Environment, one can only imagine that Mr Rattenbury is not happy with the state of the government, or is it that Mr Rattenbury is just very comfortable where he is? I move the amendment circulated in my name:

Omit all words after "greenhouse gas emissions; and" in subparagraph 1(c), substitute:

- “(d) the under delivery of electric car charge points by Better Place and their subsequent pull-out from the ACT;
- (e) the failure of the ACT Labor-Greens Government to deliver on the 'No Waste By 2010' initiative;
- (f) the failure of the Government in managing the health of our lakes and waterways;
- (g) the Government's failure to give evidence of environmental benefits for its plastic bags ban;
- (h) the breakdown in the Government's management of the small and medium generator elements of its Solar Feed-In Tariff;

- (i) the impact of the Government's Solar Feed-In Tariff, which will add an extra \$225 to the electricity bills of Canberra households; and
- (j) the findings in the latest State of the Environment Report, noting that under the last ACT Labor-Greens Government:
 - (i) Canberra's ecological footprint is 13% above the Australian average, and is second highest in the country behind Perth;
 - (ii) in their ecological footprint, Canberrans are using 14 times the land of the ACT to support their lifestyles, an increase of 25% in 10 years;
 - (iii) greenhouse gas emissions have increased 8% over the last five years;
 - (iv) waste generation has increased 28% faster than the rate of population growth; and
 - (v) green spaces have decreased by 9% over the last four years; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
 - (a) provide all Canberra households with a third bin for garden waste at no additional cost;
 - (b) explore collaborative models to collect and process other forms of organic waste; and
 - (c) explore new waste management targets for the 'No Waste' program."

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) (4.29): The government will not support the amendment proposed by Mr Smyth today. Mr Smyth needs to go back and look at what his party says it is committed to when it comes to the issue of climate change. The fact is that it has been a spinning wheel of change depending on political expediency on the part of the Liberal Party.

We had the new Leader of the Opposition, Mr Hanson, and his deputy, Mr Coe, on local radio in Canberra in the past couple of weeks following their recent elections to their positions. We heard Mr Hanson say that climate change was exaggerated, that you could prove anything with statistics and that he really did not think it was a serious issue. I do not know where Mr Hanson was during the 2008 election, but he campaigned at that time as a candidate on a policy called "Cleaning up our act—leadership on climate change". Let us talk about the key elements that the Liberal Party went to the 2008 election on on the issue of climate change. It sounds like a pretty impressive program, when you look at it.

They talked about establishing a solar power plant and renewable energy plant. The cornerstone of the policy includes the immediate commencement of a project to develop a solar power plant for Canberra at the heart of a renewable energy plant. We

have seen the Liberal Party vote against policies that support the establishment of large-scale solar power in the territory. We have seen the Liberal Party criticise the development of the Royalla 1 facility. But in 2008 they proposed exactly the same thing.

In 2008 the Liberals proposed the establishment of energy and emissions savings put to a public and private framework. Indeed, they proposed that they would put in place measures that would cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 75 per cent by identifying poor practices in resource use and building design. In 2008 they recommended the establishment of strong interim and long-term targets. I will come back to that in a moment. They also proposed the development of measures to improve home insulation in buildings that would save 37,904 tonnes of CO₂ in the first four years alone whilst saving households over 290 million megajoules in energy.

That was their policy in 2008. But what else did they have as their policy? Well, in 2008 they had a policy for strong interim and long-term targets. The Leader of the Opposition really should listen to this, Mr Assistant Speaker, because these are the issues he needs to take responsibility for. In 2008 the Liberals proposed policies of a 30 per cent reduction on 1990 levels by the end of the year 2020 when it came to greenhouse gas emissions. So there they were, in 2008—a 30 per cent reduction on 1990 levels by the year 2020 and by the year 2050 a 60 per cent reduction on 1990 levels.

They do not like to talk about that anymore. They do not like being reminded of that at all. I note that their heads are down and they are engaged in some other form of conversation over there. But the fact is that in 2008 the policy was for a 30 per cent reduction by the year 2020. This is the platform you campaigned on, Jeremy, when you were a candidate and were first elected to this place. Thirty per cent by the year 2020 and 60 per cent by the year 2050. Now, “Climate science is kind of exaggerated, is it not? You can prove anything with statistics.” That is the shocking hypocrisy of those opposite.

In contrast, this government has maintained a strong commitment to climate change action and we have not swayed in the wind like those opposite. We have not said it is an important issue with strong targets and then walked away from it when it is politically expedient to do so. No. This government has stayed the course. As my colleague Ms Berry outlined in her speech, the government has now outlined a comprehensive program through climate change action plan 2 released last year to achieve our greenhouse gas emission targets.

Let me talk about the measures the government is taking, and let me talk also about our greenhouse gas emission targets. In fact, our greenhouse gas emissions profile is now in a stronger position than it was a few years ago. In particular, it is worth highlighting that per capita emissions peaked in 2006 at 12.3 tonnes per capita, and in the most recent inventory period—for the year 2008—they are at 11.9 tonnes per capita. That is an encouraging improvement and one that we will continue to work on. The government is the only party presenting to the people of Canberra a comprehensive program to reduce the energy intensity of activity in our city, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the cost of energy to the community.

Analysis undertaken by the government in action plan 2 demonstrated the vast potential for energy efficiency improvements across the territory. One of the most important ways this is being achieved is through the new energy efficiency improvement scheme, which commenced on 1 January this year. This scheme is now being rolled out to households across the territory and places an obligation on electricity retailers to support households to put in place energy efficiency measures, saving them energy and money.

The scheme has a particular emphasis on low income households that are otherwise economically constrained from being able to save money from reducing their energy use and using energy more efficiently. Examples of activities in the scheme include replacing inefficient or greenhouse-intensive heaters, air-conditioners and water heaters as well as improvements such as double glazing, stand-by measures in relation to power and draught sealing. The expansion of the scheme to the non-residential sector, where there is also great potential for energy efficiency and saving small businesses money, is also currently under the government's consideration.

The scheme will run initially until the end of December 2015, and we anticipate that it will reduce residential sector emissions by around five per cent by 2020, or around three-quarters of a million tonnes. So three-quarters of a million tonnes alone can be achieved through this scheme, a scheme that those opposite voted against. They voted against it even though it shows a saving to households of approximately \$300 a year off their electricity bills. What hypocrisy from those opposite. Again, the heads are down and they do not want to engage in this debate.

What hypocrisy from those opposite, Mr Assistant Speaker, because they talk about the cost of living and they vote against a measure that saves households who participate on average \$300 over the three-year period of the scheme. That is the hypocrisy of those opposite. They talk about being concerned about the cost of living, but they refuse to vote for a measure that every other Liberal government in the country says makes sense, that saves people money, that reduces electricity bills and that reduces greenhouse gas emissions. What a complete failure on the part of those opposite.

But, of course, there is more work to be done and more work is being done by the government. We are implementing a range of other schemes, including the outreach low income efficiency program, which is helping low income households to save money on their electricity bills. The ACTSmart business energy and water program and the HEAT program continue to be deployed to support our community to save money, to improve energy efficiency and to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

The government is also focusing on its own operation. In particular, in the most recent budget there was \$5 million to establish the carbon neutral government fund, a loan facility at two government agencies designed to identify measures and support agencies to save money on their own electricity bills and, of course, return that to the taxpayer. These are the types of measures this government is committed to. There are a range of others: the rollout of large-scale renewable energy, the deployment of measures to encourage mode shift and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

associated with transport. But the important thing is that any party aspiring to be in government needs to have a credible policy when it comes to abating the emissions of the city, and those opposite have none whatsoever.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.40): I thank Ms Berry for bringing on this motion in the Assembly today. I think it is an excellent opportunity to talk about both climate change and the policies that are being implemented here in the ACT. Certainly, as members no doubt know, the Greens have a long history of work on this issue, and we are proud we have been able to have a positive impact here in the ACT in terms of the position that the ACT government now holds.

Climate change is not going away, and it is an issue that community leaders are going to have to deal with for a long time to come. But certainly the next decade or so is a critical time for tackling this very challenging issue in terms of how we as a species generate our energy and impact on the planet.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is due to report this year. Large chunks of this report were leaked last year, which was an unfortunate incident, given the history of that organisation of working collaboratively to get the best possible science. And to see one author engaged in that process of seeking to damage the process through his lack of integrity was very disappointing. Nonetheless, that draft report is still undergoing a peer review but it has got some quite strong findings in it.

Those findings, which have been talked about and cited, say that it is virtually certain that the impacts of these changes in temperature that are happening to the planet are caused by human activities. These are the sorts of findings that are in there. They are very strong findings. And if they come through in the final report, I think it simply reinforces the science that has been building up over the last two decades. What it does point to is that there is not going to be great news in that new report and it is going to underline the fact that this remains a policy challenge that is both global and local in scale in the way that it needs to be tackled.

Certainly Australia has not performed well on climate policy generally, and it has been slow to respond compared to many other countries around the world. I think that is a reflection of the fact that the coal industry in particular has a very significant impact on government decision making in Australia. My federal colleague Senator Christine Milne outlined in some detail those issues at the National Press Club last week. And I think we see that influence reflected in a range of federal government decisions which are at odds with seeking to tackle climate change. Certainly the significant expansion of coal mines, the development of new coal ports in areas adjoining the Great Barrier Reef and the rapid expansion of coal seam gas developments, despite all of the concerns that have been raised about them, are examples where federal government and state government policy are working contrary to trying to tackle climate change in a serious way.

That said, we do now have a carbon price in place in Australia as a result of the efforts of the Greens and the Labor Party in the federal parliament. And this mechanism will be a building block for an emissions trading scheme. The good news is that the carbon price, in conjunction with other policies such as the federal renewable energy target,

has already started to have an impact on emissions, and the federal department of climate change have estimated that the reductions in the first six months are commensurate with what they had modelled.

I think it is an encouraging sign to see that the policy is actually delivering what was anticipated, despite the hysterics delivered by the federal Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues. It does seem almost unthinkable that an Abbott-led federal government would unpick and dismantle a piece of legislation that was so long in the making, that was essentially supported by Liberal governments of earlier days and that was effectively supported by 50 per cent of the Liberal Party before the 2007 election.

For at least a decade, business has been calling for certainty on emissions pricing. Should this federal coalition win the next election, we will see a return of uncertainty for the Australian business sector as well as the country being taken backwards when it comes to tackling climate policy. I think that business leaders would be dismayed if the federal opposition actually sought to proceed with that policy. And it will be fascinating to see how it plays out if and when that situation arises.

We should be the first to act to pick up the advantages of being at the forefront rather than vacating the field, and that is both here in the ACT and at the Australian level, at the national level. The advantages of being at the cutting edge of innovation and policy development are tremendous and are much better than lagging behind and using old technology and outdated policy models.

Certainly, we should not be afraid of taking action that has been identified in other countries. Because Australia has been a bit slow to move, we have been able to look at some of the mistakes made in other places, the policy errors that were made. People have learned from those. So there is a great opportunity there for us to do a lot better and to learn from those teething difficulties. At the same time, we should also be prepared to step out in front where we believe we have got the right ideas and the research has shown that a particular policy can have a significant impact.

Certainly Canberra has strong goals in the fight against climate change. We are leading the way now, with our 40 per cent emissions reduction target, and I think that this is something that we can be very proud of. We do need to start getting the runs on the board in terms of seeing real emission reductions, because if we cannot do it here in the ACT, with all the goodwill in the community and the legislation in place, then that is a depressing thought. The minister has cited some of those figures. We are at the beginning of turning the oil tanker around, in a sense. And it is a slow process.

I think this goes to some of Mr Smyth's observations about the last state of the environment report. Apparently all environmental problems in the ACT started in 2008, when the Greens and the Labor Party signed a parliamentary agreement. None of these things have been building up for years, and all of these things should be turned around in the first instance. I think these things take time to turn around, and members who understand these issues appreciate that some of these things do take a bit of time to turn around.

The federal government carbon price will certainly assist here in the ACT, both with driving a clean economy and helping to turn around our emissions profile. But we also need to have policies that complement the carbon price and allow the ACT to access those benefits more readily and ensure we can make our city ready for a low carbon future.

We in the Greens are certainly very proud of the work we have done over the years to help drive this agenda forward. In the past, again coming to some of Mr Smyth's remarks, I certainly have been concerned at the rate of policy development from the government on this issue, and a number of policy initiatives were delivered in a much slower time frame. Nonetheless, and to the credit of both the government and the partnership that we formed with them last term, we have seen significant progress in a range of areas, including the legislation to deliver on the 40 per cent target, the passage of the energy efficiency legislation compelling retailers to introduce measures across the community, the large-scale solar-feed in tariff and the delivery of action plan 2.

