



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

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Thursday, 27 February 2014

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Thursday, 27 February 2014

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.

**Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee
Alteration to reporting date**

Motion (by **Mr Smyth**, by leave) agreed to:

That the resolution of the Assembly of 28 November 2013 referring standing orders relating to consideration of reports by Assembly committees to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure be amended by omitting the words “by the last sitting day in February 2014” and substituting “by the last sitting day in March 2014”.

**Regional Development—Select Committee
Report**

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (10.01): Pursuant to order, I present the following report:

Regional Development—Select Committee—Special Report, dated February 2014, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

In February last year this Assembly resolved to appoint a committee that was tasked with inquiring into the ACT’s relationship with the surrounding region. The committee sought to identify opportunities for greater collaboration on a range of areas, including economic development, service planning and delivery, health and education, procurement and environmental and heritage matters.

The committee held three public hearings, on 23 May, 29 May and 22 August, including a historic hearing in this chamber, something that I hope can happen more in the future.

I think it is important that I take some time to thank those who contributed to this committee process and to those who supported the committee throughout its tenure. I think I speak on behalf of the committee when I thank Dr Brian Lloyd, the secretary of the committee, and the committee secretariat. Dr Lloyd put in a lot of work for this committee, and I thank him for all of the help and advice he provided us throughout this process.

I would also like to thank all of the mayors, deputy mayors, councillors, general managers and officials who contributed their time and their ideas to this committee.

Thank you to Mayor Bill Taylor and Peter Tegart, General Manager, Bega Valley Shire Council; Mayor Robert Stewart and Ngaire McCrindle, General Manager, Bombala Shire Council; Deputy Mayor Christopher Corcoran and Anthony McMahon, Assistant General Manager, Boorowa Council; Mayor Dean Lynch, and John Vucic, General Manager, Cooma-Monaro Shire Council; Mayor Lindsay Brown and Catherine Dale, General Manager, Eurobodalla Shire Council; Mayor Geoff Kettle and Christopher Berry, General Manager, Goulburn Mulwaree Council; Mayor Pete Harrison and Peter Bascomb, General Manager, Palerang Council; Tim Overall, Mayor of Queanbeyan City Council; Councillor Fergus Thomson, and Joseph Vescio, General Manager, Snowy River Shire Council; Councillor Brian McCormack and John Bell, General Manager, Upper Lachlan Shire Council; and Rowena Abbey, Mayor of Yass Valley Council.

Thanks also to all the local community groups, businesses and public servants who appeared before us to give us their perspectives and expertise: Steve Toms, New South Wales Cross-Border Commissioner; Ms Pam Davoren, Deputy Director-General, CMTD; Robert Neil, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment; Craig Sloan and Robert van Aalst, Regional Development Australia; Duncan Edghill, ACTEW Water; Mark Sullivan, ACTEW Corporation; Chris Watson and Doug Finlayson, Ginninderra Falls Association; Lynne Harwood, Communities@Work; Noel McCann and Kathryn Scarano from the Canberra Airport; and Denise McFayden, from Surveyor's Hill Vineyards.

This committee received 18 submissions from surrounding areas and from organisations across the ACT. We received submissions from Mr Stephen Brown, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Queanbeyan City Council, the Ginninderra Falls Association, the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Communities@Work, HCCA, ACTEW, Canberra Airport, RDA ACT, SEROC, the Queanbeyan-Monaro Greens, Palerang Council, CIT, Bega Valley Shire Council, the ACT government, the New South Wales Cross-Border Commissioner, and Dr Helen Swan.

It is worth touching on some of the ideas raised in the submissions, as they highlight the diversity of views that exist in our region. The South East Regional Organisation of Councils in their submission saw value in the ACT co-developing programs such as a region-wide waste and resource recovery strategy, developing a holistic approach to address skills and training gaps, and developing a regional marketing and branding strategy. They also see the benefits that would come from forging greater ties through regional marketing and promotion. Working better together in promoting our region would substantially boost economic investment in the region and grow tourism opportunities.

Palerang Council in their submission spoke about the benefits that would come to the region through greater collaboration. One of their major recommendations is for the establishment of an overarching body to facilitate regional development. Their idea essentially calls for a greater role for the C+1 region in working to get greater economic investment, but it is easy to see the potential benefits in, at the very least, working towards regional strategies in a number of areas such as economic development, tourism, procurement and environmental protection. I did have some

ideas of my own coming out of the submission: collaboratively working with the surrounding regions to help Canberra, as a university city, to meet the skills of the surrounding region; and more collaboration between the ACT and New South Wales governments to develop the region's existing clean green image to promote and brand our agriculture, specialty foods, tourism, wineries and natural tourism assets such as the Snowy Mountains.

Madam Speaker, I am afraid to say that this committee was not able to agree to a substantive report, which is why I am tabling this special report today. It is very disappointing that we were not able to table a substantive report. You would think that regional development would not be a topic of burning division in this place, but to think that would mean that you have never had to deal with the Liberal Party. Well, that is another thing.

One would have thought that four mature members of this place could have put their heads together and come up with a report that reflected the submissions we received and the evidence we collected at the public hearings. But to think that would mean that you have never had to deal with the Liberal Party. Madam Speaker, it is a question of maturity. The Liberals are trying to blow up the committee system in this Assembly. They are doing a Tony Abbott and playing politics with the committees. By doing so, they have shown that they are disrespectful of our friends all around our region. If anyone has read the submissions that we received from our surrounding local governments, they would have seen that they were extraordinarily enthusiastic about this committee. They took the work of what we were doing seriously. It is a shame others on the committee did not.

Ms Porter and I engaged with this process in good faith and had serious intentions of coming up with a report that recommended better ways for this and any future government to deal with our region. The Liberals on this committee, on the other hand, were dismissive. They played games and were immature in their engagement with our regional partners. I guess that we will be hearing much from those opposite about how they think the committee system is broken. It is not. What is broken is the respect that the Liberals have for our regional partners.

I very much enjoyed meeting everybody engaged in this committee and having insightful conversations with our neighbours in the region. I gained a greater respect for the wonderful area that we live in.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (10.10): I will begin on a positive note and echo Ms Berry's comments in thanking all of those who gave up their time and their resources, who contributed through the hearings that the committee undertook and also in the preparation of their written submissions. All people in this place are grateful when people within the community and the greater region give up their time and put effort into putting to us as representatives ways in which they think things could be improved, done better—particularly, in this instance, how intergovernmental relations could be improved with the regional councils surrounding the territory.

But again the disappointing part is the fact that partisan politics continues to be brought into our committee system. And as long as we have nobbled committees with two members from each side, this is going to continue.

Dr Bourke: Point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the point of order, Dr Bourke.

Dr Bourke: The word “nobbled” implies “corrupted” and a range of other criminal activities, which I think is inappropriate and unparliamentary.

MADAM SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order.

MR WALL: As I was saying, Madam Speaker, so long as the committees are nobbled, deadlocked or whichever word would appease the members opposite, we are going to have a structure that does not serve the community well, does not serve us as members in this place well and most certainly does not do justice to those that continue to give up their time and to contribute.

On the issue of regional development, I think the Chief Minister has set up this select committee purely to give herself the opportunity to get a pat on the back from her Labor colleagues to say that the job has been done well, and has been done well for the last 11 years—which we all know, in reality, is a furphy. This is something that has been left to deteriorate. Cross-government relations could be considerably stronger than they have been over the past decade. That is a point that the Canberra Liberals held strongly and it is an area in which the Canberra Liberals had a strong history of carrying things out well whilst we were in government.

On that issue, there is obviously a difference of opinion. For that reason, along party lines, this report was not able to be agreed on. In the almost 12 months since the committee was established, the number of instances in which the committee met does not quite do justice to the significance of the issue that we were called to review and to look into. I think that is something for future review.

Members opposite want to continue to blame us and the Canberra Liberals for breaking down the committee system. They need to look in the mirror and take a look at how they structure committees and how, in reality, they expect that to play out on a day-to-day basis. The sooner partisan politics is taken out of committee numbers and who sits on them, the sooner the committee system will return to its proper functioning, scrutinising element, putting forward some creative, collaborative ideas so that the community may be represented better.

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (10.13): Madam Speaker, it is very disappointing indeed that the select committee finds that it cannot present any other report except a special report, and therefore it cannot present recommendations. I am sure that you are aware that many submissions were received and many witnesses came before the committee, as has been mentioned by the chair of the committee, Ms Berry. As Ms Berry also mentioned, this included a very productive hearing that we held here in this chamber with all the councils of the region.

Obviously all those who submitted and appeared before us contributed and committed considerable time and effort in doing so. They provided much insight and useful

information, some of which Ms Berry has referred to. I would encourage everybody in this place to read the submissions in great detail. You have heard from the chair the long list of these witnesses and submissions.

Unfortunately, the committee finds itself with no substantive report now, no recommendations to the government. This was not for want of time. As is the usual form, the chair of the committee presented to the committee her comprehensive chair's report. It paid respect to those who had submitted and appeared before us. However, the two Liberal members of the committee did not wish to deal with this report and did not allow it to be considered. Mr Smyth tabled a report of his own, which was clearly political in nature. Ms Berry and I did not wish to consider this report by itself.

I moved that we consider the two reports together. After seeking advice and being assured that it was within the powers of the committee to do that, the committee voted on the question that both reports be considered together to see what we could agree with from both reports. Ms Berry and I were keen to do that, but the opposition knocked it on the head and did not even see their way clear to consider both reports together so that we could see what we did agree on.

Mr Smyth interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! You will have your opportunity to speak, Mr Smyth.

MS PORTER: We were unable to proceed from that point and so we had to do what we have done today.

It is very disappointing. Rather than us, the Labor members of the committee, being unwilling to deal with this, to go forward with a report, it is the two Liberal members of this committee who refused to cooperate even when they were given a really fantastic opportunity to do this with both reports being considered together. We would have been able to find a way forward, I am sure, because we are mature individuals—at least I thought so—and I would have thought that we all want the best for the ACT government, the city of the ACT, the city-state of the ACT and the region. We all want more cooperation across our borders. We all want to work together to promote this great city and this great region, to give us opportunity to maximise the benefits of working together. There are many benefits, as we heard throughout our hearings and from reading the submissions. There are a lot of benefits. We all know that.

I would like to congratulate Ms Berry on her chairmanship of the committee. I would like to very much thank Brian for his hard work. Unfortunately, it cannot be reflected by our presenting a substantive report; however, I would like to thank him very much. And obviously I thank the members of the committee, all the members of the committee, for attending the meetings and for asking insightful questions as we went along. However, it just seemed as though they were going through the motions, because in the end they did not really want to deal with the substantive chair's report. I am really very disappointed.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (10.18): It is quite interesting that the only argument that you have is to use words like “impossible to deal with the Liberals’ lack of maturity,” or their immaturity, when you cannot actually put a case about what happened. And when you cannot put the case, that makes the point that the four-member committees do not work. You can either stumble along and try and address the outcomes and come up with some sort of patched up system or you address the problem.

In my view, having been here from 1998 to 2012, when all of the committees operated on a three-member basis, normally with one Liberal, one Labor and one crossbencher, the committee system was very strong and produced outstanding reports about delivering better outcomes for the people of the ACT. Unfortunately, the committee system in this Assembly is about producing better outcomes and protecting the government, and that is the problem. We have all signed up to the Latimer House principles, and Latimer House says:

Parliamentary procedures should provide adequate mechanisms to enforce the accountability of the executive to Parliament.

But you cannot do that when half of the committee votes consistently in favour of the executive on party lines. These arrangements of two-all have brought party lines into the committee system—something that did not happen before. Further, the Latimer House principles state:

The establishment of scrutiny bodies and mechanisms to oversee Government, enhances public confidence in the integrity and acceptability of government’s activities. Independent bodies such as Public Accounts Committees ...