These are all very positive initiatives that have been delivered in the last four years and will have a significant influence in turning around the ACT's emissions profiles. Certainly the Greens and many in the community are excited by the level of ambition that has been set in place in the ACT and given the areas of common interest between both the Greens and the ALP, I am optimistic that we are going to make significant progress in chasing that ambition.

I have circulated an amendment. I flag that I intend to move it. Obviously we have Mr Smyth's amendment on the table. So I will need to seek leave from members to move that once we have dealt with Mr Smyth's amendment.

The amendment acknowledges some of the specific policies that will help deliver the 40 per cent target and that have been agreed between the ALP and the Greens in the new parliamentary agreement, the 2012 version. And I think again we see some very useful initiatives here. My amendment seeks to add to what Ms Berry has already prepared, by pointing to the forward-looking agenda. That includes implementing the new renewable electricity consumption target of 90 per cent renewables by 2020. I spoke about that in the debate earlier this morning when I referred to the potential cost savings that can be delivered between that target and a range of other measures for households in reducing their quarterly energy bills.

We have also got a provision to provide a 20-year guaranteed payment, at a price commensurate to the large-scale auction price, for households and businesses installing solar PV systems up to 200 kilowatts. What we have seen in recent years is a very significant private investment in electricity-generating infrastructure in this city. It goes back to the efforts first started by Mr Gentleman in the Sixth Assembly to recognise that there is real value in having households invest their own money in electricity generation and provide clean energy into the grid. Canberra has a significant level of roof space, and we should be using that roof space to generate clean, green energy, and this sort of policy will continue the good work that has previously been started.

Another initiative in the parliamentary agreement is to revise the territory plan so that it is consistent with the 40 per cent greenhouse gas reduction target. And what that means is actually looking at the territory plan and thinking about whether the future city design envisaged in that plan helps to achieve the sorts of changes in the urban fabric we need to produce a less carbon-intensive city. There are a whole range of things there. I will not go into the detail now, because I think that will be a discussion for another day. But I think that initiative is very important because the urban design does literally last for hundreds of years. Certainly in a young city like Canberra, we have got a real opportunity to shape a city, with the knowledge that we now have, that will ensure that in 50, 60, 100 years time we have done the job to not have to try to retrofit so much.

Other initiatives are there in the agreement for people to see. They include implementing mandatory energy efficiency rating disclosure requirements for rental properties, subject to the satisfactory completion of a regulatory impact statement. I think it is really important that renters have the information about the energy efficiency of their property, and we need to do a lot more to encourage landlords to provide better-quality houses, more energy efficient houses for renters, because they are really caught in a nexus of not being able to improve their property because it is not their property to improve, but they are the ones who have to pay the electricity bill. And an inefficient, expensive house is unfair to renters.

These are the sorts of initiatives that are going to be coming forward in the future, and the amendment I have put forward will reflect those into this motion. As I said, our city has a great opportunity to deliver real change to make us ready for the low carbon future—not only policies that will reduce emissions but policies that will insulate Canberrans against the costs of climate change, policies that will protect the most vulnerable in our community, policies that will build resilience for this city and policies that will actually help tackle long-term cost of living issues.

We do have some inherent challenges in terms of population. Our rapidly growing population in the ACT puts an upward pressure on our emissions profile. Our density as a city, our revenue base, as well as some inherent advantages, such as our green space, our educated and thoughtful citizens and our unique governance situation of having territory and local government rolled into one—these sorts of advantages mean that we can do a lot here in the ACT.

I think that we can do a lot to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We have set the right level of ambition in the territory, a level of ambition that reflects what the scientists are telling us we should be doing. We have a lot of work to do to get there, but I am optimistic that we can make real progress. I thank Ms Berry for bringing forward this motion today.

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 Doszpot	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.

Amendment negatived.

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) (4.56): I move:

After subparagraph (1)(c), insert:

“(d) that the Labor-Greens Parliamentary Agreement outlines a comprehensive range of measures that will assist in the delivery of the ACT’s 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2020 including:

- (i) implementing a renewable energy target of 90% by 2020;
- (ii) providing a 20 year guaranteed payment for households and businesses installing solar PV systems up to 200kW; and
- (iii) revising the Territory Plan so that it is consistent with the 40% greenhouse reduction target; and”.

Amendment agreed to.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Gentleman): The question now is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (4.57): I would like to thank all members who have spoken in this debate for their contributions. I hope that all members of this chamber now have a better sense of the urgency with which we are framing our policies to reduce our pollution of this planet.

I would like to thank Mr Rattenbury for his constructive amendment. This further highlights the comprehensive plan that this government has to tackle climate change and shows that a majority of this chamber is serious about implementing policies that will work.

Minster Corbell raised a number of good points when talking about how this city is preparing itself to tackle this great challenge. The minister rightly highlighted the groundbreaking development of the FRV Royalla solar farm that will provide enough affordable, emissions-free renewable energy to power around 4,400 Canberra homes.

Over the lunch break I did a bit of reading to prepare for this afternoon. In light of Mr Smyth's attempt at a history lesson, it is worth discussing what I read. I wonder if Mr Smyth actually wrote this policy document; it is quite a concise little policy document from the 2008 ACT election campaign that Mr Corbell referred to. It was a document from the then Seselja-led Canberra Liberals. Looking at the Canberra Liberal Party of today, it stands as a great example of how a political party can be hijacked by ideology and lose sight of common sense. The paper is called *Cleaning up our ACT*—pun intended, I imagine—*leadership on climate change*. Mr Corbell referred to it, and I will read it to be clear. Under the headline "Setting serious targets", the Canberra Liberals set out their emissions reduction policy. It reads:

A Canberra Liberal government will set a long term target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 60% of 1990 levels by 2050. We will also set an interim target of a reduction to 30% of 1990 levels by the end of 2020.

Well, there is real leadership right there, Mr Assistant Speaker. But the policy paper goes on. Halfway down the same page, we have the Canberra Liberals' policy on renewable energy and efficiency. It says:

A Canberra Liberal government will also set targets for at least 20% of all electricity used in the ACT to be from renewable sources by 2014, as well as a target for a 20% reduction in the per capita use of energy by 2020.

Considering the huge amount of scientific evidence on the disastrous effects of climate change since that time, and also considering that the government's policies to achieve considerable greenhouse gas emissions are not all that different from that plan, I question the reasons behind the opposition's current retrograde thinking on this issue. And I wonder, given the disastrous effects of climate change around this country, why the Liberals' only solution to this is another garbage bin. Well, that is simply garbage.

I know that Mr Hanson wants to paint a picture about this government's beliefs and policies, but it looks a bit thin when he runs away from policies such as those taken by the Canberra Liberals to the 2008 election.

In conclusion, the government are committed to action on climate change and we have a plan to achieve our targets. In doing so, we will continue to focus on local job creation, the diversification of our economy and helping vulnerable parts of the community manage our transition to a low carbon economy and a sustainable Canberra.

Question put:

That the motion, as amended, 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.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Budget—expenditure restraint

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (5.04): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that in the 2012-2013 Budget tabled on 5 June 2012, the Government had predicted a deficit of \$318.3 million;
- (b) that in the Budget Review tabled on Thursday, 14 February 2013, the Government predicted that the deficit for 2012-2013 would deteriorate to \$362.9 million;
- (c) that for the financial years 2013-14 and 2014-15 the deficit is predicted to increase by \$60.4 million to \$241.9 million over the two years; and
- (d) that the surplus predicted for 2015-16 has deteriorated from \$45.6 million in the Pre-election Budget Update to \$29.3 million in the mid-year Budget Review, less than 1% of the total budget; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) provide detail on how it will deliver the following expenditure restraint measures, which were promoted in the Treasurer's press release on 14 February 2013:
 - (i) driving savings and efficiencies in the use of consultants, advertising, travel and printing;
 - (ii) delaying projects;
 - (iii) continuing to review the capital program; and

- (iv) further driving efficiency in the ACT Public Service; and
- (b) detail the impact of these measures on the community.

On page 10 of the 2011-12 financial audits, the Auditor-General makes some grim predictions about the future. If people have not read them, they should. The auditor says:

The long-term financial position of the Territory is much weaker than the budgeted and prior year's positions due mainly to a substantial unexpected increase in the unfunded superannuation liability. The use of borrowings to fund the Infrastructure Investment Program has also contributed to the significant weakening of the long-term financial position since the previous year.

According to the 2012-13 Pre-Election Budget update, the Territory's long-term financial position is expected to strengthen significantly from the position that existed at 30 June 2012. However, this depends largely on a substantial reduction in the unfunded superannuation liability in 2012-13.

The unfunded superannuation liability doubled from \$2 627 million at 30 June 2011 to \$5 242 million at 30 June 2012. If this liability were to remain at similar levels over the forward years to that which existed at 30 June 2012, then the Territory's financial position would be much weaker than the position indicated by the 2012-13 Pre-Election Budget update.

Sombre words, Mr Assistant Speaker. When we get the budget update, I think we all need to be very cautious of the financial management of this government. As the motion says, this government has tabled on 5 June last year a deficit of \$318 million. We see that that has blown out from the original budget by \$44.6 million to \$362 million. The budget deficit in the current year is almost 10 per cent of the budget. Over the forward estimates, the total deficit, according to the updates, increased by more than \$100 million.

The budget is predicted to be in surplus by 2015-16 by a much slimmer margin of \$29.3 million, less than one per cent of the budget—about 0.6 of one per cent. For this to be the case, we are relying on long-term capital gains in superannuation of \$89.4 million in the 2015-16 year as the actual operating deficit is still \$60 million. It is not something that inspires a lot of confidence.

To put this into perspective, in 2012 the expected long-term capital gain on superannuation investment was budgeted at \$78 million with an actual gain of only \$1.1 million. Clearly, the government cannot rely on superannuation investment gains to be in surplus. I think their predictions will be proven to be far from correct.

If we look at the revenue, it is forecast to increase by at least five per cent per annum over the forward estimates. Total revenue increased by \$91 million over the forward estimates from the time of the budget to the budget review. Mr Barr has stated in his press release that revenue has softened across the forward estimates. Although the projected taxation revenue has decreased by \$36 million over the forward estimates from the original budget, total revenue has increased and taxation revenue is still projected to increase by 17 per cent over the forward estimates.

Of course, there is always the lease variation charge. Again, in respect of anything that this minister says, you need only look at the lease variation charge to have your doubts confirmed. The lease variation charge has been revised downwards by \$4 million in the current year, although no corresponding revision has been made in any of the future years. So it is just a one-off effect but apparently that one-off effect has now happened continuously for six quarters. Some wags have suggested that the lease variation charge is Andrew Barr's mining tax—promised lots, delivered little. It makes him look a whole lot more like Wayne Swan.

When we look at the lease variation charge, in the half-year it was meant to raise \$9.7 million. It raised just over \$2 million, a deficit of \$7.6 million. For the full year, it is meant to be \$23.4 million. That is now down to \$19.4 million. The Treasurer is always saying that the bills are out there; they will just have to pay them. They are only payable if the developments go ahead. It is interesting that once people get their assessments, a lot of these developments do not seem to be going ahead. The government has taxed the golden goose. I guess he is just following his former Treasurer, who said, "Squeeze until they bleed but not until they die."

In other expenses, we see that superannuation expenses have been revised upwards \$150 million in the current year. However, they remain unchanged going forward. We all understand the discount rate. Interest expenses increased by \$56 million. That is \$577 million in interest over the forward estimates. The expenditure on capital works for the current year has seen \$250 million of the \$812 million originally budgeted pushed to later years, predominantly 2013-14 and 2014-15. Yet again, it is the same indictment that many have already pointed out, including the Auditor-General, that this government cannot deliver on capital works.

We see that capital expenditure has been cut by \$41 million over the forward estimates. Under liabilities we see that borrowings have been revised by \$1.7 billion since the budget, increasing the total liability at the end of the forward estimates by \$593 million to \$2.9 billion, an increase of 47 per cent on the current borrowing liability. Borrowings are projected to peak at \$3.2 billion in the 2014-15 year. Again, I hark back to the warning of the Auditor-General that the use of borrowings to fund the infrastructure investment program has also contributed to the significant weakening of the long-term financial position since the previous year.

Of course, the big issue is the superannuation liability. We are all aware of the global financial crisis and the fluctuations in the market. But the superannuation liability is currently only 30 per cent funded. However, the government is predicting the funding percentage will increase to 49 per cent by the end of 2012-13, a decrease of \$2.39 billion in current year liability.

They expect investment returns below those previously estimated will reduce the probability of funding the superannuation liability by 2030 which, of course, is unfortunate. The government expect to improve the funding percentage by 10 per cent in the current year. Then they have predicted an improvement of only one per cent by the end of 2015-16.