“Independent bodies”. It is not independent when, in effect, it is controlled or nobbled by the number of government members on the committee.

We can stumble along if you want—and it suits the government’s purpose, Madam Speaker, because they will not get reports that are critical of the government. What committees do when you oversight the executive is to call them to account and hopefully suggest ways of improving it. If you go back through all the committee reports, basically back to 1989, you will see that there were some interesting problems in 1992, just in bedding down the procedures of this place. But since 1995 the committee system in this place has performed very well. From 2004 to 2008, when the government had a majority, we still had a committee system that delivered because it was not nobbled. It is nobbled now, it is broken and it does deserve to be fixed.

Ms Berry makes the case simply by her words. What she has to say does show that it is broken. So we can try and fix it or we can just continue along and we get very low common denominator reports rather than the aspirational reports that the Assembly committees used to produce.

Goodness me, it is a political report! We are a bunch of politicians. Ms Porter laments that it is political. This is a house of politics; it is a parliament. That is what happens. Ms Porter has a different view of what occurred when she says that the Liberals

refused to work out this process where we might bring the two reports together. It was suggested that we might try that. Somebody said—I think it was Ms Porter—“Let’s start with the small report,” which was the alternative draft that I tabled, in accordance with the standing orders, and the Labor member said, “We can’t agree to anything in that.” Nothing, zero, blank, no. Nothing; absolutely nothing.

You bring that sort of attitude but then accuse this side of not being willing to work and establish a rapport. But your baseline is that you will not accept a single piece of criticism of the government that you are there protecting—and good luck, you are doing a good job. Well done; you are protecting the government and that is the outcome of having two members on the committee. But do not blame us and say we did not want to make it work.

We had a process. And you can ask questions: I think the committee sat for 11 months. I think we had 11 meetings. There are some big gaps where nothing happened. Indeed when I presented my draft report, the chair failed to adhere to the standing orders at that first meeting and put it to a vote. So it necessitated coming back to this place to extend the life of the committee because, in a way, the chair failed. The chair failed to adhere to the standing orders. There was a motion later on and we have now extended the inquiry into the standing orders.

When you have to start writing down the standing orders and the process in which you are going to operate, when you start to codify things like that, it means there is a problem. You have to ask yourself what has changed that would cause this problem, and what has changed is this government’s insistence that committees be two-all, which they started with the PAC committee. I note that today I did see an amendment to be moved by the Treasurer to make the estimates committee two-all as well. We all know the debacle that was last year’s estimates committee, when the government was embarrassed by the thought that there might not be an estimates committee report, and one of the government members actually abstained on the report. So the chair’s draft got up 2-1 and then, not having had the courage to vote it down, as he should have, the government members of the committee tabled something like 497 recommendations. Forty-two of them were repeats. They had plagiarised their own recommendations.

This is the farce that we have had. We know that Mr Gentleman had to go back to the planning committee; he did not get the approval of the committee to table the report because he did not make the final vote. As per the standard practice in this place, if you have been on committees, the chair says, “I move that the draft report, as amended, be agreed to.” Mr Gentleman did not do that because he knew his report would not have been agreed to.

We can waffle on all day about this and we can throw insults across the chamber, but at the end of the day the committee system is suffering from the government’s insistence that party lines be brought into the committee process so that we have two members from each side there. Let us face it: a lot of work goes through this place without contradiction or controversy. A lot of work goes through this place where we simply agree to bills and off they go, and most people do not know that. But if you stand up for what you believe in, suddenly you are immature. If that is the level of

debate that the chair can deliver, it simply shows that the system is broken or it is certainly stressed and quite damaged by the insistence.

Committees are set up to scrutinise the government. We all supposedly agree with the Latimer House principle that says you need a strong committee system and you need strong oversight bodies. But you will not let those oversight bodies operate in the manner which is intended.

Regional development is an important issue, and 12 years of neglect by this government should be brought to the attention of the public of the ACT and the region. We had procedures, organisations and processes in place to further regional development and from 2001 until now this government forgot about them. That is the shame of regional development; that is the shame that this government bears.

You can blame us all you want; go for your life. Indeed, Ms Porter, that is politics. But the reality is that you have created a situation in the committees which I think is tarnishing the reputation of this place. It is certainly stopping what were very good reports coming out of the committees. There is a simple way to fix it, which is to go back to the lines. Indeed if we read the standing orders they say that all parties in the Assembly can be represented on committees. If Mr Rattenbury, who is a minister, a private executive member and who has funding to be a crossbencher, is going to have those sorts of funding and staffing arrangements, perhaps he can fulfil his job and he can be the third member on these committees. I doubt that somehow. But there you go.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (10.27): I rise briefly to—

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the Chief Minister, not the conversation across the chamber.

MS GALLAGHER: express my disappointment at the inability of the committee to provide a report to the Assembly. I do think that, again, it reflects poorly on all of us that highly paid MLAs sitting on a committee for over 11 months failed to deliver a report of such importance to this community, particularly with the next couple of years that we face. The region provides the ACT community with great opportunities and we provide the region with good opportunities as well. This was an opportunity for four people, who our community expects to work hard, to sit together and deliver a report.

We have heard this morning speeches from the opposition seeking to blame and carry on about whatever political argument they want to run, and nothing about the region, other than that, yes, it is important and, yes, it is significant. Both Mr Wall and Mr Smyth said, “Yes, it is a significant issue. Yes, it is important. But do you know what? We don’t think it’s important enough actually to work out a report with recommendations that we can progress as an Assembly.” How embarrassing for this Assembly that that is the approach that you two are going to take—to thwart, to refuse to discuss, unless everyone agrees with you. If you do not agree with Brendan Smyth and Andrew Wall then there will be no report. How ridiculous.

I will have to go back to the mayors of the region, to SEROC, to the Cross-Border Commissioner, to everyone who has involved themselves in this committee, and say, “I’m sorry, after 11 months the committee was not able to resolve a report or any recommendations about the future.” We are not going to play this game anymore. I foreshadow that we will look at a procedural way of managing this—my colleague will speak to that—to make sure that you do not get away with the games that are being played on committees.

There are four-member committees. The community elected 8-8-1. That is the reality. So we will have to have four-member committees—two members from each side—and they are going to have to work through these issues. I see no reason why they cannot. There were four-member committees in this place for some time. They are not that unusual. But when you take the approach that you have taken from the beginning—and, let us be honest, the Canberra Liberals have taken the approach from the beginning of the term of this Assembly that you want to thwart, wreck, ruin, hold up and frustrate the committee system at any cost.

That is the approach you have taken. You have been quite up-front about it. I do not think you can sit there and shake your head and say you have not. I think you have been quite up-front that you do not want four-member committees and you are not going to allow them to work. That is the feedback that I am getting, that is the approach you are taking and it has been confirmed here today by the refusal and the inability of members of the committee to reach a compromise on an important report like that of the Select Committee on Regional Development.

Mr Smyth: Compromise means that you agree with the government.

MS GALLAGHER: No, it does not mean agree with the government. I listened to Ms Porter, and she proposed that both reports be considered together. So that does not seem to indicate to me a lack of willing to discuss, consult or compromise, and that motion was not supported. The view from the Canberra Liberals was that you could not support the discussing of two reports together. In my time in committees, that is exactly what happened. Someone would bring what they wanted to say to the table, there would be a chair’s report, and then you would negotiate through that and you would reach agreement on a final report. From what I understand from this morning’s speeches, that process was not allowed.

The ball lies firmly in the Canberra Liberals’ court. Some may ask what you are actually paid to do here. My guess is that non-executive members are remunerated to be members of this place and sit on committees, and you are sitting on committees and refusing to allow them essentially to function. You have to ask the question: what are you doing there? Not a lot, from what it seems.

We will move an amendment to this motion today to seek to have both reports tabled in this place, and we will continue to do that for every committee that finds itself unable to report. We will have a look at what you wanted to say, Mr Smyth, and we will have a look at what the chair’s report says, and then we will work our way through it and, from those reports, perhaps be able to make some recommendations for ourselves.

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) (10.32): Madam Speaker, I will move the amendment that has been circulated in my name. I would ask for your indulgence. It is entitled “Assembly Business Order of the Day No 1”. In fact it should be “Assembly Business Order of the Day No 2”.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes, that is one of the things that confused me. Thank you, Mr Corbell.

MR CORBELL: I move:

Add:

“and that the Committee Chair, before the Assembly rises today, table the Chair’s draft and the alternative draft that was considered by the Committee”.

I am moving this amendment today because it is important, given what we now know to be a deliberate political strategy on the part of those opposite, that we properly understand the context in which they are pursuing this within this committee and potentially in other committees. If they feel that they have so much constructive input to put in to Assembly inquiries, and that they are being denied the opportunity to have that voiced in the final committee report, let us see. Let us see what Mr Smyth and Mr Wall proposed to the committee, let us see what the chair proposed to the committee and let us make our own judgements about how the committees are operating.

In my time in this place it has been very clear to me that there have been many instances in the past where there have been four-member committees, and those committees have delivered conclusive reports—often with dissenting reports, but they have delivered conclusive reports.

What has changed, Madam Speaker? I will tell you what has changed. It is very clear that what has changed is that on that side of this chamber they are out to wreck the committee system. They are not interested, as the Chief Minister says, in doing their job. They are not interested in engaging in constructive discussion in committees. They just want to wreck the committee system.

Maybe that is to their benefit because then they have to do less work, and we know how notoriously lazy this Liberal opposition is. But it is time that we saw clearly—it is time that this Assembly saw clearly—exactly what work they are putting in, what they are suggesting and how the committee is dealing with those matters.

This resolution will allow the Assembly to make those judgements. It asks—indeed, it requires—the committee chair, before the Assembly ceases its sitting today, to table the draft report put forward by the chair of the committee and the alternative draft that was considered by the committee. In that way we can reach our own conclusions as to the veracity or otherwise of the claims being made on the other side of the chamber.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.36): It was not my intent to speak to this item today, but some pretty serious and baseless allegations have been raised by the government. I would agree that the committee system is not working well, and the question is why. We have attempted to make the committee system cooperative and effective. I spoke to the Clerk about this matter and I sought his advice. He provided me with advice on 23 May last year.

We had a debate about this very issue in the Assembly last year arising from that. In the advice that he gave me he discussed the Latimer House principles, the continuing resolution of this Assembly, which talk about the committee system. The advice that the Clerk gave me in quite some detail talked about the importance of the Latimer House principles, the continuing resolution of this Assembly, and the effect upon the committee system. The advice the Clerk gave me also referred to the historical precedent in this place when it comes to committees. Committees perform a number of roles in terms of their function of inquiry but, ultimately, the committee system is there as a scrutiny measure of government. We do not have an upper house and the committees provide a very important function of this place to make sure there is scrutiny of the executive.

The Clerk's advice goes into the Latimer House principles, the continuing resolution. The Clerk provides apolitical advice to me. He is someone whom I certainly respect and a person who has provided long and distinguished service to this place. He says at the conclusion of his advice:

The adoption of a committee system without non-government majorities is, in my opinion, a step away from the spirit of those principles.

That is the nub of this point. What the government have done in this place is lock up the committee system. It is a deliberate act with their colleague from the Greens to make sure that the committee system is unworkable. In addition to the fact that they only want to sit in this place for 39 days a year, they have made sure that the committee system cannot function the way that the Latimer House principles and the advice of the Clerk say that they should—and that is, to make sure that there is effective scrutiny of government.

What the government and the Greens have done, as the Clerk has advised, is a step away from the Latimer House principles. What we have seen in the conduct of those opposite on committees is essentially that they want to have committee reports that are a simple praise of the government and the way it is doing its business. When the opposition wants to raise matters of concern and suggests elements and reports which deviate away from government policy, those opposite will shut that down. Probably the clearest example of this would be the estimates report of last year, where there was no opposition majority. The two members of the government on that committee then had a report that had 500 recommendations in praise of the government, and most of those recommendations were “commend the government for this”, “commend the government for that”.

If we in this place are simply going to have committees that come up with reports commending the government for how wonderful Andrew Barr is and how wonderful Simon Corbell is, what is the point of that committee system? That is what they did. Now, 42 of those recommendations were actually copied and pasted—they were duplicates—so it was probably only 450 in reality.

I agree that the committee system is not working well, but let us not have this myth that this is a deliberate political ploy by the opposition. When you refer to the Latimer House principles, to the continuing resolution of this place, and to the Clerk's advice, he told us—and I have tabled that document I think here before—that to not have opposition majorities on those committees is a step away from the Latimer House principles.

And you lot do not care because what you want is a committee system that protects this government. You want a committee system that is muted, and that is what you have achieved. Well done; congratulations. You have done exactly what you set out to do, which is to make the committee system unworkable and something which does not scrutinise this government. That was your objective. You have achieved that and now what you are trying to do is spin it as somehow the opposition's fault.

There is a very easy solution to this. Let us do it. I have moved a motion in this place before to that effect. Let us listen to the Clerk's advice. Let us be consistent with the Latimer House principles and let us have opposition majorities on those committees. By having two opposition members and one government member, that would allow the backbench of the Labor Party—which I appreciate has got a lot on, particularly with the appointment of a sixth minister that is pending—to actually spend more time on the detailed work on the fewer committees that they would then sit on. And then judge how we do that job. If you think that we are just playing rank politics with the majority committees and you say that, that is fine. I think that the onus would be on us to make sure that the committee reports that we have provided are balanced but, importantly, consistent with the Latimer House principles and are a genuine critique of government policy and government programs.

That is a way forward that I have tried to achieve in this place before. I think that is reasonable, in accordance with the Latimer House principles, which is a continuing resolution, and in accordance with the Clerk's advice. Let us not have any of this nonsense from the government and the Greens about how the Liberals are dragging the committee system down when it is the government and the Greens that set up an unworkable system deliberately to make sure that scrutiny of the government was avoided.

We are going to have a lot more of these debates in this place, I am sure. There is a way forward that we have proposed that is a workable way forward. I do not want to hear those opposite trying to create a fiction that this is the opposition's fault. Go back to the origins, the substance of the debate. Go back to the way the system is meant to work. Go back to the Latimer House principles. There is a way forward. Enough of this muckraking, enough of this nonsense, enough of the allegations that you are making about my members who are doing a bloody good job on committees to get this wrapped up.

MADAM SEPAKER: Order, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: I withdraw.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella) (10.43): Firstly, I would like to congratulate Ms Berry and all of the committee members for the work that they have done during this time. It has been quite a lot of work. I really hope that Ms Berry's recommendations and her comments today are recognised. We have heard today from the opposition the excuse that the committees are not working because they are four-member committees. Mr Smyth gave us a little bit of history about the make-up of committees and went back a couple of years.

I think it is worth while looking at the history of the committee system. If you look most recently at this Assembly you find that four-member committees, on certain committees, are working quite well. The A&P committee is working quite well. The JACS committee and the scrutiny committee are working quite well. They report quite regularly. Contrary to what Mr Doszpot said about scrutiny of government, the scrutiny committee regularly scrutinises government in its reports and we work very well on that committee.

Back to the history, though, if we look at previous Assemblies, the A&P committees have mostly been four-member committees. We have had some five-member committees on A&P. In the Fifth Assembly, A&P committee members were Wayne Berry, Roslyn Dundas, Vicki Dunne and John Hargreaves. The community services and social equity committee had four members: John Hargreaves, Roslyn Dundas, Helen Cross and Greg Cornwell. The planning committee had four members: Roslyn Dundas, John Hargreaves, you, Madam Speaker, and Helen Cross.

In the Fourth Assembly, the Standing Committee on Health and Community Care was Bill Wood, Mr Rugendyke, Jacqui Burke and Harold Hird. In that Fourth Assembly again, the Standing Committee on Education, Community Services and Recreation was Ms Tucker, Mr Berry, Jacqui Burke and Harold Hird. The Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety was Paul Osborne, John Hargreaves, Trevor Kaine and Harold Hird. Admin and procedure was Mr Berry, Mr Hird, Mr Moore and Ms Tucker.

In the Third Assembly, PAC had six members. Estimates 1993-94 had four members. In the Second Assembly, A&P had four members. The legal affairs committee had four members. Planning, development and infrastructure had five members. The social policy committee had six members and PAC had five. In the First Assembly, interestingly, A&P had four members. In one report they had inquiring into the structure of the committee system, they made a recommendation that the conservation, heritage and environment committee be increased to four members.

So the history is that four-member committees have worked quite well. They continue to do so in this Assembly on several of the committees. I think that it is a sad case that this particular committee has not been able to report.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (10.46): In speaking to the amendment, I think it is important that people know the true story of the committees. I refer to the advice of the Clerk. I will quote the Clerk, and this has been tabled:

An analysis of all general purpose committees established since self government in 1989 reveals that there have been relatively few four member committees. As stated above the most common practice has been for 3 member committees. Prior to the 8th Assembly there have been only four 4 member committees established—the Planning committee in the 3rd Assembly, the Justice and Community Safety Committee in the 4th Assembly and the Community Services and Planning Committees in the 5th Assembly. The reasons for appointing 4 member committees in all of these instances was to accommodate extra cross bench members (Mrs Cross in the 5th Assembly, Mr Kaine in the 4th Assembly and Mr Moore and Ms Horodny in the 3rd Assembly).

That is the point. They were not dominated by any political party. Let us face it: if the government have two members on a committee, they can control what that committee does by voting in the negative to anything that the government do not want.

I think the point that Mr Duncan makes as Clerk in his advice is that it is about non-government control of the committees, because if you have non-government control then you can have oversight. If the government has control or the balance of power then, of course, it will use that to protect the government. That should not be what the committee is about.

There is the official record: relatively few four-member committees. When they were established in the past it was to accommodate an extra crossbencher. We have had ministers on committees before. The standing orders actually say that representatives of each party should be on a committee. Mr Rattenbury gets extra funding so that he can perform a crossbench function when it suits him. But the problem here is that Ms Gallagher's new era of openness and accountability is not so open and is far less accountable when you have committees that divide on party political lines, and that happens when you have got two government members and two opposition members.

Again, Ms Gallagher very kindly makes my case for me. Instead of fixing the problem, she is going to have "a procedural way to manage this". The government will now manage the committee system because they have got the numbers in this place. There you have it. In direct violation of the Latimer House principles, the government are now going to manage the process. There you go.

It is interesting that Mick, in his bid to show how onside he was and his qualifications to be a minister, told the truth. He said, "There has been a lot of work done by members of the committee." Thank you, Mr Gentleman. I acknowledge your praise of all the committee members who did their work. It is interesting when you look at what the Chief Minister said, that somehow we are lazy. Well, we actually produced an alternative report. You might not like the report.

Ms Gallagher: Table it so we can see how hard you work.

MR SMYTH: Well, you are about to move a motion to table it. Go for your life. I don't mind. I stand by everything I wrote.

MADAM SPEAKER: It is not a conversation; it is a debate.

MR SMYTH: I apologise, Madam Speaker. The issue is that, because of the nature of the committees that the government have set up, they have used their numbers, in conjunction with Mr Rattenbury, who has abandoned the Latimer House principles. The Greens were very keen on Latimer House when they were not in government. Now that they are in government they are not so keen on the scrutiny mechanisms that Latimer House says that parliaments should have to scrutinise the executive. So there is a lesson for everybody.

At the end of the day, the committee system is now being managed by the government. Out of the Chief Minister's own mouth: "We will determine a procedural way to manage this." There you have it. That is the total undermining of the committee system in this place. If you go back over time, people like Kerrie Tucker, Michael Moore and others used to say the committee system was the gem of this place because people came together and worked together. What has changed is the government's insistence of having an insurance policy on all committees of two members so that anything critical of the government will not go ahead.

I am happy to table my report. When the chair tables it later I will stand and speak to it. There were a lot of good things in my report as well to hold the government to account. But when we offered the Labor members on the committee the opportunity to go through ours paragraph by paragraph, they said, "We don't agree with anything you say."

There is the nub. If you have got four, it breaks down to two-two and nothing will happen. Your era of openness and accountability is now down to, "We'll use our numbers to determine a procedural way to manage this." The demise of the committee system is encapsulated in those words from the Chief Minister. They will simply use their numbers on every occasion to get the outcome they want.

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) (10.51): I will be supporting the amendment because I think it goes to the very issue that is getting some airing here today. There is no reason why these committees cannot present reports to this Assembly. The fact that this has not happened on this occasion is a poor reflection. I am incredulous that these committees cannot work together to develop a report they can agree on.

Clearly there are going to be differences on some of the content, but Ms Berry indicated the number of witnesses that had come before the committee, a very broad spectrum of witnesses. I think it would have been a very interesting set of hearings. Surely the four members of that committee could have found some area that they agreed on. I do not understand why this place is not working to bring these reports

back and say, “Look, we heard all of this stuff, these are the areas we agree on,” and then, if they want to go along those lines, Mr Smyth would make some dissenting or additional comments, and perhaps Ms Berry would have done the same. Then we would have the benefit of the collective views of the Assembly. If they want to put additional views, so be it. That goes to the heart of all of the bluster we have heard this morning about the fact that this is some attempt to undermine the committee system. I simply do not share that view.

I come from a party that values consensus and is able to work through things in a way that is about collaboration and getting good outcomes. It is embedded in our DNA that that is the way we get on and get things done. There is no reason why the committees in this place cannot do the same thing, unless there are members who are determined to prove that it cannot work. I suspect that is probably the case here. They are so determined to prove that it cannot work that they will not let it work. That is what is going on here. There is no reason why these committees cannot produce reports and then have additional or extra comments or dissenting comments, whatever form they end up being.

The Administration and Procedure Committee is going to need to do some work. The fact that we are getting deadlocks and members not even having the capability and the wherewithal to work together to produce some common ground reflects very poorly on the contribution of members that are creating those deadlocks.

I will be supporting Mr Corbell’s amendment today because it will bring forward the work that has been done. Frankly, this should not have needed to be brought to the Assembly. The committees should have been able to say, “Look, we’ve got these extra bits of material that we each want to add and we’ll table all of it”. We are able to resolve this this morning, and I will be supporting Mr Corbell’s amendment.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (10.55): I will speak to the amendment and close the debate. I am disappointed that Mr Smyth has said just now that he is very happy to table his report. When the suggestion was made in the committee that perhaps we could consider both documents together and a motion was moved, he voted it down. Yet here he is today saying, “No, it’s all right, I want everybody to see what I have been doing.” But he could not work on it in the committee.

Mr Smyth: You refused to agree with anything in our report.

MS BERRY: I will talk to that, Madam Speaker. Mr Smyth accused me of failing in my chairing of that committee. He presented a document, and I thought the best course of action to allow the committee to consider that document was to adjourn to give people time to consider a document tabled at a meeting of the committee. I do not think that was failing in my position as the chair. I think it was a very sensible decision to give people an opportunity to go through that document and give it special consideration. That is what committees are there for.

I did not fail; I think I did the right thing. We went away, we considered the document, we came back, but other people on the committee could not come to an agreement. We got the advice that said that we could work together, except that two of the committee members from that side of the chamber just could not come to the party.

It is disappointing to hear Mr Smyth make dismissive comments about all of those submissions from all of those witnesses—“Oh, yeah, just read the transcripts. They’re not really that important. Just go to the web page and have a read of them. We don’t need to put them in a report.” It is shameful, mean and nasty Liberal Party representation on those committees.