Of course, Mr Assistant Speaker, when you look at the capital works at the end of the mid-year update, you see how badly the government is struggling to deliver its capital works program. There are many examples there, whether it be in transport for Canberra, the town and district park upgrades, the strategic bushfire management plan—all are being reprofiled.

There is also the Molonglo path connection from John Gorton Drive and the revitalisation of Civic. There are so many projects listed here that have been reprioritised—that is, delayed, pushed back, not started. It is quite interesting to see the reasons given in the financial report from the Auditor-General. It states:

This significant underspend mainly resulted from delays in procurement for various capital works projects because it took longer than expected to scope the work, consult with those affected by these capital works projects and complete procurement. Also, additional time was needed to obtain approval for compliance with environmental requirements. Some projects were delayed because of wet weather.

Yes, the weather has changed recently. The big dry has finished. But, again, we see a picture that is repeated year after year after year, and all of this from a government that I think in the last decade or so only budgeted once to be in surplus. Once! Maybe it was twice, but I think it was once. I should check.

That is the economic record of this government. It is certainly not improving under this Treasurer. That was, of course, all before yesterday when we had the revelation from the ICRC. What did the minister say when asked about what the effect of the ICRC determination would be on the dividend from ACTEW? He said:

I can say that preliminary advice suggests ACTEW's revenues could be impacted in the order of \$80 million per annum.

\$80 million! In 2015-16 we are hoping for just under a \$30 million surplus. That is not to say that some of it will not be absorbed by ACTEW through various means, but we are talking about the government receiving \$80 million less in revenue. You can kiss the 2015-16 deficit goodbye at the stroke of a pen because this government is just so dependent on superannuation and in many cases simply dependent on the dividends because it cannot manage its finances.

That is why we have brought this motion forward today. What we would like to know is how the government intends to restrain expenditure in order to live within its means and what the impact of those measures would be on the community. I can hear the minister's answer now. He will stand up and say, "It is called a budget, Mr Smyth. You will find out in June."

I think that people need to know well before June what this government is doing. If the government intends to wait till June then it simply shows that it has not got an answer. You only have to look at the minister's media release of 14 February where he refers to the ACT government's plan. It says that it will review the budget, its borrowing strategy, the capital works program, service delivery and revenue. He goes on to say:

In particular, we will ensure that expenditure is restrained, including:

Driving savings and efficiencies in the use of consultants, advertising, travel and printing ...

I can remember that when I suggested we make savings in printing, it was pooh-poohed quite soundly by all and sundry on the far side. But there they are taking our advice. One should always look for the savings. The press release refers to “delaying some projects”. What are those projects? It refers to “continuing to review the capital program”. What is the implication of that? And it refers to “further driving efficiency in the ACT public service”.

We know that the Chief Minister did not write off job losses. So the question inherent in what the minister has said here is, “Okay, what are you actually going to do?” We call on the government in paragraph 2(a) to provide details on how they will do these things. The minister has stated in his press release:

In particular, we will ensure that expenditure is restrained, including...

Either they have had this discussion or he should have said, “We will look at it.” But he has not said that. He says:

In particular, we will ensure that expenditure is restrained, including ...

Now, he has only listed four dot points; so I would like to know what else is included in this restraint. I think it is important, if the minister is going to put out press releases of this nature, that he detail to people exactly what he intends to do. Of course, there is another paragraph in the government’s plan, and I will read that:

This will involve decisions to ensure our budget position is sustainable for the long-term to continue delivering high quality services, notably in disability services through the NDIS and education through the Gonski reforms, and priority infrastructure projects such as light rail and the new northside hospital.

Potentially, there are tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars worth of expenditure there. We all know, because of the questioning in the annual reports hearing the other day, that there is no price too big for the light rail. Is there a number that will stop this project? No, there is not.

If we are going to have restraint, and that includes delaying some projects, what projects are now going to be jettisoned so that the government can build their dream light rail, for which there will be no tap turned off? The Treasurer has already signalled that it will be built whatever it costs, and therefore by implication whatever the impact to the budget bottom line. Therefore, by implication, we have the warnings from the Auditor-General that the borrowing program has contributed to significant weakening of the long-term financial position.

What sort of responsible Treasurer would say that there is no number they will balk at to build the light rail? Whatever it costs, whatever it takes, we are going to build it,

because we do not pay it back. It is taxpayers' money. The taxpayer will pay it back. At some stage, the taxpayer always pays for what the government does. What we have got here is a government who is refusing to take the advice of the Auditor-General. I expect that the Treasurer will stand up in a little while and not be able to detail any of these efficiencies that they intend to put in place. I suspect that he will not be able to say which projects will be delayed.

There are so many projects there that are delayed already. As Mr Wall pointed out yesterday, the Aboriginal healing farm is about five years late. They spout how interested they are in addressing issues affecting Aboriginal health and wellbeing. But here is a healing farm that they are going to build in a spot that the Indigenous people did not want because they hoped to be at Ingledene Pines right down on the Murrumbidgee, and it is five years late.

Where is the youth mental health facility? Where is the secure mental health facility? Let me go through the list of significant projects that have been delayed. There is the delivery of the prison and the delivery of the Gungahlin Drive extension. It was five or six years late and four times the cost. There is the delivery of the Tharwa bridge.

You cannot trust this government on finance. This government do not budget to live within their means. Now we have a simple request before them. I wait with bated breath for the Treasurer to tell us the details of the impact of these measures on the community as he drives savings and efficiencies in the ACT public service.

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) (5.19): I thank Mr Smyth for bringing this motion to the Assembly today, and I move the amendment circulated in my name:

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

"(1) notes that:

- (a) in the 2012-2013 Budget tabled on 5 June 2012, the Government had an estimated net operating deficit of \$318.3 million for the 2012-2013 fiscal year;
- (b) in the Pre-Election Budget Update, the net operating deficit was revised to \$381.1 million for the 2012-2013 fiscal year to primarily reflect increased superannuation expenses due to an accounting adjustment to the discount rate for long-term liabilities;
- (c) in the Budget Review tabled on Thursday, 14 February 2013, the Pre-Election Budget Update net operating deficit estimate was revised to \$362.9 million in the 2012-2013 fiscal year;
- (d) the 2013-2014 Budget will seek to:
 - (i) drive savings and efficiencies in the use of consultants, advertising, travel and printing;

- (ii) delay some projects;
 - (iii) continue to review the capital program; and
 - (iv) further drive efficiency in the ACT Public Service;
- these measures will be outlined in detail in the 2013-2014 Budget; and
- (e) the Budget is on path to deliver a net operating surplus by 2015-2016; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) manage the budget in a measured and responsible way to ensure the Territory can fund significant and necessary infrastructure projects; and
 - (b) ensure the budget position is sustainable for the long-term to continue delivering on key initiatives, including:
 - (i) high quality disability services through the NDIS;
 - (ii) high quality education through the Gonski reforms;
 - (iii) priority infrastructure projects such as light rail;
 - (iv) a new Northside hospital; and
 - (v) other key initiatives outlined in the Parliamentary Agreement.”.

The amendment does not disagree with the first part of the shadow treasurer’s motion, but it tidies up some of his language which, it would be fair to say, was just a little sloppy. It clarifies why Treasury adjusted the net operating balance in the pre-election budget update which, as we have discussed in this place on a number of occasions, is almost entirely to do with the change in the discount rate on future superannuation liabilities.

Just to put some perspective on this, the discount rate on 30 June was 3.41 per cent. This compares with the long-run average of six per cent. As I have indicated about four times in question time this week and earlier this month, superannuation is, indeed, a long-term liability with, amazingly, a long-term funding strategy. The liability will be volatile, and will, of course, depend on the prevailing financial circumstances of the day and, in particular, the state of the investment market.

It is important for members to understand that the bond rate assumption does not change the underlying nature of the ACT superannuation obligations or its funding requirements. It is simply a point-in-time, present-value calculation of the projected future cash flows. It is for this reason that a consistent long-term bond rate is used for budget purposes to minimise volatility from budget to budget which would hinder the long-term assessment and potentially impact on the allocation of budget resources.

It is an unfortunate reflection that the shadow treasurer either wilfully ignores that reality or chooses not to understand how our superannuation liabilities work. But it is one of the more basic concepts that can shift around our budget figures. As I indicated in response to questions in question time, from time to time that shift will be positive if the prevailing bond rate at 30 June is above the long-term average that is used to calculate this long-term liability.

The budget review and the information I provided in my media release and press conference give a very clear direction of the government's intentions over this parliamentary term and the process we will adopt in the development of the coming budget. The budget review shows the territory economy continues to perform well. The review shows that, despite some challenging economic conditions, the territory has robust economic growth, low unemployment, strong population growth and also very strong income growth. Our housing market, whilst moderating from record highs, still remains strong.

The review showed that the budget is on track to return to balance and then surplus, and in the wake of the global financial crisis, the government has formulated a budget plan that seeks to return to balance and surplus in a measured and responsible way. We estimated a \$362.9 million net operating balance for the 2012-13 fiscal year, with an expected improvement of over \$200 million or \$230-odd million, to around \$138 million deficit in 2013-14, a deficit of around \$100 million in 2014-15 and a surplus of around \$30 million in the 2015-16 fiscal year.

This is a return to balance and surplus in a measured and responsible way, and it contrasts with approaches of other governments that have decided to trash their local economies and significantly increase unemployment in their jurisdictions in a mad rush to surplus for the sake of it. Whether a government's budget is in surplus or deficit is not the measure of economic management; there are a number of other measures of strong economic management, such as the health of your economy overall, the state of your infrastructure and your capacity to deliver essential services to the community, that are equally important. So to slash and burn a budget just to return to surplus a year earlier is economic folly and needlessly harms a community and the important services that residents expect from their government.

The budget update shows the territory's economy and fiscal position are subject to uncertainty, particularly in relation to future levels of commonwealth spending and employment in our economy and to the pressure of the land release program and conveyance duties. Responsible governments, of course, regularly review their revenue and expenditure. Prudent budgeting to ensure our fiscal position remains sustainable is the core focus of the government as we move into this budget round.

In 2012-13 we outlined a range of significant reforms to make the territory's revenue base more sustainable and, importantly, less volatile for the long term. We also made a series of responsible savings with new spending measures offset against those savings. For the benefit of the shadow treasurer, those savings included: a \$4.6 million reduction in travel and accommodation expenditure; a \$7.2 million

reduction in printing and stationery expenditure; a \$14.4 million reduction in consultants and contractors; savings of \$3.7 million in recruitment and training; advertising and marketing savings of \$4.7 million; fleet management savings of \$1.5 million; savings in the Land Development Agency of \$1.2 million; \$4.8 million in savings by extending the operating life of our ICT equipment; a \$73.9 million saving in employee expenses across the territory government; and other agency savings of \$46 million, leading to total savings across four years of \$162 million. We also ceased nearly \$20 million worth of initiatives that had come to the end of their particular term.

That is the detail of the particular savings the government has sought. We will continue our focus in those areas. Some of the transition is, for example, a move away from newspaper job advertising and consolidating the ACT government's ad buy across the print media in order to achieve savings and efficiencies and moving to more digital advertising and the use of means of communication other than, for example, newspaper advertising.

In making those responsible savings we have sought to prioritise investment in front-line service delivery. We have seen new investment in the health system, for example—more ambulance officers, more support for people with a disability, more investment in preventive health, in mental health and in areas that have longer term paybacks in terms of reduced call on services in the longer term. Of course, those decisions do not have immediate budget impacts within the four-year forward estimates period. But I am sure there would be agreement across all parties in this place that investments in those areas will achieve longer term savings for the government.

As I said, we have ensured that continued growth in the public service is in those front-line service delivery roles. We recognise that revenues have softened somewhat across the forward estimates. With this in mind and the need to continue to provide important services to the community, we recognise the need to be restrained in the framing of the 2013-14 budget.

We will look closely at the borrowing strategy, our capital works programs, service delivery, expenditure and revenue. This may, indeed, involve some challenging decisions. However, responsible governments take a long-term view, and the government is committed to ensuring that the budget is sustainable in the long term. Reflecting this commitment, reductions in the Treasurer's advance and government expenditure were included in the budget review.

We have already looked at our capital program, and in the mid-year review we reprofiled some capital projects and we indefinitely delayed some. Examples of that include some delay in roadworks associated with potential land release in new suburbs. As those new suburbs will not be developed in the coming years, the roadworks associated with those developments will not be required in the short term, so those projects have been cancelled. The details of those were of course in the mid-year update.

A number of other projects were tied to particular land release requirements that are still awaiting commonwealth approvals, so we will of course make adjustments to our land release program. As I indicated in the public accounts hearing, we will have to make six-monthly adjustments, depending on the state of the market and which particular areas of supply we wish to bring forward. But we will have in the coming four years more options in that regard.