I cannot believe you cannot actually reach some sort of agreement, some sort of compromise or consensus, as Mr Rattenbury has suggested. I have come from an environment where I have had to negotiate under some pretty extraordinarily difficult circumstances with meaner and nastier people than even you, Mr Smyth, and I have been able to reach an agreement—

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Berry, would you like to withdraw that?

MS BERRY: Yes, I withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS BERRY: I will take people for a moment to comments of the Liberal Party members on the submissions that were made during the committee hearings. We had five cents worth from Mr Wall on the actual submissions and we had pretty much nothing from Mr Smyth. Those Liberal Party members might want to consider writing an apology to each and every single person who appeared before that committee and spent all of their time coming in here and talking about things that were important to them and their communities as part of this region. Next time you go down to the coast you might want to put a black mark on your cars so people can identify you as the people on the committee who do not care about our region because you could not come to an agreement about reporting on moving this region forward, having a plan and having an idea that actually makes a difference to people.

It is shameful behaviour and I am absolutely disgusted that we could not reach an agreement. It is clear that by hiding behind the politics of committees the Liberals have absolutely no plans for this region and no plans for the city.

I am considering reading that list again so that you can write down the names of all the people you should apologise to for being so dismissive and so disrespectful. It is outrageous behaviour and I am absolutely disgusted that you could not come to agreement on the regional development committee. It was not even an annual reports hearing. It was a committee outside of the government’s annual reports hearings.

Mr Smyth, you are always so proud of talking about, “That time at band camp when Kate Carnell and I ...” Band camp is finished; we have moved on from there and it is time to develop a plan that actually works for this region and works for this city.

I was very happy to hear, Chief Minister, how happy the mayors of the region were to have the ACT government as a member of SEROC and have the ACT government represented in the region. They were very happy that you were—

Mr Wall: Point of order.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seat, please, Ms Berry. Stop the clock, please.

Mr Wall: Can you please remind the member that all comments need to be directed through the chair and not to other members in this place?

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ms Berry, I remind you that all your comments must directed through the chair.

MS BERRY: Thanks for that reminder. I must be learning some bad habits from those opposite.

I am looking forward to talking to the documents that will be tabled as a result of this amendment to the motion later today. It will be wonderful to hear the “no plan” the Liberals have for the ACT and for the region and of all the fantastic work the submitters and witnesses contributed to the regional development committee hearings. I keep using the words “dismissive” and “disrespectful”, because that is exactly what it is. Yet again the Liberals have shown that they do not have a plan and they do not care.

They were really lazy about the time they spent on the committee—playing politics, not paying attention to what people were saying when coming up with ideas about what we can do for this city and this region. They did not want to play a part in it and I find that disappointing. I support the amendment, and I commend the amendment and the motion to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement— development Ministerial statement

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) (11.03), by leave: I present a copy of the following paper:

Development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement—
Ministerial statement, 27 February 2014.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

At a meeting between cabinet and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body on 18 June 2013, it was agreed that the ACT government would develop a whole-of-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement in partnership with the elected body. Thus, in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Canberra, I am today announcing that the ACT government will develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement, and formally launch the consultation phase of this important work.

The ACT is often acknowledged by other jurisdictions as having innovative and adaptive policy and programs. We, in the Assembly, have a level of access to our community that many of the larger states do not, which allows for more meaningful communication and collaboration with our community stakeholders. This applies to all areas of government.

One example of this is the relationship we have with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. The elected body was created under unique legislation in 2008, and has been a key source of advice and guidance since that time. In my role as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, I have personally had the benefit of the elected body's frank and forthright advice in advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans, and their considerable expertise in a range of policy areas. I would like today to thank them again for their insight, honesty and commitment.

The elected body have in recent times asked the ACT government to better articulate how it will progress equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT, to ensure that service delivery agencies have effective strategies in place to achieve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes and meet their needs. Further, there have been calls for increased performance measurement mechanisms for programs and delivery of services to gauge and improve outcomes.

The ACT is a unique territory and we need unique responses to the issues that we face. While on many indicators the ACT is an enviable place to live, many areas of disadvantage and vulnerabilities can only ever truly be resolved with a whole-of-government, whole-of-community response.

The whole-of-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement will be a high-level document that will incorporate a number of the deliverables outlined in relevant ACT plans and strategies, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice agreement, the proposed human services blueprint and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tobacco control strategy for 2010-14.

For this agreement to enhance and support the positive strategies already underway in the ACT, it will focus on a limited number of actions; include clearly identifying directorates' deliverables; and provide shorter term targets to support delivery of objectives and maintain engagement with the community. It will be what I consider a living document in that it will utilise the ongoing commitment from all parties to stay relevant, strong and meaningful, and, I hope, become a benchmark for future directorate strategies.

The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will be responsible for developing the agreement. The office, in collaboration with the elected body, will undertake an intensive consultation process with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, directorates and relevant service providers, to identify the key focus areas for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the agreement. The consultation process for the agreement will include online surveying, targeted roundtables and community forums.

In keeping with the COAG closing the gap targets, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement will articulate how the ACT government will work towards equitable outcomes for members of local ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through improving the capacity of service delivery by ACT government agencies.

In line with the ACT social compact, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement shares the long-term vision of an inclusive community that enables all people to participate and lead purposeful lives—a community where all people will have opportunities to achieve economic security, social relationships, quality of life and a healthy environment.

The agreement will also be developed in line with the human services blueprint project, and reaffirm the ACT government's commitment to ensuring that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans are able to access the right services at the right time.

The agreement will set out the ACT government's commitment to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans to improve how we deliver health, housing, economic and social services. It will provide a framework for relations between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the ACT government by articulating the principles of good communication and partnership.

The elected body have asked the government to consider how the recognition of the distinctive rights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold as the original peoples of this land will be captured in this agreement. These considerations will include: the right to a distinct status and culture, which helps maintain and strengthen the identity and spiritual and cultural practices of Indigenous communities; and the right to self-determination, which is a process where Indigenous communities take control of their future and decide how they will address the issues facing them.

I would like to acknowledge the considerable work to date that the ACT government has undertaken in this regard, with projects such as the Aboriginal justice agreement and many others. The justice agreement represents the strong commitment of this government to collaboration and community engagement, and provides ongoing guidance to a range of agencies.

These works are the foundation stones of the agreement and will continue to support and enhance our combined policy goals for the years to come. The whole-of-government agreement will build on these successes, and provide a more focused and tangible approach for the government and community to use in future negotiations.

Following outcomes of the consultation process, the agreement will be considered by government in the second half of this year. I encourage all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans to share both their personal views and professional opinions so that we can build an agreement that reflects the issues faced by our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and start to build a road map that will meet the needs of our community members into the future.

Further information on the consultation process for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement can be accessed through the Community Services Directorate website.

I look forward to presenting the Legislative Assembly with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement later in the year that delivers community solutions that will help build a more just and fulfilling future for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Bill 2014

Mr Barr, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Community Services) (11.11): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Bill 2014. This bill will implement a statutory indemnity insurance scheme to respond to the treatment and care needs of persons catastrophically injured in a motor accident in the ACT. Establishing this scheme will meet the ACT's commitment to introduce a national injury insurance scheme to provide no-fault coverage for those catastrophically injured in a motor accident by 1 July 2014. Commencement of this scheme will coincide with the rollout of the national disability insurance scheme in the ACT.

Currently, only those who are able to establish that someone else was at fault in a motor accident have access to compensation under the ACT's compulsory third-party insurance scheme. This leaves injured persons who are unable to prove someone else was at fault to navigate the health system as best they can, often relying on the support of their families and friends. This may be a person who is considered to be at fault, or someone who was involved in a single-vehicle accident, or even in a blameless accident. A no-fault scheme to deal with the most serious of injuries recognises that the causes of accidents are often complex and numerous.

This scheme will reduce the stress of litigation on those who are catastrophically injured. As a no-fault scheme, it will be the first time the government has been able to offer equal access to a scheme that provides those catastrophically injured in a motor accident on ACT roads with the certainty that their treatment and care needs will be met. Specifically, under part 6 of the bill, this scheme will ensure that participants are able to receive their reasonable and necessary treatment and care needs for the whole of their life. Under this bill, a person catastrophically injured in a motor accident will have the benefit of targeted and specialised treatment, regardless of fault.

This bill will bring the ACT into line with other jurisdictions by offering a modern approach to the fundamental needs of those catastrophically injured, as has been in place in New South Wales and in Victoria for more than seven years.

By contrast, under the existing CTP environment, where the lump sum award or settlement is made in a CTP claim, there is no certainty that the lump sum will last the rest of a catastrophically injured person's life or that they do in fact receive the treatment and care that they need. The focus of the new scheme is to provide participants with certainty over their treatment and care that will give them, and their families, the opportunity to participate in society as far as possible.

The lifetime care and support scheme to be established under the bill will apply to all catastrophic motor accident injuries that occur in the ACT from 1 July 2014 and involve at least one registrable motor vehicle. As such, it will cover pedestrians, cyclists, motorbikes and motor vehicles so long as there is at least one registrable vehicle involved in the accident. The categories of catastrophic injuries that the scheme will apply to are spinal cord injuries, moderate to severe brain injury, amputations, severe burns or permanent blindness.

Based on actuarial estimates to date, it is expected that there will be between three and six participants entering the scheme per year. However, this will fluctuate from year to year given our small population and the small numbers involved. Based on the average number of participants, this would equate to an estimated annual premium of \$34. The premium is defined as the lifetime care and support scheme levy under the bill and will be set by the ACT lifetime care and support commissioner. The levy will be paid by motorists on motor vehicle registrations and will apply to periods of registration that commence on 1 July 2014.

This scheme will provide the same entitlements that are offered in New South Wales. This means that from 1 July 2014 persons who suffer a catastrophic motor accident injury in the ACT will be offered the same treatment and care as they would have had the accident occurred just across the border in New South Wales.

I commend this important bill to the Assembly.

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

Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Amendment Bill 2014

Mr Corbell, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement, a Human Rights Act compatibility statement and the following papers:

ACT Solar Auction Review—

Summary Report—ACT Government, Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, dated October 2013—Prepared by Sinclair Knight Merz.

Government response.

Title read by Clerk.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (11.17): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Prior to the last election in 2012, the ACT government took to the community a comprehensive plan for tackling greenhouse gas emissions—climate change action plan 2, or AP2 as it is commonly called. The plan built on previous strategies and plans implemented by the government. It incorporates comprehensive economic and financial modelling and technology assessment as well as an extensive program of community consultation undertaken throughout 2011 and 2012.

Since its re-election the government has been steadily and systematically implementing AP2. With the introduction today of the Electricity Feed-In (Large-Scale Renewable Energy Generation) Amendment Bill, the government takes another important step forward in this process.

Our emission reduction targets, while nation-leading, have a firm scientific and economic footing. AP2 will allow us to deliver on our targets, enabled by Canberra's dynamic business and research sectors and a proud, supportive and forward-looking community.

With the release of AP2, the government established a pathway to meet our emission reduction targets based on a clear strategy of investment in renewables. In November 2013, the government gave further effect to this strategy through the formal establishment of a 90 per cent renewable energy target under the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010.

Today the government proposes the extension of the capacity of the Electricity Feed-in (Large-Scale Renewable Energy Generation) Act to provide the policy mechanism through which this target can be achieved.

It is no secret that climate change has become a contested political space. Those that advocate recognition of the strong and compelling scientific evidence on climate change are pitted, in the media, against counterclaims by interest groups using pseudo-scientific analysis, often funded by vested commercial interests. Those that advocate action on climate change have to face down opportunistic do-nothing opponents that are focused on the short-term costs while playing down the long-term strong economic, scientific and moral basis for action. Regrettably, in Australia, this has been made manifest in policies such as winding back of carbon pricing and threats to the once bipartisan support for a national renewable energy target.

But if the challenge of climate change is too pressing to ignore, the opportunity for our city is all the greater. Cities that lead in growth areas such as renewables will be rewarded by history, as were those that led the information technology revolution over the second half of the last century. Canberra can be one of these cities. Our vibrant knowledge economy is already engaged globally in renewable energy research and development with local businesses and research institutions delivering world-leading innovation.

The commitment of the Canberra community to action on climate change is reflected in recent survey results undertaken by the government that show over three-quarters of residents surveyed believe the ACT government must take urgent action on climate change. Over 80 per cent want the ACT government to take a strong leadership role. Ninety-three per cent supported the government's plans to demonstrate and promote new energy technologies such as renewables.

This is the same positive response that was expressed by our community through consultations on draft action plan 2. Through that process our community overwhelmingly supported the territory becoming a national leader in renewable energy investment. This is because the community understands that with around 62 per cent of the territory's emissions coming from the burning of fossil fuels for electricity generation, renewable energy provides a clean, viable and essential alternative.

Our leading businesses and world-class research institutions recognise that if we can position ourselves as an innovator in renewable energy development and investment the rewards can be enormous. Global investment in renewables is estimated at around \$7 trillion over the next 20 years. With smart policy design, Canberra can secure its slice of this renewable energy revolution, diversifying and strengthening our economy and creating clean growth and clean new jobs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you will be aware that the first release of capacity under the Electricity Feed-in (Large-Scale Renewable Energy Generation) Amendment Act resulted in the solar auction process which ran from early 2012 to mid-2013. As a result of this process the territory is providing feed-in tariff support to three solar farm projects totalling 40 megawatts of generating capacity.

The Royalla solar farm is already well into construction in Canberra's south and it will be, when completed in the coming months, Australia's largest operational

photovoltaic solar farm to date. Two other farms, with a further 20 megawatts of combined capacity, will, subject to development approval, be completed by mid next year.

These solar facilities will produce enough green power to supply around 10,000 Canberra homes, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 1.4 million tonnes over their operational 20 years. Having three of the largest solar power facilities in Australia is underpinning Canberra's emergence as an internationally recognised renewable energy innovation and investment hub.

The solar auction process was effective in delivering solar power at the lowest possible cost. Costs to households are expected to peak in 2016 at around 45c per week and decline to around 27c per week. This decline will continue over time.

Today I am pleased to table, as promised and in accordance with section 22(1) of the act, a review of the solar auction process and the government's response to the recommendations of the review. The review was undertaken independent of government by Sinclair Knight Merz, a national consultancy with specific expertise in energy policy development and review. For the benefit of members, I am pleased to report that the key findings of the review endorsed the solar auction policy design and its applicability to the achievement of the territory's future investments in large-scale renewable energy.

The solar auction and the design of the supporting legislation are pioneering bodies of work. They overcome many of the pitfalls of other renewable energy support policies implemented in Australia over the past decade. The auction delivered superior outcomes with regard to efficiency, risk assignment and, importantly, delivering large-scale solar energy investments at the lowest possible cost to consumers.

Building on the strengths of the auction, the review identified a number of process improvements and legislation changes that the government is accommodating, as appropriate, in this bill. The bill that I introduce today implements changes to the act recommended by the review and other improvements identified by the government through the solar auction process.

Recognising the strong endorsement of the territory's legislated feed-in tariff policy mechanism and reverse auction process by the independent solar auction review, the government, through this bill, proposes to extend the capacity of the act for renewable energy generation from 210 to 550 megawatts.

This increase will allow the government to continue its program of investment and enable the full achievement of the ACT's renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction targets. Approximately 490 megawatts of large-scale capacity is expected to be deployed between now and 2020 to reach these targets. This investment program continues to be progressed within the framework set out in our climate change strategy, AP2.

The government's first priority is investment in energy efficiency which can deliver both abatement and substantial costs savings to Canberra homes and businesses. A

blend of renewable energy generation sources will be pursued towards a 90 per cent renewable energy target with the majority of this being wind power outside the ACT as the lowest cost form of generation currently available. The government will ensure that this results in additional renewable energy generation above and beyond the national renewable energy targets.

Due to demonstrated industry cost reductions and changing market conditions, the cost of achieving the 90 per cent renewable energy target is now estimated to peak in 2020, six years from now, at around \$4 a week for the average Canberra household. That is, about the price of a cup of coffee a week for more than halving our greenhouse gas emissions from current levels and transitioning to cleaner electricity generation sources. These costs would be reduced by the presence of a price on carbon.

In recognition of the significant local economic benefits associated with renewable energy development, AP2 foreshadowed that a priority order for investment would be adopted by the government that would preference local investment over more remote generation developments. However, it is important to also recognise that we exist within an interconnected national electricity supply system. The territory does not have a monopoly on sunshine or wind and while we have access to exceptional solar and wind resources in our region, in some cases there are even better resources further afield.

Creating a geographically broad-based competition under future renewable energy auction processes can benefit the territory through reduced costs and greater innovation. Importantly, this does not have to be at the expense of local economic development benefits and returns to local businesses. Local jobs can still be created through design, IT and other corporate functions, warehousing and logistics and through returns on locally developed intellectual property that can be managed at a distance from the actual generating site.

The bill amends the act to provide for this broader competition while ensuring that local economic development benefits are maximised. This is achieved by requiring that, before a generator located outside the Australian capital region can be granted a feed-in tariff entitlement, the responsible minister must be satisfied that its proposal offers both exceptional economic development benefits to ACT renewable energy industries and minimises costs to the territory's electricity consumers. This ensures that investing further afield will not be at the expense of local jobs.

Further, it is proposed that in future capacity releases all proposals must compete on the basis of the returns they can provide to local industry. This may be in the form of using local contractors, setting up local offices or investing in research partnerships in our academic research institutions or in our trades training capacity.

Mindful of the potential impact and benefits for local communities, the government proposes that all future proposals will be asked to demonstrate effective community engagement processes and outcomes drawing on best practice models from around Australia and the world.

The amendment bill moved by the government today is part of an integrated strategy to meet the challenge presented by climate change by deeply cutting the territory's greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with our legislated targets. The government's comprehensive economic modelling demonstrates that its greenhouse gas reduction targets are achievable and that its strategy is affordable.

The government's core policy mechanism, using a feed-in tariff and reverse auction process, has been independently reviewed and found to be effective at delivering renewables at the lowest possible cost. We will extend this mechanism to future capacity releases while maximising local economic development benefits and community engagement outcomes.

With the solar auction complete, and with Australia's largest solar farm under construction, the ACT government has demonstrated how smart policies can deliver nation-leading outcomes. With the amendment bill introduced today, our community can slash our greenhouse gas emissions while positioning our economy to benefit from a global renewable energy revolution, as an internationally recognised centre for renewable energy innovation and investment. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lawder**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Rail Safety National Law (ACT) Bill 2014

Mr Corbell, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (11.33): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the Rail Safety National Law (ACT) Bill 2014 into the Assembly today. The bill, which provides for the adoption of a rail safety national law in the ACT, introduces a legislative framework for rail safety which does not exist in the ACT at present. Until the introduction of an interstate standard rail track gauge across Australia, rail operators working across multiple jurisdictions were faced with having to deal with as many as three different rail track gauges. The lack of uniformity in the gauges added greatly to the complexity and cost of rail operations. Rail regulation has a similar history with all jurisdictions regulating their railways differently.

The national partnership agreement to deliver a seamless national economy identified rail safety regulation as a competition reform priority. The commonwealth and the states and territories recognised that they had a mutual interest in improving outcomes in rail safety regulation and investigation and have worked together to achieve this

outcome. In December 2009 COAG agreed to the implementation of a national rail safety regulator which would administer the rail safety national law.

Both the national law and the regulator are hosted by South Australia. The national law was passed by the South Australian Legislative Council in May 2012, enabling the states and territories to apply, or reference, the law in their jurisdiction. The regulator, while based in Adelaide, will have branch offices in each of the states and territories that had rail regulators before January 2013.

Regulating the ACT's small amount of rail operations will be done by the regulator's Adelaide office. In practical terms, a single national rail safety regulator will cut red tape by providing the rail industry with a consistent and reliable co-regulatory approach by enabling those rail operators who work across multiple jurisdictions to have one national accreditation certificate instead of having to apply for accreditation in each jurisdiction in which they operate. In addition, one set of rules will apply to an operator's safety management systems and operators will need to respond to one regulator rather than multiple regulators.

The national law, which is applied by the bill, establishes the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator and the responsibilities and obligations of all persons undertaking work that affects or could affect rail safety in Australia. Key features of the national law include: general duties that apply to responsible parties along with the statutory recognition of shared responsibility for rail safety; risk management criteria based on the requirement to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that rail operations are safe; detailed requirements for the development and contents of safety management systems; clear criteria for the accreditation of rail infrastructure managers and rolling stock operators, and the registration of managers of private sidings; requirements for consultation and communication, particularly when planning a change to railways operations; specific duties on other parties to protect safety of railway operations, including those performing works on or near rail infrastructure and parties loading and unloading rolling stock; a hierarchy of sanctions and penalties where breaches of rail safety requirements occur; and requirements for the contents and accessibility of the national rail safety register to be maintained by the regulator.

While the national law applies to the entire rail sector, including freight and passenger rail, it does not apply to some classes of railways. The national law clarifies the railways to which it does not apply. Examples include non-moving displays and some amusement railways; a railway used only to guide a crane; a railway used only by a horse-drawn tram; and a railway that is privately owned and operated as a hobby on private property and which does not cross a public road and to which the public has no access.

Railways with a track gauge of less than 600 millimetres also do not fall within the scope of the national law. In the ACT, the Kingston miniature railway which is run by the Canberra Society of Model and Experimental Engineers and the privately owned and operated Weston Park railway do not fall within the scope of the national law. However, the Australian Railway Historical Society, which is the sole ACT-based rail operator running rail operations out of Canberra into New South Wales, and NSW Trains, which provides commercial rail passenger services between Canberra and Sydney, are impacted by the national law.

The Australian Railway Historical Society has written to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate expressing its strong support for the national law and desire for the ACT government to adopt the legislation. The society holds accreditation under the national law for its operations in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. When the national law is implemented in the ACT, the regulator will vary the society's existing New South Wales rail safety accreditation to cover its ACT operation. Similarly, NSW Trains will have its accreditation varied to include its operation in the ACT.

The national law is intended as a model for the safety regulation for rail systems operating on railway track with a gauge of 600 millimetres or more, together with their rail infrastructure and rolling stock. Such rail operations include heavy rail, light rail, monorail and trams. Notwithstanding this, the national law provides that jurisdictions may prescribe that the national law does not apply to a railway or railway of a certain class.

For example, Victoria has prescribed that tramways or light railways are not subject to the national law, whereas New South Wales has determined that the Lake Macquarie light rail and a number of heritage rail operations—for example, the Illawarra Light Railway Museum Society Ltd—are subject to the national law. In regard to capital metro light rail, the government will consider whether to apply the national law to light rail in the ACT.

Regardless of which of these options is adopted for the ACT, part 17 of the Australian road rules makes provision in relation to drivers operating trams on road. These laws would apply to any light rail operation established in the ACT. In addition, a number of other rules in other parts of the Australian road rules also refer to, or apply to, trams or tramways.

As the proposed legislation is part of a national scheme, commitments made by states and territories through the intergovernmental agreement on rail safety regulation and investigation reform are for essentially uniform application of the national law as legislated by South Australia. To ensure that the national law scheme operates consistently across participating jurisdictions, a number of jurisdictional laws are excluded from applying to the regulator.

The local application provisions of the bill set out which ACT laws will not apply. These include acts dealing with the interpretation of acts, financial matters, freedom of information, the role of the Ombudsman and matters relating to the employment of public servants. Instead, provisions are included in the national law to deal with each of these matters. This approach means that the same law applies in relation to each jurisdiction that adopts the national law.