The decisions we take will be in keeping with the government's strong fiscal objectives which are: a measured response to changing economic and fiscal circumstances, to provide flexibility for adjustments should circumstances change, to ensure that we are not harming the economy and community by undertaking knee-jerk ideological responses to particular circumstances, and to ensure that we respond to the growth in a need for services, particularly in health and education. By looking closely at the budget we will ensure that the territory is well placed to meet our future challenges.

Our desire to return to surplus is not for the sake of returning to surplus; it ensures that the government has the capacity to fund the significant and necessary future infrastructure projects, such as the north side hospital and light rail, and that we can continue to sustainably provide high quality services and invest in the disability sector and in education. It gives the territory the capacity and flexibility to respond to the changing circumstances in the local, national and global economies.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (5.34): The Greens will support the amendment put forward by Mr Barr. In looking at both Mr Smyth's original motion and the amendment put forward by Mr Barr, the "noting" sections of both are essentially the same. They are both factual statements centred on the budget and related papers. You could probably choose some different ones, but I do not think that is the key issue in the motion.

I certainly agree that it is important that the Assembly is aware of the budget position, and there are certainly a range of significant challenges that need to be addressed. We have a significant deficit, and there will be significant challenges in turning that around. We have a difficult job to return the budget to an operating surplus whilst at the same time deliver vital reforms and new infrastructure for the people of Canberra. This is something the government needs to continue to do as the city grows and as our infrastructure ages. We are certainly at a point in many places where it is time for that upgrade.

Earlier today we had a discussion about costings, and Mr Seselja made some observations about, "It is fine to have your policies costed, but if you can't afford them, there's no point," and I completely agree with him. The good news is the Greens not only had our policies costed but we also took a clear commitment to the election of having a balanced budget over the economic cycle. We were very explicit about that, and we remain committed to that. As part of my partnership with the Labor Party, I have a clear commitment to the intended return to surplus that is outlined in the budget papers.

Certainly the fact that we are in deficit does not mean that we should do nothing at all. We need to have a fiscal policy to manage the economy, keep Canberrans employed and prosperous, and also continue to spend on necessary infrastructure. We need to invest in sustainable infrastructure. This is something the Greens have said on many occasions. Significant investments now can make both significant savings down the line and significant improvements to the lives of Canberrans. It is a well-recognised concept to borrow money now to make investments that pay back over an amount of time. That is a policy and fiscal position that I am very comfortable with.

There is no reason why we cannot continue to make our city more sustainable as we maintain a balanced budget over the economic cycle. We need to be mindful of the fact that the local economic cycle is not necessarily the same as the national economic cycle. Certainly, many would observe that Canberra tends to be counter-cyclical. At a time when the federal government is in expansionary mode through trying to prop up the national economy, as we saw through the period immediately following the global financial crisis, you could certainly make the observation that Canberra was going very well at that point as the federal government invested heavily in and expanded the size of the public service to roll out those programs. Potentially we are about to see that cycle swing back the other way, particularly if there is a change of government at the federal election in September.

There are a number of significant risks still, both on the international and on the domestic horizon. The outcome of the Italian election in the last few days and the little bit of shifting around that has been done on the international financial scene give us an indication of how rapidly perceptions can change and the impact that can flow through to both our national economy and then, of course, the local economy.

As I have said, the ACT could be in a very difficult position if there is a change of government at the next federal election, with the unemployment rate potentially increasing anywhere between 40 and 200 per cent, depending on which of the predictions you believe—whether it is Mr Seselja's 4,000 job cuts to the public service, Mr Abbott and Mr Hockey talking about anywhere between 12,000 and 20,000 public servants, or Senator Humphries, if he makes a comeback in the next few weeks, and his figure of 12,000. Any of those figures, irrespective of which of those Liberal members you take the projections of, will have a very significant impact on the ACT economy.

It is not just the public service job cuts; we all know that so much of the private sector around the ACT is built around servicing that government sector, whether it be printers and various suppliers to the commonwealth government through to the hospitality sector. With significant unemployment we will obviously see people not having the level of discretionary spending they have when they are employed. That is a self-evident concept.

In terms of the delayed projects Mr Smyth is asking for information on in his motion, it is important to understand that they are all listed in the back of the budget update, so I understand that information is already available. In terms of the rest of the points he has made, initiatives will have to be put in place to manage the budget, and the

ordinary expectation is that these will be included in the budget papers. These are pieces of information which will become available, but, as Mr Smyth I imagine appreciates, those are still subject to budget consideration.

It is appropriate to call on the government to manage the budget in a particular way. It is obviously a prerogative of the Assembly to express that position. I agree that the initiatives listed in the amendment are issues we should all be supporting because they will deliver great benefits to the community—things such as the provision of high quality disability services through the NDIS and the various others outlined in Mr Barr's amendment. This comes back to the observation I made earlier—that is, it is appropriate for the government to continue to invest in important community infrastructure. The challenge for the government is to do that in the context of returning the budget to surplus. That is not an easy job but one that is very necessary, and we will be sticking to the task very carefully. On that basis and having made those few remarks, I will support the amendment put forward by Mr Barr.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (5.40): I thank Mr Smyth for bringing on this motion. I also note his long-term commitment to the issue of our budget in the ACT. There has been no greater champion over the last few years of fiscal good management than Brendan Smyth. It stands in some contrast to, I think, Mr Barr, who has a Swan-esque approach to budget surpluses. He is claiming it is a surplus for three years before it is actually delivered, as opposed to Wayne Swan, who at least has the good decency only to claim the surplus a year before it actually goes into deficit.

I note the ludicrous situation we have where the Greens member is standing up and speaking as a Green and commenting on the government when he is the government. I just wonder how long this facade can continue, where you have got the Greens member saying, "It's important that we call on the government to do this and we call on the government to do that." He is the government. He is a minister of this government. How long do we have to put up with this ridiculous charade in this place?

This government has been characterised by infrastructure cost blowouts, deficits, increasing rates and charges and increasing borrowings. While real taxation has increased by 55 per cent since 2001-02, becoming the highest tax jurisdiction on a per capita basis, the government continues to spend beyond its means and the deficits continue to grow.

Let us look at the current budget position. In 2012-13 alone, we can see the budget deteriorating. The original budget predicted a huge deficit of \$318.3 million in 2012-13. A pre-election budget update saw this blow out to a record \$381.1 million. Now the budget review has this slightly improved to \$362.9 million. Despite the Treasurer claiming this \$362.9 million as an improvement, it is still \$44.6 million worse than the deficit predicted in the budget. In fact, over the four years the budget position deteriorated by \$82 million between the pre-election budget update and the budget review to a total of \$575 million.

But this is not new. Ever since Katy Gallagher presented her first budget in 2009-10, the budget has always predicted a cumulative deficit over the forward estimates. That is, over the four years the government plans to outspend what it receives. In 2009-10 this was a \$778 million deficit, in 2010-11 a \$472 million deficit, in 2011-12 an \$18.5 million deficit and in 2012-13 it was initially a \$609 million deficit. What is more, since Katy Gallagher became Treasurer a few years ago now, the much anticipated surplus is getting further and further away. In the 2009-10 and 2010-11 budgets there were not estimated surpluses. In the 2011-12 budget the surplus was estimated to occur in 2013-14, with a surplus of \$1.6 million in 2013-14 and a surplus of \$56.6 million in 2014-15. This was then delayed in the 2012-13 budget with a surplus of \$5.2 million not expected until 2015-16. Now the budget review shows a surplus of \$29 million in 2015-16. Who here believes that that is going to be delivered? You would have to be bold, wouldn't you? Let us be clear about this. That \$29.3 million surplus is achieved not by prudent financial management, spending less than we are receiving; it is achieved through long-term capital gains from superannuation.

Expenses continue to outmatch revenue. While this is occurring, ACT Labor continues to spend more and more, showing little restraint. Borrowings have increased to \$2.7 billion this financial year. ACT Labor's costed election policies total more than \$1 billion over the forward estimates. This \$1 billion—if they are promises that were already in the budget then you probably should have been more honest with your election promises, Andrew, if that is your response—does not include the \$614 million construction cost of light rail, the \$340 million for the University of Canberra hospital or additional policies outlined in the Greens-Labor parliamentary agreement. As mentioned by my colleague Mr Smyth, the Treasurer has said that, no matter what the cost, light rail will be built.

Mr Barr: That's not what I said. Have you read the full transcript?

MR HANSON: That is exactly what you said. I have read it. I have read the full transcript and it is very clear. It is very clear that ultimately you do not know what it will cost. Mr Barr, I would suspect that you had some concerns about it, but your government, led by the Chief Minister, sold any sense of fiscal probity to get the Greens into government, to secure your government. Light rail was part of that little equation, wasn't it, Andrew? And now what we are seeing is that you have got to deliver light rail, regardless of the cost, to make sure that you lot stay on those benches over there. Now, \$630 million, is that the latest estimate? Does anybody believe that that is what it is going to be delivered for? Again, it is a bit like an Andrew Barr budget surplus: you have to be bold to believe it.

If the government wants to get its deficit and financial position under control, it has got to start making some tough decisions. It cannot have it all. In a media release of 14 February 2013 the Treasurer stated that it will ensure the budget position is sustainable in the long term and will ensure expenditure restraint by driving savings and efficiencies in the use of consultants, advertising, travel and printing, delaying some projects, continuing to review the capital program and further driving efficiency in the ACT public service.

Let us look at these points. The first and last points—driving efficiencies in the use of consultants, advertising, travel, printing and the ACT public service—are essentially the same thing. It is taking departmental resources away and making directorates do the same with less—just like the efficiency dividend. But this is not new. The last four budgets have included such measures: \$88 million in 2012-13, \$88.8 million in 2011-12, \$73 million in 2010-11 and \$55 million in 2009-10.

Whilst we support increased efficiencies where possible, efficiency dividends and departmental savings are only sustainable for so long. In fact, Mr Barr stated in PAC on 21 February that that point would be reached very soon. I quote Mr Seselja's question:

If that is what you are cutting every year, how long before that starts to impact on the capacity of some of those agencies? Or is it your view that in fact there will still be a lot of fat when it comes to some of that extra spending?

Mr Barr replied:

I think we would be reaching a point fairly soon where you have exhausted the available savings in those areas of any significance ... There are always opportunities, but I would not be suggesting that those savings are in the millions.

So where are those savings coming from? Will there be more staff savings, I ask you, Mr Treasurer? In the last two budgets there has been a total of \$135.7 million taken out of staff expenses. That is 390 positions. Are you contemplating staff cuts?

The other two points on the list of actions are to delay some projects and review the capital program. It is difficult to find an infrastructure project that is not delayed. I suppose delaying it further might just be the pretence as a cover for the fact that as a project gets delayed the government will say that it was just part of the financial plan to get the budget back into surplus. Maybe that will be the smokescreen. But what projects are they? Which projects are going to be delayed based on—

Mr Barr: They were listed on the budget update. You can't read?

MR HANSON: Let us see the update of that, because what we are seeing time after time is projects delayed for any other reason than economic profiling. What about infrastructure works that are needed right now, like the rectification of Taylor Primary School and a lot of the capital infrastructure on our roads? Are these projects simply going to be delayed because of the inability of this government to control its spending?

The budget is of serious concern to the opposition and the ACT community. While the government continues to state that revenues are softening, it is not acting as if this was the case. The Treasurer needs to be honest with the people of Canberra about the savings he has outlined and the savings that he is perhaps keeping hidden. I commend Mr Smyth's motion to the Assembly.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (5.50): In closing the debate, as predicted the Treasurer has squibbed it. He veils it by saying he is clarifying what the government are doing. As I said, they will not tell us a single detail, aided and abetted by Mr Rattenbury, who unfortunately seems to be quite comfortable with the government—

Mr Barr: Brendan, it's not budget day, is it?

MR SMYTH: No, but I made that point. You can say, "Wait till the budget." That is four months away. You have said you are about to do all these things, but apparently you have no idea what you are doing. You can call it clarifying if you want. That means you have no idea, you are unable or you are unwilling to tell us what is going to happen.

We did not actually get a single item that addresses 2(a). You just totally ignored 2(b)—"detail the impact of these measures on the community". Again, we go back to using the numbers with the pat response of the government when they get these sorts of motions. You might as well have just tabled your press release as the amendment because all you have done is cut and paste from the press release what the detail is there. We seek more detail than what you put out in the press release. I think the public have a right, when the government say they are reviewing what they are doing, to know at least what direction they are going in and what that means. What we have got from the government, yet again, is contempt for the community because they will not tell us how they are going to manage the budget. They talked about everything except what we asked for and that is unfortunate.