The bill also includes provisions to make necessary adjustments to existing ACT law to ensure that the regulator is effectively integrated, including amending, omitting, repealing or disapplying local laws that are inconsistent with the uniform operation of the national law or that would interfere with the efficient operations of the regulator in the ACT. Consistent with this approach, the following territory laws do not apply to

the regulator: the Annual Reports Act, the Auditor-General Act, the Criminal Code, the Financial Management Act 1996, the Freedom of Information Act, the Government Procurement Act, the Public Interest Disclosure Act, the Public Sector Management Act and the Territory Records Act.

The national law does not contain or apply a privacy law regime. South Australia does not have its own privacy legislation. Accordingly, the commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, which currently applies in the ACT, will apply to the regulator when exercising functions under this law in the ACT. The national law provides for the role of a responsible minister for a participating jurisdiction. Collectively, the Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure, or SCOTI as it is known, represents the body of responsible ministers who will discharge functions and responsibilities prescribed in the national law for the oversight of the regulator.

The head of power enabling the regulator to test rail safety workers for the presence of a drug or alcohol is set out in part 3 division 9 of the national law while details as to the procedures to be followed for drug and alcohol testing are included in the application provisions of each of the participating jurisdictions so as to allow for local variations.

Such variations include approval of alcohol and drug testing equipment used in the ACT by our police or hospitals; appointment of authorised persons to conduct the tests; local processes relating to breath, blood and oral fluid sampling; evidentiary procedures; and so on. This flexibility enables the existing alcohol and drug testing processes that apply under the Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act for drivers and driver trainers to be used when rail safety workers are tested. This approach will allow the existing expertise and equipment that is currently available in the road transport context to be used in the rail safety context.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the provisions contained in this bill may be seen to engage various rights under the ACT's Human Rights Act 2004. The national law's engagement of these rights, which is discussed in detail in the explanatory statement, relates to whether any limits or rights which it may create can be considered reasonable, consistent with section 28 of the Human Rights Act.

I am confident that any limitation on these rights is reasonable and proportionate, particularly given the need to protect the community from the dangers that an intoxicated or drug-affected rail safety worker would pose not only to their safety but also the safety of other workers, rail passengers and the general public. I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

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

Construction and Energy Efficiency Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

Mr Corbell, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (11.45): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

This bill amends the Construction, Occupations (Licensing) Act and regulation, the Electrical Safety Act and the Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act. The bill includes amendments to the existing provisions in the licensing act for keeping a register of information about construction licences and making that information available to the public.

Although the existing law requires the Construction Occupations Registrar to make information available to the public, it does not provide guidance on how the information must be provided. Some information held in the register may not be suitable for publication on a website or for general disclosure. This could include personal details such as residential addresses and information of a confidential nature that may be disclosed to the registrar in relation to compliance and enforcement. Disclosure of some information could also be considered unfair, such as publishing information on a previous disciplinary action that was not upheld on review.

To avoid privacy and other issues, at present, only names, licence classes, licence expiry dates and conditions and endorsements are published weekly, with other information available on request. However, it is important for people who engage construction practitioners to be able to make an informed decision on which practitioner to engage. This includes whether a licensee is subject to conditions, suspension or other relevant action.

This bill therefore creates a public register which includes a subset of information about construction licences, including details of certain disciplinary actions and rectification orders. The public register approach balances privacy and fairness for licensees with the need for the community to access relevant and up-to-date information on licensees they have engaged or are considering hiring.

This is part of the government's ongoing work to improve the quality of building work in the ACT.

The bill includes new inspection powers that apply to building assessment work and works assessment that is regulated primarily under the licensing act. These powers complement existing inspection powers for other occupations under operational acts such as the building and electrical safety acts.

A further amendment rounds out the existing enforcement powers in the licensing act by including standard provisions for obtaining a search warrant for things or activities connected to offences.

The bill also includes amendments to the Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act. These amendments clarify when an activity is excluded from an

energy savings calculation. They also provide that a retailer's result can be recalculated up to five years after the end of the relevant compliance period. A recalculation can be made if information on which the original result is based is later found to be incorrect or an activity is not compliant.

Further provisions support the functions of the administrator in determining electricity retailers' compliance with the act and to administer codes of practice. These provisions support the administrator's current functions by providing for information sharing with relevant regulatory agencies and the ability to gather information from other parties to determine compliance; taking action against a contravention of a code of practice, including issuing a rectification order for a breach that has caused or may cause injury or damage to people, property or the environment; and restricting the creation of abatement factors for eligible activities if required to protect public safety. These provisions are intended to complement existing statutes that require safe installation practices and address any situations where existing law may not provide adequate coverage of an activity implemented under the scheme.

Amendments to the Electrical Safety Act streamline the existing legislation for setting safety standards for electrical equipment. Safety standards are part of a national system of corresponding law across all states and territories. The bill expands on the current powers to make regulations for the energy efficiency of electrical products sold in the ACT and to regulate efficiency of lighting and other appliances under the building code. New provisions would allow regulations to be made to promote the efficient use and conservation of power and energy or to limit harm to the environment from electrical equipment and installations.

Further amendments transfer all residual powers from the Planning and Land Authority in the Electrical Safety Act to the Construction Occupations Registrar. This reflects that the functions of the registrar include responsibility for administering the Electrical Safety Act. The act already gives powers to the registrar for regulating electrical inspections, electrical work and parts of the product safety system.

I note that the Construction and Energy Efficiency Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 (No 2), passed by the Assembly this week, amended legislation which will affect a small number of provisions in this bill. I will therefore be introducing Assembly amendments at the debate stage to make the necessary minor amendments to give effect to the intent of the provisions in this bill. A number of the provisions complement amendments in the two construction and energy efficiency legislation amendment bills introduced in 2013. The bill contains amendments to improve the implementation of existing laws and improve public access to important information about construction licences.

I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

Mr Rattenbury, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

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) (11.52): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. The bill will make a number of changes to corrections and sentencing law.

The bill will create a new scheme to require people sentenced to imprisonment and parolees to obtain approval from the Director-General of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate before they can apply to change their name. The bill makes it an offence for people sentenced to imprisonment and parolees to apply to change their name in the ACT or another Australian jurisdiction before first obtaining the approval of the director-general. The maximum penalty for the offence is five penalty units. The amendment will improve the ability of law enforcement to prevent convicted offenders from changing their name to evade parole supervision, obtain new passports, facilitate the commission of offences or avoid detection.

A number of safeguards have been put in place to ensure that the scheme is compliant with human rights law. The scheme only applies to people who are convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, whether full time or by periodic detention, including those who are released on parole or on licence. It does not affect people who are convicted and given a less serious sentence such as a non-conviction order, good behaviour order or financial penalty.

The scheme does not necessarily prevent people serving a sentence of imprisonment and parolees from changing their name. It does require that they seek approval for such a change.

The grounds on which the director-general decides whether to allow the person to apply to change their name are set out in the bill. The change of name must be necessary or reasonable and must not be reasonably likely to be a threat to prison security; to jeopardise a person's health or safety; to be used to further an unlawful activity or purpose; to be used to evade or hinder the supervision of the person; or to be regarded as offensive by a victim of crime or an appreciable sector of the community. The person can appeal to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal if their application is refused by the director-general.

Introduction of the scheme gives effect to a Standing Council on Law and Justice agreement to consider implementing a best practice approach to the change of name process to minimise abuse of the system. Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales introduced similar change of name schemes in 2004, 2006 and 2012 respectively.

The bill makes a number of other amendments which were brought to my attention by Legal Aid ACT in the context of consultation for the mental health act review and the

ACT courts and tribunals. Following further consideration by my directorate, and in consultation with other justice stakeholders, I have proposed these amendments to address those concerns.

The bill gives a court power to order that ACT Corrective Services can bring a detainee before the court for a civil proceeding. The amendment does not allow a detainee to be compelled to attend a civil proceeding. Rather, this amendment ensures that, where appropriate, and with their consent, a detainee can be present at civil proceedings. The power may be relevant, for example, where the detainee is an applicant in the proceedings, where a domestic violence protection order or forensic procedure order is sought against the detainee or where the detainee is a witness who is the subject of a subpoena.

The bill also provides that where an offender is unable to perform periodic detention or community service only because they are detained under a restriction order or other power under the Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Act, they are deemed to have performed those obligations. The amendment will only apply where the offender is detained at a specific place, such as a health or care facility, and is therefore prevented from leaving to attend periodic detention or community work. The amendment will ensure that an offender is not at risk of being found in breach or unnecessarily brought before a court or the Sentence Administration Board because they were unable to comply with their reporting obligations.

The bill will also make a minor amendment to clarify that a person is not excluded from being appointed as a member of the Sentence Administration Board merely because they are 70 years old or older. The amendment provides that the only limitation on appointment is that the person must have been a legal practitioner for not less than five years. This is currently the only requirement under the legislation, but the amendment will make this fact clearer.

I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Estimates 2014-2015—Select Committee Establishment

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (11.57): I move:

That:

- (1) a Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015 be appointed to examine the expenditure proposals contained in the Appropriation Bill 2014-2015, the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2014-2015 and any revenue estimates proposed by the Government in the 2014-2015 Budget and prepare a report to the Assembly;
- (2) in keeping with Continuing Resolution 8A, the committee be composed of:
 - (a) two Members to be nominated by the Government; and

- (b) three Members to be nominated by the Opposition;
- to be notified in writing to the Speaker by 4 pm today;
- (3) an Opposition Member shall be elected chair of the committee by the committee;
- (4) funds be provided by the Assembly to permit the engagement of external expertise to work with the committee to facilitate the analysis of the Budget and the preparation of the report of the committee;
- (5) the committee is to report by Tuesday, 5 August 2014;
- (6) if the Assembly is not sitting when the committee has completed its inquiry, the committee may send its report to the Speaker or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publishing and circulation; and
- (7) the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

This is the standard motion we tend to move this time of the year every year to set up the next estimates committee to examine each budget. In keeping with what has been normally the practice, it is a five member committee. In this case, as there is no crossbench, it is two from the government and three from the opposition with an opposition member to be elected as chair. Some funding is to be provided by the Assembly to permit the engagement of an external adviser to help us work through the budget documents and to report on the first sitting day in August so we can facilitate the debate in the last sitting in August.

I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Community Services) (11.58): The government supports the establishment of an estimates committee and is happy with all but one element of the proposal Mr Smyth has put forward. Consistent with last year's estimates committee and all other committees in this place, the government will be seeking to move an amendment to have a four-member committee, reflecting the fact that there are eight Labour and eight Liberal members and that the committee should represent equal representation between the two parties. As there is not a crossbench member available to be a member of this committee, we need to look at the balance of the parties the electorate has delivered the Assembly and—

Mr Doszpot: Why is it the government should get it then if the crossbench isn't available, Mr Barr?

MR BARR: Well, we could always reduce the level of opposition membership below two if those opposite are concerned about even numbers. But wanting to reflect the representation in this place, there should be equal representation on the committee. I have circulated an amendment to that effect, and I move that amendment now:

Omit subparagraph (2)(b), substitute:

“(b) two Members to be nominated by the Opposition;

to be notified in writing to the Speaker by 4pm today;”.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (11.59): It is an interesting argument that Mr Rattenbury cannot be on the committee because he is a member of the executive. That would therefore mean on Mr Barr’s own logic that there are only four members of the Labor Party available for this committee as opposed to the seven available from the Liberal Party. So the ratio of three to two would be a far more accurate representation if Mr Barr wishes to be consistent and follow his own logic.

But we all know the numbers are the numbers. We all know that Latimer House, whilst we have a continuing resolution, does not apply. We all know the government will get its way.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (12.00): I simply add to this discussion that private members day has six slots, and it is deliberately four to the opposition and two for the government because that is the way the numbers are for non-executive members. Using the same logic the government agreed to with regard to private members day, it would seem consistent to have a majority on all the standing committees and select committees, especially for estimates.