The Treasurer has actually put a few more things out there that he probably did not mean to. For instance, he referred to the lease variation tax. Of course, the lease variation tax exposes another hole in the budget. The value from the lease variation tax was hypothecated to the urban improvement fund. We are down \$7 million this year already. The government have downgraded what they expect to get from the lease variation tax by \$4 million. I predict, based on the last six quarters, it will be a significantly larger figure than that. They therefore have to fund that gap in the urban improvement fund. Where will that money come from?

The minister spoke about delaying capital works projects, for instance, in new suburbs. We are going to push out the infrastructure because we do not expect to be able to sell the land. That therefore highlights a further softening in the dividends from the LDA. We know, because of the ICRC report yesterday, that the ACTEW dividend is looking a bit shaky at this time.

We ask reasonable questions about the future of the budget and the future of the economy of the ACT. It would be reasonable to get an answer, but there is never any reasonableness from this Treasurer. All he simply says is, "You can wait till I'm good and ready in June." We will wait. We will be patient; we always are.

Mr Barr: You are not in budget cabinet, Brendan, so you do not get the benefit of making those decisions, do you?

MR SMYTH: That is very astute, minister, that you have noticed that I am not in budget cabinet. I am glad that you are the Treasurer now that you have managed—

Mr Barr interjecting—

MR SMYTH: We will be one day. But, again, you look at this plan. As Mr Hanson pointed out, the surplus that just seems to always elude us, that drifts slowly further afield, is now down to about 0.6 of one per cent of the budget. It is under \$30 million. You have to question the government's commitment to getting to the surplus.

We all take on board the discount rate and we all know what that means for the superannuation liability. But if your whole way of delivering a surplus budget is to constantly rely on the returns of superannuation instead of tackling the root cause of your deficits, which of course is that you spend more money than you earn, we are never going to see true economic sustainability in the ACT. This is what the government is good at and, indeed, the amendment outlines a whole lot of other quite worthy projects. I do not think there is anybody I know that does not want to see some sort of NDIS scheme in place. But it all comes at a cost and we have to live within our means. This is a government that stalwartly refuses to live within its means.

We get to the issue of infrastructure. Just so that Mr Barr has it fresh in his mind, when we look, for instance, at the cost of the light rail, Mr Barr says, "We are committed to the project." I say, "Whatever the cost. Is there a number at which the project will not go ahead?" Mr Barr says, "No." It is very simple.

Mr Barr: And what's the next line, Brendan?

MR SMYTH: "Are you committed to it whatever the cost?" "No, I'm not saying that either." But you just said, "Whatever the cost."

Mr Barr: Thank you. You left that little bit out of your press release, didn't you?

MR SMYTH: I cannot help it that you vacillate. One moment you say there is no number at which the project will not go ahead.

Mr Barr interjecting—

MR SMYTH: You say, "No." "You are committed to it whatever the cost?" "No, I'm not saying that either." At best, people could say it is not clear what you are saying, which is so typical of this government. I think you let the cat out of the bag: "Is there a number at which this project will not go ahead?" "No."

I will go back to where I started. I will go back to the financial audits and the adjudicator. What does the Auditor-General say? The report states:

The use of borrowings to fund the Infrastructure Investment Program has also contributed to the significant weakening of the long-term financial position since the previous year.

We see additional borrowings in the mid-year review and out in the never-never we see the prospect of huge expenditure on something like the light rail. A new northside hospital will cost money but it is not included in the forward estimates, so where will that come from? What other projects will get knocked off or will you go further beyond the borrowings that you have made?

It is unfortunate the government adopt this stance. It is nothing more than we would probably expect from them, aided and abetted as always by Mr Rattenbury. It is not hard, Mr Rattenbury, for the government to detail how they see the impacts of these measures on the community. If you will not stand up for the community, we always will.

Question put:

That **Mr Barr's** amendment 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.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

At 6 pm, in accordance with standing order 34, the motion for the adjournment of the Assembly was put and negatived.

Sport—ground hire fees

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (6.01): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that in the last election campaign the Canberra Liberals highlighted the burden that sporting clubs and Canberra families face in meeting the cost of ground hire fees, particularly for junior sports;

- (b) that as a response to those concerns, the Canberra Liberals announced a sportsground fee policy that proposed a reduction of 50% in hire charges for junior sports;
 - (c) that at the time the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation dismissed this idea, suggesting that fees were of little consequence to sports clubs or to Canberrans in general;
 - (d) that following the election, the Government increased the cost of hire for sportsgrounds for 2013 by over 50%; and
 - (e) that these increases are only being notified to clubs as they are invoiced, because the 2012 fees remain listed as current on the ACT Government website; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) support the Liberal Party policy that reduces fees by 50% of 2012 levels and one that provides opportunities for all Canberra families to participate fully in local sports;
 - (b) table in the Assembly all information on who uses the grounds, frequency of use, revenue raised per venue, per sport and the modelling on which these proposed increases were calculated; and
 - (c) as an immediate interim measure, revert to the published 2012 sportsground charges until clubs can be properly advised as to what its intentions are for future increases.

I am pleased to be able to bring to the attention of the Assembly the important issue of junior sport in Canberra. Sport is very close to many Canberrans' hearts. We have for some years now led the nation in the number of people, per head of population, who participate in some form of physical activity on a regular basis.

In recent months, and in months to come, sports tragiocs have had and will have an array of quality sporting matches to watch. We have a team in the AFL competition, the GWS, that plays in Canberra on a number of occasions. We now have Australia's national baseball Claxton Shield winners in the Canberra Cavalry. Our own Brumbies have started the 2013 Super Rugby season in brilliant form; next week they will surely show up the New South Wales Waratahs, and in a month or two we will see them play the British Lions here in Canberra. The Raiders almost made it to the finals last year, and thrilled their supporters with their play in the lead-up. In cricket in January we saw the Prime Minister's XI beat the West Indies, and that was followed by an Australian team beating the West Indies again here in Canberra.

The government has invested heavily in first-class sport, so it is good to see that the money has started to reap some rewards in these quality games. However, the love for the big end of town does not seem to have filtered down to the local level. That is a pity, because young Canberrans are particularly fortunate to have a wide choice of sports to be involved in.

Football, soccer, is played for nearly 31,000 hours a year; Rugby League for 6,000 hours; softball for over 4,000 hours; cricket for over 5,200 hours; and Australian Rules for over 5,200 hours. At last count our ovals had over 81,000 hours of booked sports usage a year. But that is where the good news ends. Headlines in local papers over the past months have included “Players sick of taking trips: petition calls for action on Kambah oval upgrades”, “Club calls fault over high rates for poor service”, and “Community sport facilities neglected under ACT Labor government”.

In the lead-up to the 2012 election, the Canberra Liberals were only too aware of how much pressure local sport clubs were under. We spoke of football clubs who had to turn away junior players because there was not an oval available to play on. We spoke with club officials who had to rely on the Saturday canteen and raffles to keep the clubs afloat. We spoke to sports fans who raised concerns about putrid toilet blocks, makeshift canteen facilities, and players who had inadequate changing facilities. And of course there is no sports oval anywhere in Canberra that can accommodate the cars that attend regular Saturday and Sunday morning sporting competitions. We can see the cars parked on areas where they should not be parking, on verges. There are a lot of issues in this whole area of junior sport that need to be looked at.

We spoke with club officials in several sports. Above all, there was one common theme—the cost of venue hire. Ground fees are a major impost on clubs. We know they are because we went to the clubs and talked to them. It is called consultation, Mr Barr. In every sport, ground fees came up time and time again as an issue of concern.

I realise that this is a bit of a catch-22 for government. On the one hand, they have to maintain facilities and they also have to recoup costs. But here Labor are duplicitous. They claim to support junior sport, but they lift fees and do not improve facilities. And they dismiss the whole thing as unimportant.

In 2011, when we first flagged that in government we would make junior sport more affordable, we did it with the evidence that training and match fees had increased by 135 per cent, making it difficult for large families to afford organised activities. So as early as October 2011, we announced that in government we would cut ground training and match fees by 50 per cent for all junior clubs.

We thought that for a government that purports to support junior sport, here was an opportunity to come out and match the Liberal offer or better it. Instead, in debating the issue in the Assembly, Minister Barr was dismissive, suggesting that junior sports were already heavily subsidised because they wanted “to generate greater levels of participation”. Increasing the fees by such a large amount is meant to do what, minister? Generate lower levels of participation?

During the election campaign, the only promises this government gave followed the tried and tested Labor Party formula: offer them bigger and better, and give them a completion date after the next election—a new grandstand for Gungahlin; a new Olympic size swimming pool for Weston and an enclosed oval; a \$5.1 million soccer facility at Melrose high; and a study into indoor facilities for the north side. There

were mega promises about more ovals, bigger grandstands and pools that will probably never be built. We know the history of sporting promises from this minister. We are still awaiting the pool promised for Gungahlin almost a decade ago.

Already, only four months after the election, word on the street has it that the government have started to back-pedal on their soccer facility for the south side, telling clubs that they cannot really afford to build it and suggesting that perhaps they could join the government in raising funds for it. That was not what was promised before the election. Before the election, if I recall correctly, there was major activity on the south side of Canberra down near Woden, where the government attended a sporting event and made these promises to get the sporting community on side. Now, only four months later, the back-peddalling occurs. What a surprise!

Whom do you believe? On the one hand, we have clubs telling us that ground fees are a huge impost. On the other, we have a minister who says they are a mere trifle. To add insult to injury, there were no warnings, no consultation about any fee increases. The fees listed on the website notionally expired in September last year. But if you go to the website today to book a ground, they are the fees that you are directed to look at.

One large club that I met with only recently provided me with their paperwork. It showed very clearly just how much the fees had gone up. For their sport, junior training fees per hour in 2010 were \$1.70. In 2011 they jumped 135 per cent to \$4.00. In 2012 they went up again another four per cent, to \$4.15. And this year they are \$6.40 an hour, an increase of 54 per cent from last year. In 2010 the fees were \$1.70 an hour. In 2013, it is \$6.40 an hour. The sum of \$6.40 an hour may not be a big deal in some people's expectations—obviously the minister is one of those—but for a club that has thousands and thousands of juniors, and is trying to set fees for junior sport, to have a 54 per cent increase makes it very hard for them to balance the books.

We keep getting calls from more and more clubs about the same issue. They are not happy. And, what is worse, there was no consultation, no advance notice and no public notice.

When clubs were to be told, or how, is anyone's guess. How are clubs to budget when ground fees are not known, Mr Barr? How are clubs meant to budget? How are clubs expected to cover these charges when they have already set their fees, when they have registered their players and when winter sports are about to start, and they find that they have a 54 per cent increase—not the 50 per cent saving that the Liberal side was offering prior to the election, not a 50 per cent reduction, but a 54 per cent increase? And it is an increase of 54 per cent in one year, Mr Barr. Are we to have a sportsground-led recovery to reduce the ACT deficit?

We have just had the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission decide—

Mr Barr: Well, not at \$6 an hour.

MR DOSZPOT: There are a lot of thousands of kids involved. I think that is part of the equation that you are missing, Mr Barr—just how much it does cost the community and the parents.

If not providing transparent costings and timely notification to users was not galling enough, clubs tell me they are paying higher fees for grounds that are at times unplayable and have less than adequate facilities. Instead of improving existing facilities that in all likelihood would make clubs feel happier about paying higher fees, this Labor government, for the most part, offers to build newer and bigger facilities sometime in the future. Is that treating the sporting community with honesty and integrity? I do not think so.

Another issue the minister needs to look at is the booking system for ovals and grounds. As officials tell me, it is a most unsatisfactory, frustrating and totally inefficient process. It is particularly frustrating when you realise that bookings are mostly done by community sporting clubs that are run by volunteers with limited time. Clubs are not able to see what fields are available when submitting a booking request, and I am told that ACT sportsground personnel are often unhelpful. Interaction with them is difficult, and approaches to meet in person are currently being resisted.

We have a department that puts up fees without consultation, makes you submit requests over and over if your first choice is rejected and will not meet with you to discuss the issues. But the blame cannot sit with the department. It is merely reflecting how this minister has operated across numerous portfolios—no consultation, no review and no appeal process until the opposition bring it to the attention of the Assembly. We saw it with school closures and now we are seeing it with sporting clubs.

Minister, this is your department. This is your responsibility. Where is your customer focus? Where is service to the public that you should encourage in your public service?

Sporting clubs are a fantastic resource, and much is achieved by a great army of volunteers who put up goals, nets and posts during the week for training and on weekends, who run canteens, who manage teams, who transport them to games all over Canberra and further afield, and who run training camps, wash uniforms and help to deliver Canberra's reputation as a healthy, active community. When they get sluggish with huge increases, without warning, by a government that provides substandard facilities and refuses to engage in consultation with clients, they get somewhat despondent. It makes many of them wonder why they bother. And if those thousands of volunteers did not bother, Canberra families would lose the chance for their children to learn a sport in a healthy and fun environment. And why? Because an arrogant government wants to slug junior sports, the trifling matter that Mr Barr referred to—a minister who simply thinks that it is no big thing.

We ask the government, given that it is no big thing, to cancel the 2013 increases for junior sport and adopt the Canberra Liberals' policy of reducing fees by 50 per cent. This will demonstrate a genuine commitment by government to participation at a community level. We have also asked for the Assembly to be better informed as to how the department calculates its fees. Tell us why you choose 50 per cent for some and two per cent for others. What are these random increases based on?

Sportsgrounds in Canberra are a valuable resource. We need them, and we need them to be maintained. They need to be available, they need to be playable and they need to be located in areas where the need is greatest. Sports users have little confidence that their needs are understood by this Labor government, and promises of more and bigger things sometime into the future do not fix the problems the clubs face today.

Mr Barr, we are calling on you to assist the clubs—assist the clubs who are coming to see you about the dire circumstances that they are in. The fact that they have to keep raising prices is making it harder for many members of the community, especially when they sometimes have two, three and four children playing for their particular clubs. Mr Barr, do not make it harder for clubs by keeping them in the dark, by cherry picking increases and ignoring their requests for information and improvements.

Have a look at the Liberal policy that we put before you. Have a look at it in a serious fashion—as to how you can help some of these junior sports to be able to cope with the many areas of increase that they are faced with during their normal season. They arrived at registration fees some months ago. All of a sudden, now they find that they are 54 per cent behind in their calculations on just one activity. What do they do? Do they now slug the parents for another 54 per cent increase to cover your increase, Mr Barr? I am asking you—we are calling on you and your government—to have a look at the needs of the sporting community, which has come to us asking for some relief.

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) (6.16): I thank Mr Doszpot for raising this issue this evening. I would indicate that I have circulated an amendment to Mr Doszpot's motion. That amendment substitutes Mr Doszpot's words with the following:

... the ACT leads the nation in participation in sport and recreation, with 80.3% of Canberrans participating in physical activity, well above the national average of 65% ...

The words also include that the government recognises:

... sportsground hire fees are only a fraction of the cost of maintaining sports facilities and all revenue raised from these fees goes directly back into improving the quality of these facilities ...

... the Government has invested in improving sport and recreation facilities such as:

- (i) the restoration of Ngunnawal, Charnwood and Isabella Plains sportsgrounds. Work has begun on Bonython neighbourhood oval with works scheduled—

and budget funded—

at Weetangera and Watson ovals ...

The words also include that there will be significant upgrades to the Kippax enclosed oval—I think I will be opening it in about two weeks time; that construction of an enclosed oval and leisure centre is occurring in Gungahlin, and that work is well advanced; that \$2 million was provided in the 2012-13 budget to improve amenities at sports fields around the territory, such as pavilions, canteens, toilet blocks and lighting systems; and that the government are committed to improving the quality of playing surfaces as a priority, and we are supporting this through the replacement of the irrigation system at the Dickson playing fields. I can say, from last season of AFL nines, that when I played there only late last year, along with many hundreds of others, the Dickson playing fields are in the best condition they have been in for more than a decade. The Kambah and Hawker irrigation systems are also to be replaced under this program.

The words also include that the government have an ongoing program of replacement of grass surfaces, to ensure that we are using more water efficient couch grass; that we have a commitment to hire three extra maintenance and repair officers for Sport and Recreation Services to undertake continual improvements to the quality of sports facilities across the territory; that the government will continue our commitment to delivering higher quality sport and recreation facilities; and that we will continue to progressively reduce the cost of insurance, which is a major cost that sporting organisations face and is obviously passed on to participants. And I have noted no public comment of support from the opposition for the reduction in taxation and eventual abolishment over the next four years of all tax on insurance. We would also seek to investigate whether casual public liability insurance could be accessed by some sport and recreation groups to further reduce costs for those groups.

That is the basis of the amendment I am moving. I do so because the government is committed to delivering better-quality sportsgrounds and facilities. I formally move:

Omit all words after “notes that” in paragraph (1), substitute:

- “(a) the ACT leads the nation in participation in sport and recreation, with 80.3% of Canberrans participating in physical activity, well above the national average of 65%;
- (b) sportsground hire fees are only a fraction of the cost of maintaining sports facilities and all revenue raised from these fees goes directly back into improving the quality of these facilities;
- (c) the Government has invested in improving sport and recreation facilities such as:
 - (i) the restoration of Ngunnawal, Charnwood and Isabella Plains sportsgrounds. Work has begun on Bonython neighbourhood oval with works scheduled at Weetangera and Watson ovals;
 - (ii) significant upgrades to the Kippax enclosed oval;
 - (iii) construction of an enclosed oval and leisure centre in Gungahlin; and

- (iv) \$2 million in the 2012-2013 Budget to improve amenities such as pavilions, canteens, toilet blocks and lighting systems; and
- (d) improving the quality of playing surfaces is a priority of the ACT Government and is being supported through:
 - (i) replacement of the irrigation system at Dickson playing fields, with the Kambah and Hawker systems also to be replaced;
 - (ii) replacement of grass surfaces with water efficient couch grass; and
 - (iii) a commitment to hire three extra maintenance and repair officers for Sport and Recreation Services to undertake improvements to the quality of sports facilities; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
 - (a) continue its commitment to delivering higher quality sports and recreation facilities in the ACT;
 - (b) continue to progressively reduce the cost of insurance by abolishing duties charged through the 2012-2013 tax reform initiatives; and
 - (c) investigate whether casual public liability insurance could be accessed by some sport and recreation groups.”.

I move this amendment because the government is committed to delivering better quality sportsgrounds and facilities, to boosting participation in sport and to ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for competitors.

As the amendment indicates, the ACT continues to lead the nation in participation in sport and recreation. We have done so throughout this century, and we see 80.3 per cent of Canberrans participating in physical activity, which is well above the national average of 65 per cent. These figures are, of course, derived from Australian Bureau of Statistics publications. Of particular note, and this would appear to be at odds with the perception that the shadow minister is putting forward in his speech, young Canberrans continue to lead the way, with 90 per cent participation amongst 18 to 24-year-olds, for example, in sport and recreation. But there are also strong figures for participation by older Canberrans, who are far more active here than anywhere else in the country.

The government have delivered a number of improvements to sport and recreation facilities. Again, far from the picture that the shadow minister portrays, we have delivered upgrades to sportsgrounds at Lyneham, Charnwood, Dickson, Ngunnawal, Isabella Plains and Hawker. There is work underway at Bonython. And the budget of last year delivered funding for Watson and Weetangera ovals.

Members for Brindabella would be aware, and certainly Minister Burch is aware, of the new archery and multi-use facility in Greenway that is nearing completion. The government invested \$2.1 million in this complex, which provides a new world-class facility for sports like archery, table tennis and fencing.

The government has supported, through a partnership with Tennis ACT, Tennis Australia and some private sector partners, the development of a new Tennis ACT facility at Lyneham. It has been jointly funded by the ACT government, Tennis Australia and the private investor Next Generation Clubs. I think it is a fantastic example of ACT government investment leveraging support from a national sporting body and from the private sector. This will be a fantastic new facility for the north side. It will have a gymnasium, a 25-metre indoor pool and a 25-metre outdoor pool, 14 hard-court tennis courts, 10 outdoor and four indoor, eight sand-filled artificial grass tennis courts, six clay tennis courts, six squash courts and other related facilities

The government provided, in partnership with the Belconnen Magpies and the AFL, funding to complete the redevelopment of the Kippax District Playing Fields for both cricket and AFL; \$2 million was provided there. The Belconnen Magpies, through fundraising and in-kind contributions, together with the AFL, have been able to provide at least another half a million dollars worth of value to that particular project. And it is a great example, again, of government investment leveraging partnerships from the local community and from the national sporting organisation and will be a fantastic facility for the people of west Belconnen. I know the members for Ginninderra in this place warmly welcome that investment in Kippax.

Work is underway in Gungahlin on the new aquatic facility and the enclosed oval. And I am advised that the lights at the enclosed oval will be erected very shortly.

The government has, through its ongoing sport and recreation grants program, delivered tens of millions of dollars to the sport and recreation industry through that program.

Our commitments in the next four years include funding for a new aquatic facility for Weston Creek and Molonglo and a FIFA-standard facility at Melrose High School. For the benefit of the shadow minister, if you are hearing words in the community that the government is not committed to that project, can I stand here now and assure you and everyone else that the government remains firmly committed to that project.

Mr Doszpot: When by?

MR BARR: During this term of government. We will continue to support upgrades to irrigation and surface improvements at Kambah and at Hawker; the restoration of the Spence and Torrens neighbourhood ovals; a half a million dollar investment in the Greenway Enclosed Oval; a new enclosed oval for Weston Creek and Molonglo—and I am very pleased with the support for that project from the Weston Creek Soccer Club; funding for an active kids program; support for a new southside synthetic athletics track; feasibility and site identification work for a new northside indoor sports centre; funding for a community hub as part of the Lyneham sports precinct; additional funding in the sports grants program, which will provide a structured mechanism to support sports such as hockey, gymnastics, tennis, netball, basketball and lawn bowls to upgrade their facilities and to assist them to meet ongoing replacement, maintenance and repair costs; and additional funding for three extra

maintenance staff to maintain and improve ACT government owned and operated sporting facilities. These extra staff will work within Sport and Recreation ACT to provide extra capacity to undertake improvements to the quality of our facilities, including fixing irrigation, lighting and restoring playing surfaces.

There is a \$5 million commitment to further upgrades of the Narrabundah Ball Park, the home of baseball in the territory; funding to establish a family water play area as part of the Lakeside Leisure Centre at Tuggeranong; a commitment to the University of Canberra sports hub; and funding for community recreation parks, to deliver three new facilities across the city.

So all of this is a clear track record of strong support for community sport and a clear agenda for the next four years. We will continue to provide funding and high-quality facilities to ensure that Canberra remains the healthiest and most active community in the country.

The contrast is the policy that the Canberra Liberals took to the 2012 election, which was, in effect, a cut in funding to community sport. Mr Doszpot, as the shadow minister for sport, supported cutting the lease variation charge, a significant proportion of which is spent on upgrading facilities and supporting local sport. This would have meant that sports clubs would have had to drastically increase their player registration fees in order to fully fund facility improvements, which would otherwise have been offset through government contributions. Whilst they only make up a small part of player fees, ground hire fees are also an important contribution to continuing to maintain facilities at a high level. So a policy to cut fees by 50 per cent would lead, in the context of sports teams, to a cut of a few cents per player per hour but in fact would have resulted in a decrease in funding available to maintain sports facilities.

Mr Doszpot also took to the election a policy of running only \$3.5 million worth of sports grants over the next term of the government, which would have represented a significant cut to grants delivered under Labor. Since becoming minister for sport six years ago, I have delivered more than \$13 million worth of funding through the sport and recreation grants program. So it can only be assumed that Mr Doszpot's policy to gut money from community sport and recreation by handing tax breaks to rich property developers instead of investing in community facilities, to cut the sport and recreation maintenance budget and to reduce funding for sports grants would have been a detrimental step for community sport and recreation and one that we will not be supporting.

The ACT has a range of high-quality facilities catering for a wide range of sports, and fees play an important role in helping to pay for the upkeep and running of those facilities. Fees are, as Mr Doszpot indicated, adjusted annually to keep up with the cost of maintaining sportsgrounds and facilities. However, it is important to note that I have not signed off on any increases in sportsground fees since the 2011-12 financial year fee schedule.

New fees would normally come into effect at the beginning of October each year, to encompass the coming summer season, but with a predominant impact upon the

winter sport season. However, due to the caretaker period before the territory election last October, the 2011-12 schedule was kept in place for the summer season. I anticipate that there will be a fee increase for the 2013 winter season. However, it is certainly not at the level that Mr Doszpot is suggesting in his commentary tonight. Fee increases are predominantly set at the wage price index. However, some fees may vary to adjust fairly into the fee structure of junior sport being progressively charged at half the rate of senior sport.

Sport and Recreation Services may have notified some clubs that they anticipate an increase but this has not been approved by me as minister, and I am yet to consider any increases. It should be noted that sportsground hire costs are only a small part of the overall costs associated with playing sport. For example, the current charge for junior football is \$4.15 per hour for one football field for training. Various football clubs share this space and up to 50 participants per field can utilise that \$4.50 hire service. So this equates to 8c per player per hour. Revenue received from the hire of sportsgrounds recovers about 14 per cent of the total costs of sportsground maintenance, but it is nonetheless important to offset these maintenance costs that are otherwise funded by government.