Question put:

That the 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

Ms Lawder
Mr Smyth
Mr Wall

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Capital Metro Agency Appearance before Assembly committees

MR COE (Ginninderra) (12:04): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the Government's proposed construction of light rail is likely to be the Territory Government's largest ever capital works project;
 - (b) the Assembly and taxpayers should be regularly updated about the progress of the project; and
 - (c) Members of the Assembly should have more opportunities to ask the Minister and Capital Metro Agency officials about the project;
- (2) refers to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services for inquiry and report by the last sitting day of the 8th Parliament, the issue of light rail in the ACT, including:
- (a) progress and process of awarding contracts;
 - (b) Government decisions made regarding the project;
 - (c) expenditure on light rail and associated works;
 - (d) future light rail expansion and operations;
 - (e) impact on the environment and other forms of transport; and
 - (f) any other relevant matter; and
- (3) the inquiry's public hearings should occur in March and August each year with witnesses to include representatives of Capital Metro, the Minister responsible for Capital Metro, and any other Minister and Agency requested by the Committee.

Today's motion is not about the merits of light rail. This motion is about the need to ensure that there is appropriate scrutiny for the biggest infrastructure project in the territory government's history. In other jurisdictions, there are capital works committees which inquire upon self-referral or automatic triggers, often related to the projected cost of a project. We have no such committee or mechanism here. As such, it is incumbent upon us as members of this place to use our discretion as to when inquiries are required. I believe one is required for light rail.

Today's motion calls for two additional public hearings per year, bringing the total number of public hearings for capital metro to four. This should mean that public hearings would occur in March, June, August and in or around November. Of course, June's hearing is part of estimates and November's would be part of annual report hearings.

I am sure the minister will say that this is a burden and a distraction. I disagree. This is good governance. For instance, does the government think that preparing budgets, annual reports or fronting estimates is an unnecessary burden as well? The fact is that we do need good governance to ensure an appropriate expenditure of every one of the taxpayers' dollars, but especially for something as significant as the \$640 million capital works light rail project.

It is also important to remember that the public hearings will be an opportunity not only for opposition members but also for government members. Labor MLAs would also be able to use the additional hearings to request information and make suggestions.

The case in favour of my motion is straightforward. We need more scrutiny of this light rail project. I believe that ACT taxpayers want MLAs to scrutinise this project and I would like to do all I can to ensure that their money is properly spent.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (12.07): I thank Mr Coe for bringing this motion forward today. I must say I am very surprised by Mr Coe's request that the capital metro project be referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services for public hearings twice a year, in addition, of course, to the two times a year that members could already ask questions of the agency through the estimates and annual reports process.

I am surprised because if Mr Coe was seriously much more interested in understanding more about this project, I would have expected more questions from him right here in the Legislative Assembly. Yet there has been very little interest from Mr Coe on this project. The government is constantly taking opportunities to keep the Assembly and the public updated on the progress of this project. In fact, only yesterday I was asked by Mr Gentleman to provide an update on the progress.

At the end of last year the government put forward a motion on the benefits of light rail, but Mr Coe did not even contribute to the debate. In fact, the Liberal Party only had one speaker on this motion. Mr Coe clearly is not interested in the details. Mr Coe would rather make up his own figures and try to derail this important project for our city. In fact, if Mr Coe had such an overwhelming and active interest in needing to be informed and kept up to date on this project, I would have expected that he would have approached my office and asked for a briefing from the project director of the Capital Metro Agency on the project.

I have not received a single request to date from any opposition MLA for a briefing on this project—not one, Madam Speaker; not one. The shadow attorney-general approached my office: "Can I please have a meeting with the Chief Justice? Can I please have a meeting with the Chief Police Officer? Can I please have a briefing from corrections?" He is doing his job, but what is the shadow minister, Mr Coe, doing? Is he going out of his way to try and find out a bit of information, do his research, speak to the officials or ask for a briefing? Is he doing his job? No, he is not doing his job. There has not been a single briefing; there has not been single request from Mr Coe to meet with the Capital Metro Agency. He has not even met with them. He has not even asked to be briefed. That is extraordinary from a man who professes how important it is to be kept up to date and informed on this project.

This is a very important project for our city. The government is working to attract jobs and investment. We are working to make our city stronger and more resilient. Only this week we saw reports of the region's high unemployment when it comes to young

people. Youth unemployment is high. But capital metro is just one example where the government can invest to diversify the economy and attract employment and jobs and opportunity for our city.

Let me provide a few examples to reiterate my point—the Gold Coast light rail project, where building stage 1 of the GoldLinQ light rail system generated over 6,000 jobs: 6,000 jobs. In Manchester, the Metrolink expansion facilitated over 3,000 permanent new jobs. In Washington, areas within two kilometres of a light rail stop have eight times the employment density of other areas in that city. This is a project that makes a real difference for our city's economic future, as well as its transport future, and opportunities for jobs.

The Assembly, of course, is an important avenue to look at scrutiny and to provide for scrutiny of all government functions. We are here to discuss issues of public concern and expenditure. There are many opportunities for questions to be asked in this place and in existing committee processes about the operations of all government projects, including the capital metro project.

There is, of course, a select committee on estimates that will be able to scrutinise the Capital Metro Agency budget allocation and key performance indicators line by line. There is, of course, the opportunity for scrutiny over contracts. Any contract over \$25,000 is available online for anyone to read or view and for anyone to ask questions about. That is the type of scrutiny that is already available to anyone willing to do their research.

The government, though, is making it a priority to reach out to the community with information on the operations and delivery of this project. Just two weeks ago I launched a new online presence for the project with extensive information and links on how the project achieves the government's strategic priorities and the range of activities, contracts and other studies that are now being undertaken.

Capital metro is reaching out to the community. We have engaged heavily and invested heavily in public communications and engagement capacity. The government has invested in the delivery of a strong team that will have the capacity to reach out to the community and give them information and answer questions about the project.

The agency is actively engaging with a broad range of stakeholders, including the MBA, community councils, the Property Council of Australia, the institute of engineers, the Business Council and many more. These are all bodies that have sought out the Capital Metro Agency and asked to be informed, unlike Mr Coe, who seems to be prepared, perhaps deliberately, to stay in the dark so that he can continue to criticise with a certain level of ignorance.

Last week, capital metro's project director presented to the government's procurement board and outlined the operations of the agency when it came to government procurement. The project director has presented to the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand on light rail, giving a detailed briefing on the project. So the Capital Metro Agency is reaching out. The Capital Metro Agency is engaging with our community. The government is putting a big effort into putting information online and into the public arena so people can see and understand what is occurring.

The proposal we have from Mr Coe is unfortunately undermined by his own actions. Mr Coe says that he wants an additional two public hearings every year and, in addition to those public hearings, unlimited time available potentially through estimates and annual reports. But he is the same man who has not even asked for a briefing from the officials who are charged with delivering this project. We simply cannot take his assertions as genuine or sincere.

Madam Speaker, I am proposing an amendment, and I have circulated that to members. I am proposing that, instead of the proposal put forward by Mr Coe, to address his concerns—and perhaps we might even be able to line up an opportunity for Mr Coe to bump into the project director so that he gets a chance to ask a question, seeing how reluctant he has already been to do it to date—this Assembly agrees that at both the annual reports hearings and at the estimates hearings the relevant standing or select committee provide for a period of at least two hours to question the Capital Metro Agency, if that is required by the committee.

That is a minimum guarantee that the government is prepared to suggest to members—at least two hours in each of those already scheduled hearings—and that, in addition, officials from the agency and the relevant minister be available for an additional 3½ hours during this year for a further public hearing to discuss and answer questions on the project.

I think that with all of that in place, on top of what I have already outlined, we might just be able to facilitate an opportunity for Mr Coe to ask questions of those officials who are charged with actually delivering this project. Indeed, we might even be able to compel Mr Coe, in perhaps some gentle way, to acknowledge that it would be in his interests to ask for a briefing from officials rather than remain in the studied ignorance that we see from him to date. I move the amendment circulated in my name to Mr Coe's motion:

Omit paragraphs (2) and (3), substitute:

“(2) agrees that:

- (a) at both the annual reports hearings and the estimates hearings, the relevant standing or select committee provide for a period of at least 2 hours to question the Capital Metro Agency, if required; and
- (b) officials from the Capital Metro Agency and relevant Ministers should be available for an additional 3.5 hours in 2014 for a public hearing before the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services to discuss the Capital Metro project.”.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Ageing) (12.17): I thank Mr Coe for raising this motion. As I have said before, I am very keen for the capital metro project to be open and transparent. There is no benefit for anyone in hiding this project from scrutiny. I want the project to be robust; I want all the questions to have been asked,

considered and answered; and I want the Canberra public to be part of the project as much as possible. In fact, I think the highest level of openness and public involvement is essential to the success of the project.

Look at other successful transport and development projects from other jurisdictions. They do well when the public is heavily involved in them and, in essence, the project is owned by the public. I have mentioned before that when I visited Portland last year I noted that the local government there had enshrined several planning principles which govern its projects. Number one is public involvement. That is a lesson for Canberra and we need to genuinely engage and involve the community in projects and leverage community knowledge and creativity.

I also say to Mr Coe and the Liberal Party that I understand how difficult it can be sometimes as a non-executive member to get all the information you may want about a government project. I think more and more information about the light rail project is becoming available, and this information will continue to grow. This is the expected trajectory, because the project has been going through the initial planning stages. There is naturally a lot of planning work occurring and possibly not as many concrete outcomes to show just yet. The project is starting to enter a new phase with the appointment of the capital metro director and the communications director, for example. The capital metro website has been established, and I believe the communications with the public will be improved in coming months.

This is part of the reason I am satisfied with Mr Corbell's amendment, which I will be supporting. The capital metro project will naturally change and go through different phases. The information that is available at different stages will vary. It is a bit preemptive to lock in two days of additional committee hearings every year until the end of the Assembly term. Mr Corbell's proposal I think is actually very sensible. It extends the time available to question capital metro through both annual reports and estimates committees. It also adds an extra half-day special committee hearing where capital metro and relevant ministers can be questioned. That is for 2014 only at this point. If we find that is not satisfactory then by all means let us reconsider it, but it is important not to overdo it at this stage. I think we should see how it goes during 2014.

The capital metro office will, of course, be extremely busy. It has a very large project to deliver and it has timelines to meet on behalf of the community. The last thing I would want to do is consume their time with extra days of hearings that are not really needed and essentially turn out to be filling in time. Every now and then we see this occur when a committee has an agency before it but does not necessarily have enough questions to fill the time. That has happened on a range of occasions that I can recall.

I simply underline that I understand Mr Coe's request for further opportunities for questioning and information gathering but, having thought through it and thought about the practicalities, I think we should start with Mr Corbell's proposal which I think is a satisfactory outcome to allow the level of scrutiny needed for this project.

There is another dimension to this issue that is important to mention. To be perfectly frank, once this additional committee time is set up, the challenge for the Liberal Party and Mr Coe is to use these additional opportunities properly. It does not serve

the community or the hard working capital metro officials very well if the extra committee time is used by the Liberal Party as a headline generator for a negative political campaign against light rail. That would be an egregious approach to what is a very important project.

I raise this issue because, unfortunately, there is already a history of this behaviour by Mr Coe in particular. You get a sense of this by doing a quick Google search for the phrase, “Coe and light rail,” and a series of headlines then give a nice perspective on this. I think it is quite clear that at every turn Mr Coe is trying to grab a negative headline and to paint himself as the arch nemesis of this light rail project without ever actually saying he opposes it.