The ever-increasing costs of potable water, which accounts for 60 per cent of the sportsground maintenance budget is an issue the government must consider. (*Time expired.*)

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (6.31): In the interests of time I will make a few brief remarks so we can finish this matter this evening in the time remaining to us. This is a very interesting debate, and I think there is a real debate here in light of Mr Doszpot's motion and the policy the Canberra Liberals brought to the last election: what is the best outcome? Is it to have the lowest possible fees or is it to have a decent quality of oval? I think there are mixed views on this in the community. When the Canberra Liberals first came up with their policy on this quite some distance out from the election, as I recall—it was very early in that first splash of things—I did some talking with people in the sports community about whether this was a good idea, and I received mixed feedback. Some obviously thought it was terrific, but others basically said, "The real issue is making sure the ovals are of a better quality." They would rather pay a fee that assisted with the upkeep of the ovals and produced a higher level of maintenance so there was less prospect of a child rolling their ankle or breaking their ankle and all of those sorts of things that can happen in sport. There is a genuine debate here, and I do not think there is a right or wrong position on it.

I was interested to hear the minister talk about the amount of revenue received relative to the amount spent on ground maintenance. Clearly it is not a full cost-recovery model and clearly there is already a significant subsidy going into maintaining sports grounds in the ACT. That is a significant benefit particularly to young people but also to all people across the board who play sport and make use of the ovals. They are a tremendous facility. Subsidised fees are a significant incentive already. The sorts of figures we are talking about for hourly hire, particularly when you put 30 or 40 kids on an oval, are very low costs. People should be able to make some contribution to the upkeep of the ovals. If you go to the swimming pool, it is \$5.50 a visit for an adult. If

you think about the hourly fee charged for some of these things, particularly per person, it is way below what it costs to go to a swimming pool. The cost for the use of ovals is, therefore, not too bad a price in the scheme of things.

I was concerned to hear the remarks Mr Doszpot made about the difficulties sporting groups are having booking the ovals. That is not addressed in the motion actually, so, in some ways, we cannot vote on that or discuss it in terms of the actual motion, but it is a point of some concern. This is something Mr Barr might want to look to, to see if there are ways for improvements to be made. It is a constant challenge for the government to break down some bureaucratic processes and urge agencies to improve things and adopt new technologies like online bookings. There is probably some room for improvement there that could well be explored. It sounds like Mr Doszpot has raised some issues that are real and are out there and warrant some further work. That is not in today's motion—it is much more about the fees—but I want to acknowledge that as an issue. It warrants a further look.

On that basis, I will support Mr Barr's amendment to the motion. Mr Doszpot has basically asked that the Canberra Liberals' policy be adopted. It is not a view that I share. As I say, I think this debate is around lower fees versus better quality. I tend to fall on the side that the fees are not a significant impost, particularly spread across team sports. I would rather see some additional revenue made available to improve the quality of the ovals to ensure that there are fewer accidents and that the upkeep of the ovals is as high as possible.

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (6.35): It is an interesting debate, and I thank members for their contributions. It is interesting to hear Mr Rattenbury say that the lowest possible fees are not necessarily the best solution. I agree with that, but neither are the highest possible increases that some of these issues relate to—increases of 135 per cent and 54 per cent. In three years the fees I am talking about have gone from a 135 per cent increase last year to a further increase of 54 per cent this year. That is not a small amount for large clubs with a lot of juniors. Even for small clubs with juniors that amount equates to quite an impost on them.

It is also interesting to hear Mr Barr say that he has not signed off on any increases. That is fantastic news. If you can guarantee me that you will not sign off on any increases, then that is what I am looking for. The clubs are concerned, Mr Barr, that they have received very clear indications that on 1 April, in certain instances, instead of paying the \$4.15 figure currently on your website, they will have to pay \$6.40. That is an increase, Mr Barr, and that is what they have been told.

Mr Barr: There will be an increase, but not to the level you are talking about. There is an increase every year, Steve.

MR DOSZPOT: Mr Barr—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Barr, this is not a conversation; this is a debate.

Mr Barr: I am sorry; I was asked a question by the shadow minister.

MR DOSZPOT: Madam Speaker, if I can—

Mr Barr: I should not respond.

MR DOSZPOT: I will respond through you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: That would be appropriate, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Mr Barr said that he has not signed off on any increase. It is not a figment of my imagination that clubs have come to me saying that on the website \$4.15 is the current price they pay for using these grounds. They have been given paperwork by the department to say that fee on 1 April will be \$6.40. That is a 54 per cent increase. If Mr Barr has not signed off on it, I dare say he should be talking to his department about why this situation has taken place. If Mr Barr can give us an undertaking that he will not sign off on a 54 per cent increase, I will very happily carry that message to the community. Because that is what—

Mr Barr: Well, I did that in my speech but you weren't listening.

MR DOSZPOT: Well, that is what the community has come to see me about. It is the conflict of ideas that I cannot quite relate to—there will be some increase and the department has already given that increase but the minister is saying he has not signed off on it. I am missing something here. I would love for Mr Barr to explain that if that were possible, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: No, Mr Doszpot, you have the floor. This is not a conversation; this is a parliamentary debate. You have the floor, and you have six minutes to go.

MR DOSZPOT: I can only repeat what I have just said—I find it absolutely incredible that we have this dichotomy where the clubs are telling us they are being sluggish and the minister is either hiding his head in the sand or—I will not go there. The department has given indications of the price the clubs have to pay. I cannot say it any more bluntly.

The government argue that they care about junior sport. I would love to see some definitive statement from Minister Barr, although it will not be in this debate, which I am closing at the moment. The government claim they are upgrading facilities. But will they deliver on all their upgrade promises? We doubt it, and so too do many other people who have waited, in some cases, for years for things to get better. Through the drought dozens of ovals went off line. The drought has been over for years and still there are less than a handful of grounds that have been restored. Indeed, one club is going to lose a fairly major oval in Woden, as we understand, in about a month's time. So 21 ovals were still offline in 2011, and the rate of upgrade and restoration is only one or two grounds a year.

We understood the reasons for taking them offline and we accepted the rhetoric, but it is time that we got more than rhetoric and we got some action. Some in the

community cynically believe some ovals will never be restored with the government moving to have their status changed to allow other options for those grounds. Time will tell if their fears are realised.

Revenue from junior sport fees is like small bickies for the government. What Mr Barr does not seem to understand is that those small bickies add up to a lot of money for clubs that have thousands of kids and that have set registration fees some months ago only to be told now, a couple of weeks out from the start of the competition, that they have a 54 per cent increase to consider. These small bickies for the government are very big imposts for the clubs.

Of even more concern is the total lack of consultation. We are being told one thing by the department while the minister is telling us he has not signed off on it, so there is obviously a mutiny in the department. That is all I can put it down to. Mutinies can be put down in several ways. Mr Barr, we look forward to seeing how you are going to handle this.

No consultation, no review, no appeal. We believe the motion we have put is reasonable and ought to be supported. We do not accept the government's amendment. I am disappointed Mr Rattenbury has not seen fit to support the motion. I do not know how he feels about this issue we have with the minister saying, "Yes, I haven't signed off on anything," but the clubs are saying they have to pay a 54 per cent increase. We believe the motion is reasonable and ought to be supported. To do otherwise would demonstrate a cynical disregard for Canberra families and community sport.

Question put:

That **Mr Barr's** amendment 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.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Schools—Lake Ginninderra college

MR COE (Ginninderra) (6. 46): On 19 December last year I was pleased, along with other MLAs, including you, Madam Speaker, to attend the UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra year 12 graduation. UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra is one of two University of Canberra schools, the other being UC High School Kaleen.

As part of the partnership with UC, Lake Ginninderra is able to offer students tertiary pathways and other opportunities, including access to shared resources and the opportunity to co-enrol at UC and access university courses. Lake Ginninderra also provides its students with access to the elite sports program, in partnership with the AIS, the ACT Academy of Sport and other ACT sporting bodies; the college leadership group; and the environmental sustainability team.

In previous years, I have congratulated those who received awards. However, today I would like to place on the record my thanks to the staff of 2012 at the college. The principal is Martin Watson and the deputy principal was Gerard Barrett. I would also like to acknowledge Lilly Allen, Roger Amey, Mary Apikotoa, Peter Blunt, Graeme Budd, Kirsty Budding, Rika Bushby, Fiona Chester, Urmila Devi, Roz Dibley, Heather Donohoe, Dianne Fiorese, Daniel Gordon, Graeme Hackworth, Jenny Hanson, Emily Hogan, Ross Humphreys, Jerry Ianno, Elena Ivanova, Jenny Jasinski, Chris Jones, Amanda Kabaila, Joella Keech, Joanne Kilner, Lee-Ying Leong, Bob Lofthouse, Kristal Lomax, Alan Lyal, Maxine Mannix, Nicole McDonald, Rebecca McNamara, Adam Morehouse, Mira Newman, Steve Pateman, Matthew Phillips, Kerri Pinkerton, Libby Pittard, Melissa Planten, Rade Pudja, Phil Rasmus, Warwick Richmond, Joan Ritchie, Gustavo Rivera, Kelly Roberts, Sarah Robertson, Sara Suffolk, Kianoush Sheikholeslami, Jessica Steenberg, Sarah Taylor, Stephen Thearle, Sam Townsend, Matthew Turnbull, Kirsten Vizjak, Steve Walding, Bernard Walsh, Kristine Warren, Jason Wegener, Joe Willmott, Mary Woodhouse, Athina Whild and Colleen Wright.

While some of these staff will have moved on to other colleges or other places of employment, there will be some new staff. I want to wish the new staff all the best and thank the staff of 2012 for their valuable contribution to education in the ACT.

Tuggeranong Valley Cricket Club

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella) (6.49): I rise tonight to advise members about the launch of the Tuggeranong Valley Cricket Club's book *Cricket in the Valley: Tuggs at the Heartstring* which occurred a couple of weeks ago. I was pleased to go along to that launch. The book has been researched and written by Celine Hampson. *Cricket in the Valley* is the history of the Tuggeranong Valley Cricket Club, including the early history of cricket throughout the southern Canberra area, and it is poignant of course in our centenary year. The book actually covers from 1819 right to today in Tuggeranong and talks a little about the very early history at Tuggeranong Homestead where Charles Bean was. Players would actually fly in to contest the cricket at the homestead.

It was a wonderful evening. There was a great account of cricket in the valley by Celine, the writer. She actually talked about personalities in the club and the people that have helped the club throughout all of these years. The club began in 1976, and this book highlights the major achievements in its formative years, from a juniors club right through to its inception in the city and suburban competition, the ACTCA grade competition and the first-ever grade premiership and the building of the clubhouse at Chisholm. The club itself has an excellent track record in progressing players through state and first-grade cricket, including the likes of Michael Bevan, Jason Behrendorff, Jason Flores and Tom Thornton.

It was a fantastic evening. I want to thank those people that attended, including Gai Brodtmann, the member for Canberra, Brendan Smyth and Ian McNamee. I just want to mention Ian. He is the president of ACT Cricket and he made a comment that evening that he remembers my father's keen contribution to sport in the ACT. He finished off by saying my father was a bit of a rascal. That was good. Mark Vergano, the CEO of ACT Cricket was there, as was Bob Weight, the president of the Tuggeranong Valley Cricket Club. So congratulations to Celine and all of those at the Tuggeranong Valley Cricket Club on their launch of the book.

Branch Out Cafe

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (6.50): Tonight I rise to talk about one of the growing number of social enterprises in Canberra, the Branch Out Cafe in Holt. Social enterprises are businesses performing a great social role, providing a supportive environment and real work for people who might otherwise struggle to win a job. The social enterprise can be an end in itself or a stepping stone to work in the wider economy. Social enterprises come in many forms but are generally non-profit, with any income used to sustain the venture.

Another characteristic is social inclusion, bringing the marginalised into the world of work, raising their self-esteem and giving them a new identity and purpose. The enterprises might assist marginalised people who have a disability, an illness or have other barriers to employment such as little English or being long-term unemployed.

Social enterprises in Canberra include the six seeds pilot project whose first venture was making and selling rocky road sweets packaged for Valentine's Day. Another is the mail business, JACKmail. There is Ink Cafe at Woden Library and the White Nile catering business run by women who arrived in Australia as refugees from Sudan. There is also Donkey Wash in Holt, the Recyclery, Paperworks, and No Sweat Fashions amongst many more.

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of meeting five young people graduating in the Branch Out Cafe's training and catering course in Holt. The Branch Out Cafe is staffed by young people overcoming their disabilities by learning about work, the cafe and the catering trade. At the graduation, the pride of Jackson Maritz, Tim Carr, Christopher Fowler, Kathleen Walczuk and Kayla Weis in their achievements was inspiring.

Through working at the Branch Out Cafe, these young people can complete the certificate 1 in work preparation (community services). The course is designed for students with a disability and is helping them gain jobs in the hospitality industry. Indeed, one of the graduates at the ceremony was about to start work at a hospitality business.

Assisting in the transition to outside work is an important part of the enterprise. This includes liaising with businesses, connecting the graduates with potential employers and helping employers and graduates design a job to suit the young person's abilities. Graduates can also build on their certificates by going on to other vocational training.

The trainees serve customers in the cafe on Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 8.30 to 12.30 and prepare food for the cafe at 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt. Having enjoyed their hospitality, I can especially recommend their gourmet sausage rolls. The team also do outside catering for morning and afternoon teas and lunches at conferences and the like. The prices and order forms are available online through the Carers ACT website.

I congratulate the Branch Out Cafe graduates, Carers ACT and the trainers involved in the cafe and Communities@work for the support it gives this wonderful venture. It really is transforming lives.

Melba Copland Secondary School
CAT awards
Health—organ donation

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (6.54): I visited the Melba Copland college recently following an invitation by a young man, Josh Goyne, who approached me at his school's graduation. Josh informed me he was part of a team of students that have entered and won the New South Wales division of the F1 in Schools national championship. He wanted me to meet members of his team, all of whom were students at Melba Copland secondary.

Last week I was able to finally meet with the team. The team gave me a thorough presentation of their entry and showed off their awards that they had won last year, including the state championship and an innovation award. I congratulate all of them on their hard work and imagination. The team left on Monday this week to participate in this year's F1 in Schools national finals in Avalon, Victoria.

I would like to thank all the sponsors who helped make this possible. I congratulate their principal, Mr Michael Battenally, and the teachers in charge of the F1 project, Mr Minos Nikolaidis and Mr David Appel, on guiding in supporting these students.

Of course, I congratulate the students: Conor Flannery, CAD designer and team captain; Fin Ubels, performance manager; Jaxon Biden, research manager; and Josh Goyne, marketing manager. I wish them luck as they compete with their peers from around Australia.

I would also like to add my congratulations to those of Mr Coe yesterday to all those who were nominated and won awards in the CAT awards. Big congratulations to Mr Romko Hordynsky, the winner of the gold CAT. I was pleased, as Mr Coe noted, to announce the first person to be awarded my personal perpetual professional development scholarship. It went to Mr Peter Riccardo and I wish him all the best in furthering his career.

The CAT awards recognise talent of all kinds in bringing amateur theatre to us in the ACT and the wider region—acting, directing, producing, set design and lighting et cetera, school theatre and adult theatre, drama, comedy and musicals, from the coast to the New South Wales-Victorian border, to Orange, to Griffith and Wagga Wagga, as well as our fine Canberra Theatre. It is a great way for people to develop the skills that they have. We have seen many CAT winners go on to great acclaim in professional theatre.

Also, I would like to mention a DonateLife event that I attended for the Chief Minister on Monday when I presented Vanessa Little, Director of ACT Libraries, with the Book of Life which showcases many inspirational stories about organ donation recipient and donor families.

As the Chief Minister was saying, it is important to talk about organ and tissue donation and to share your donation decision with the people closest to you. I strongly encourage everybody to take some time to share their wish with their family and close friends.

The generosity of organ donors means that lives can be saved. I know this is a very difficult subject but it is important that, if you wish to be a donor and potentially save lives, your family and loved ones need to be aware of your intentions. I am sorry to say that due to an infected foot at the moment, I could not make the walk this morning as I had planned to do. I am glad so many members were able to make it, though.

Catholic Schools Week

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (6.57): As the Assembly will not sit again until 19 March, I wanted to take this opportunity to note that this year Catholic Schools Week will be celebrated—

Ms Burch: Tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: It meets tomorrow, Mr Doszpot. It is all right; go on, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, Ms Burch. That is excellent. I just came in a day early. As the Assembly will not sit again until 19 March, I wanted to take this opportunity to talk about Catholic Schools Week. I realise we have a sitting tomorrow, Ms Burch, and I know you find this extremely funny, but there are other things we will be talking about tomorrow.

Catholic Schools Week will be celebrated between 10 March and 16 March. Catholic schools in the ACT play a vital role in the education of our children. Catholic schools educate 20 per cent of students Australia-wide and 29 per cent of children in ACT schools in 37 separate campuses from early learning centres through to colleges. This represents nearly one-third of all school students in the ACT.

This year we have seen the opening of the newest school in the ACT Catholic Education Office family, the John Paul College at Nicholls. This school has had a number of setbacks but I know how many families are delighted that it now has a home. I know that enrolments and results at this school will be strong.

During Catholic Schools Week all schools will celebrate in various ways, with open days, special masses and special assemblies. I applaud the work that Catholic schools do in educating so many young Canberrans. Many former students have gone on to successful careers in sport, business and academic life—indeed, even to the Legislative Assembly both as members and staff. Catholic Schools Week is about strengthening relationships between all those that have a stake in our schools—students, staff, families, priests, parishioners and members of the wider community.

I look forward to joining the school community and principal Judy Walsh of St Michael's Primary School at Kaleen on Thursday, 14 March for a community breakfast celebrating Catholic Schools Week. This will be the fifth year that I have attended and it is always a great opportunity to meet with the many sections of the community that also attend this event.

I hope to see Ms Burch there at this event, having enjoyed her mirth about the early announcement of this. Hopefully, we will see you there, Ms Burch.

Canberra Capitals—awards

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (7.00): Last Friday night I had the privilege of joining the Canberra Capitals for their centenary gala dinner. I would like to take this opportunity to again congratulate all the winners on the night. In particular, I would like to congratulate Casey Samuels, who received the first award for cap on the rise; Brigitte Ardossi for taking home the most valuable player; Carly Wilson, to whom I presented the Kelly Abrams best defensive player award; and Jessica Bibby for the recognition she received from her peers, winning players' player award.

Looking around the room during the dinner, I was struck by the number of women who are now household names in national and international sports. I do admit and confess that I was star struck. Household names like Lauren Jackson and Carrie Graf have put Canberra on the map. I am personally very excited that they have both made commitments to the Capitals for the coming seasons.

High profile figures like Lauren and Carrie have a positive impact on all levels of the game. As a basketballer myself, and with nieces who have played through their teens, I know how important it is for women to have role models to look up to in their sports. A great player like Brigitte Ardossi inspires those of us who are less talented and a

little bit older to get out on the court and have a go. Watching my nieces grow up playing basketball, I have seen firsthand the importance of sport in positively shifting a person's identity.

Whilst exercise has a role to play in preventive health, participation in sport also builds confidence, social skills and teamwork, and community spirit. The success of women in basketball is not surprising. The profile of the WNBL and of Australian players internationally is a product of the support Basketball ACT and Basketball Australia show for women at all levels of the game. The flow-on effect is the growing number of girls and women making time for a weekly game in their busy schedules.

This relationship between elite sport and community participation has been recognised by the ACT government in the redevelopment of the Belconnen basketball stadium. Upgrading these facilities improves the experience of the local clubs that use them, but also lets fans like me see their heroes play closer to home. It was an honour to spend the evening with some of the best basketballers in the country. I will definitely be in the stands cheering on the Canberra Capitals when the 2013 season begins later this year.

Health—organ donation

MR WALL (Brindabella) (7.02): I too rise this evening to speak about an event that occurred this morning here in Canberra: the seventh annual DonateLife Walk. The walk, which I along with a few thousand other Canberrans participated in this morning, is Canberra's largest community activity during DonateLife Week, a week designed to promote organ and tissue donation nationally. I note numerous members of this place from both sides of the chamber were present, which I guess is testimony to the quality of the cause.

Events such as DonateLife raise awareness and encourage people to discuss the importance of organ and tissue donation. During DonateLife Week, Australians are all being encouraged to discover, decide and discuss organ and tissue donation—that is, discover what organ and tissue donation are about and how this last gesture could save the lives of others, decide to register and sign up to become a donor, and discuss it, the most important step. Discussing this decision to become a donor with your family and loved ones ensures that your wish will be able to be followed. It is critical that this decision is discussed with your loved ones, as it will be their decision that allows this donation to take place. Recently, my wife and I discussed becoming organ donors and we both signed up to the organ donor registry. It is a simple process and it costs nothing. I urge everyone to at least consider becoming an organ donor as you never know what the future may hold.

I am happy to see that the statistics are improving, thanks to successful campaigns such as this one. In a recent media release, Gift of Life announced that figures released by the government on the Australia-New Zealand organ donation registry showed there was a five per cent increase in donors since 2011, which resulted in a four per cent increase in transplant recipients. The ACT also achieved its best ever organ donation results, which is really pleasing to see.

Gift of Life is the peak body for organ donor awareness in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding districts, and I place on record my thanks to the president, Mr David O'Leary, and his committee for ensuring this very important issue is being progressed and highlighted wherever possible. I also acknowledge the work done to promote and organise the walk this morning. It was a very enjoyable event, and I commend it to the Assembly.

Schools—visits by minister

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) (7.05): I will be brief in speaking in the time left.

Since becoming Minister for Education and Training in November of last year it has been my privilege to visit many of the great schools that make up our education system and to meet the principals, teachers and parents. To date I have visited 13 schools, and I look forward to visiting them on a regular basis.

I went out to Torrens Primary School in November of last year to look at their new artificial grass installation. The kids are having a wonderful time on that. It was great to speak with the teachers; and I want to thank Sue Mueller, the principal there, for hosting me and providing such a nice morning.

Going to the Franklin early education school, I toured the facility before it was opened in November of last year and had the pleasure of being there on the first day of a brand-new school. Julie Cooper and her team did a fabulous job in welcoming the new parents.

I was out at Belconnen high to launch a Menslink program and toured the high school ahead of the refurbishment that is earmarked for Belconnen to the tune of \$28 million. I want to thank David McCarthy and his team for that.

Also in December of last year I toured the Red Hill Primary School's new \$7.3 million enhancements, including classroom extensions, a school entrance facelift and an upgrade of the car park. Again the principal, Kate McMahon, who was new, has done a great job with the school.

Also last year before Christmas I visited Richardson Primary School to look at the new solar panels and tour the school. It was just a few days before break-up so the school was quite colourful, with Christmas and Santa Claus decorations.

At the beginning of the school term, for the first day of Charnwood-Dunlop, I visited there with Minister Garrett and had a tour of the school. Debbie Martens is the principal there. She certainly had the school in very fine order for the beginning of term.

Earlier this month I visited Erindale College and toured the facilities—that innovative connection of college with the theatre and the Erindale leisure centre. I thank Michael Hall for that visit.

I popped into Hawker Primary School on the 15th of this month and I really did notice the design of that school; its open space for learning was really good to see. It is a design of the 1970s—and it is very much a 1970s design—but it works really well. The principal there, Mandy Kalyvas, has done a good job.

At Calwell Primary School, I had the pleasure of meeting with the prime minister, deputy prime minister, speaker and cabinet of the schools parliament. I was at Calwell Primary School with Mary Durkin and Alasdair Roy to launch the report on talking to students about bullying and disability. I want to thank Linda Neeson again for the great work that she is doing with the school.

On the 22nd of this month we opened the new hydrotherapy pool, a \$3 million investment at Malkara. Jennie Lindsay, the principal, who has been there for four years or so, has done some great work with the school. The hydrotherapy pool builds on a legacy from families of 30 years ago when they built that first hydrotherapy pool. To see the absolute joy and happiness of the kids when they use that pool was quite special.

I visited St Anthony's primary school on the 22nd of this month and had the pleasure of presenting students with their week awards. They have an assembly every week where they give weekly awards to their students. I also toured the BER facilities. Greg Walker is a fairly newly appointed principal there. I look forward to visiting more of our Catholic education schools and independent schools. And, for Mr Doszpot's interest, I will be attending the centenary mass, I think, in a week or two, to celebrate the Catholic education system.

At Kingsford Smith School, I joined the Prime Minister and the federal Attorney-General when they announced the National Children's Commission. We had a great opportunity to tour that school with the Prime Minister; the principal, Jan Day, and the deputy principals were quite excited about that.

I visited Lake Tuggeranong College on the 25th, earlier this week. I toured the college. They had a careers fair expo; I was shown around that with reps from the SRC and Julie Murkins. Again, she is a fairly newly appointed principal who is doing a good job. It was great to see that the careers fair was well supported by many there. And my attention was drawn to the school honour roll board, where I noticed the name of one of my staff who was on the board at the college there. It was quite exciting that the current SRC could see what students could do. (*Time expired*)

The Assembly adjourned at 7.10 pm.