It is one thing to raise legitimate issues about government projects—I am all for that—but it is another when the issues raised are wrong or misleading and are put into the public domain where they mislead and confuse the public. Take Mr Coe’s simplistic claim, for example, that light rail will cost over \$400,000 per extra passenger. To get this headline he simply took the projected project cost and divided it by an estimated passenger increase for one random point in time with no consideration of other factors. It is almost like dividing two random numbers together, but it gets the negative result that he obviously wants. It does not take into account any factors like population growth, longevity of the rail system, environmental benefits, development opportunities or modal shift benefits on the whole transport network. Talk to anyone who works on economics or a transport project evaluation and they will laugh at this claim. It is obviously a political exercise.

Even sillier is the “Northbourne Avenue to be dug up for construction of city’s light rail” headline. The claim of Mr Coe that the light rail project will require all of the road surface on Northbourne Avenue to be dug up and replaced was simply wrong. In fact, I had to issue a press release to try and make sure the public were not misled. The claim was based on a transport option study that was over a year old. Further project updates which had been released publicly by the government made it clear that Mr Coe’s claim was wrong. It presented a revised proposal that did not require the complete digging up of Northbourne Avenue.

Naturally, it is a cause of concern when someone who obviously had not even read the available project updates comes in here to ask for more opportunities for scrutiny. Reading the publicly available information would be a very good start. Scrutiny is important, and Mr Coe is right that the project’s scope means additional committee time is appropriate. But I am very keen that scrutiny is done with integrity and without the unhelpful negative politics that sometimes taints it.

I also note the Liberal Party has not expressed a desire for additional scrutiny for other large ACT projects in the past. For example, if we think of the almost \$300 million Majura parkway project which, up until light rail, was up there as one of the largest capital projects in the ACT. I cannot recall being asked any questions about the project since I have been the minister responsible for this project. I have not seen any headlines about the Liberals’ apparent scrutiny of that project. Funny that—it is a road, but there you go. In fact, the Greens raised a motion in the Assembly in 2011 to try and get more scrutiny of the Majura parkway project and the Liberals voted against it.

Funny that—they are not interested in scrutiny when it is about building more roads in this town. That project should be open to an equal level of scrutiny because it is actually as much money.

Nevertheless, I am quite happy to vote today for expanded scrutiny of the light rail project. I am looking forward to the continued progress of the capital metro project and further involvement of the Canberra community as well as the Canberra Liberal Party. I hope that through this process they will start to acknowledge the many benefits of light rail and they will at least be willing to look at the project on its merits and with an open mind.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (12.25): The opposition will not be supporting the amendment put forward by Minister Corbell supported in lockstep by Mr Rattenbury, of course. As I said in my original speech, I am not going to get into the merits of light rail; this is about scrutiny. But, of course, Minister Corbell and Minister Rattenbury could not resist and instead went into the merits of light rail. Well, if you do that search as Minister Rattenbury suggested—“Coe and light rail”—some stories come up: “Libs query route, need for \$600m light rail”; “Canberra light rail funded by taxes, says Alistair Coe”; “Light rail agency hired consultants”; “ACT capital metro light rail spin to cost \$1m”; “Come light rail or not, Northbourne trees a risk”; “Canberra light rail plan: ‘Not enough traffic’ says Infrastructure Australia”; “Heavy pay for light rail leader”; and it goes on and on.

I have no problem putting my name to these stories. I do not know what these furphies are that I am putting my name to, all these shambolic stories that are going to bring distress to Canberra households. The fact is there is a \$614 million light rail project. We have a government that has chosen the route before they have done the master plan. How do we know the city to Gungahlin is the most economic route to do first? I argue we do not know that and I argue that it is not the most economic route to do first, and I will be presenting some information on that later on.

We need more scrutiny of this project, and it is very disappointing that those opposite do not agree to a basic level of scrutiny that would be consistent with just about every public works committee in the country—that is, a hearing every three months. We are not going to get that, and that is very disappointing.

If the light rail team is as equipped as what the government say, if the communications person on a \$200,000 package is as good as what they say, if the head of light rail on a \$380,000 package is as good as what they say, they should be able to field our questions easily. If not, that is the very reason the questions need to be asked. It is disappointing those opposite are not going to support this, but we will continue to do all we can to ensure we get appropriate scrutiny for this expenditure.

Question put:

That the 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

Ms Lawder
Mr Smyth
Mr Wall

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.31 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Health Directorate—half-yearly report

MR HANSON: I have a question for the Minister for Health. Minister, you are required under the Financial Management Act to provide half-yearly reports against measures contained in the budget papers. In the papers released by you in January 2014 nine out of the 37 Health Directorate measures are reported with errors. Some measures, as a consequence, are up to 70 per cent underperforming. On Tuesday you tabled a corrigendum which still does not correct these errors. Minister, why do these figures remain incorrect?

MS GALLAGHER: The targets were set for the first time using the national accounting practices. These new national methods contained formulas and processes to derive those estimates. In addition, activity that is considered in scope for attracting commonwealth funding should be captured. Services that are funded by other revenues, such as through workers compensation, motor accident insurance or Department of Veterans' Affairs, should not be counted. A range of those out-of-scope services were inadvertently included in deriving the targets. So the targets will come down, and the error between the targets and the result was not identified early in the financial year, as the records take time to complete due to the work involved in correctly coding all activities.

I have met with Health over this matter. I asked that a statement be included on Tuesday to explain the process and the fact that we are still working through some of the revisions that need to be done. A notifiable instrument will be tabled in the next sitting and that will provide the accurate estimates for 2013-14. So I have provided you with as much information as I can at this point. Essentially, it is moving to the new national system through the national health reform processes that has led to these mistakes. As I understand it, there have been a couple of other jurisdictions that have had similar issues in identifying what is in scope and what is out of scope, and including them in targets which need to be removed. These are being worked through with all the relevant national authorities.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Can you give the Assembly an idea of what the quantum of the error is—how much variance there is between what has been recorded and what the actual figure may be?

MS GALLAGHER: I would prefer to have all of the final details with me before I start speculating. As you point out, in some of those targets there has been a considerable difference. But rather than speculate, because I do not have all the information at this point in time, I have asked that we provide as much information as we can, and I will come back to the Assembly.

It does not change anything in terms of the work that is being done or the funding that is being provided; it is around how we set the targets and what is included in those targets. For a patient presenting to the hospital, it will not make any material difference at all.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Chief Minister, have any external consultants been hired to assist the agency in this transition?

MS GALLAGHER: Not that I am aware of, but I will check that. The briefings I have had around this issue have been with senior Health staff. They have not involved consultants but I will check that and come back to the Assembly.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, when will the final methodology for determining the statistics be underway and able to be compared against other jurisdictions and longitudinally here?

MS GALLAGHER: My understanding is I will be correcting this in March next year. In terms of longitudinal comparisons, we are moving to a new system. So it will be easy to compare with other jurisdictions and we will look at how we can make sure people can compare the new targets with what existed before.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre

MR WALL: Minister, the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre, or AILC, has been located in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre building at Yarramundi Reach for more than five years and has acted as the property manager for this period of time without recognition by the ACT government. The AILC has recently been advised by the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs that the lease arrangements that are currently in place will change. Minister, will you guarantee that the AILC will be able to continue to operate from Yarramundi Reach into the future, as it has done for the past five years?

MR RATTENBURY: I dispute the fact that the AILC has had little recognition and acknowledgement of the role they have played at Yarramundi Reach. They are highly

recognised as an organisation and there has certainly been an appreciation from the government for the role they have played on that site, particularly in terms of having people at the location and a lively presence there.

When it comes to the future of their location, I am not going to comment on that matter today and give the undertaking you are seeking in that there is clearly scope for negotiation. My understanding is that AILC have recently also had great success, as is warranted to them, in getting further federal government grants. I am under the impression they may, in fact, need a larger space which may not be available at that site. So it may be that we need to have a discussion with them about whether that is the most appropriate site. At this stage there is no explicit intent to kick them out, which I think is the tenor of your question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what assurances can you give AILC that the future changes imposed on the organisation for use of the premises at Yarramundi Reach will reflect the organisation's financial capacity?

MR RATTENBURY: I can give them an assurance that through the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs we will work closely with them to get the outcome they need in terms of accommodation.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lawder, a supplementary question.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what assistance will the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs offer to the AILC should their current accommodation arrangements become untenable?

MR RATTENBURY: I feel like I am being asked a series of hypothetical questions here. There is an insinuation going on that I am not exactly clear about as no-one has exactly put it on the table. So at this stage I have nothing to add to my earlier comments.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what are the benefits of locating the leadership centre here in Canberra?

MR RATTENBURY: Dr Bourke, I think there are real benefits in having the centre here. It is a widely respected centre. The work that they do is acknowledged as being an outstanding contribution to Australia's Indigenous community. People come from all over Australia to participate in the leadership programs they run. I know that they run some of their programs outside Canberra, and there is a range of reasons for that, but we have a highly respected organisation that is making a very important contribution to furthering opportunities for particularly younger Indigenous Australians—though the leadership courses are not restricted to just younger Indigenous Australians; I have met some people who might be considered a little older who have gone through those courses as well.

It is an organisation that I would want to see stay in Canberra. I am committed to making sure that they have the right accommodation and that we continue to partner with them effectively.

Child care—places

MS LAWDER: My question is to the minister for education. Minister, the Precious Momentz childcare centre is a longstanding childcare centre in Phillip. Due to circumstances with the new building owner evicting the centre on short notice, the childcare centre is now moving to Queanbeyan due to a lack of other options. This is leaving many parents stressed about finding child care for their children and the ACT losing a centre that we desperately need for child care. Minister, given statements you have made about your government's support for child care in the ACT, what action has the government taken to assist and keep these childcare places in the ACT?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Lawder for her question and recognition that this government indeed does provide significant support for child care. It has come to my attention recently that it is a private tenancy arrangement that Precious Momentz have had with the building owner. As I understand it, the owner has changed and they are seeking to vacate Precious Momentz. That has come to my attention recently, but I think Precious Momentz has been aware of that possibility for some time. Certainly, this week I have had some correspondence from a couple of families to see what we can do.

It is my understanding they have been offered temporary accommodation within the Phillip precinct. That is temporary and we will work with them. It is my understanding that Precious Momentz have made a decision to relocate to Queanbeyan. They are an independent organisation. They can make that decision. I am not aware of the reasons for that decision. That is for them to make. Certainly, in the short term it is my understanding that we have offered them, or have found, temporary accommodation within the Phillip precinct.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what other options may be made available for parents who will be without placement for their children if or when Precious Momentz moves to Queanbeyan?

MS BURCH: Parents have the option of actually taking their kids to the site, to wherever they relocate, should that be Queanbeyan, or to enrol them in other childcare places. Certainly, the regulation unit in the Education and Training Directorate are working with the service. They are quite happy to work with families as we can and to make information available on what are the other centres and services in place and to do all we can. But when these are private arrangements between families that have an arrangement with a company—a centre such as Precious Momentz—there is support we can offer but there are very few levers we can pull to directly help the families.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, when did you first become aware of this situation?

MS BURCH: I do not know the exact date, but it was certainly in very recent times—in the last couple of weeks is my memory.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, how can the community maintain trust in this government to support child care in the ACT?

MS BURCH: I missed the first bit but I think it was about how can the community have trust in this government in supporting child care?

Mr Doszpot: Yes.

MS BURCH: I will go to the numbers I read out earlier this week: over 2,000 places just in the last two years; effectively, a doubling of childcare places in the decade that this government has been in office; significant millions of dollars that this government has put in to support childcare services here in the ACT; and the complete absence of any commitment, any promise, any activity from the Canberra Liberals.

I also go to the scholarships that we have put in place to support the workforce. As I indicated earlier this week, 71 per cent of the long day care services, and, I believe, after and before-school care, are provided by large community organisations. I think that, out of the services, 40 per cent of the long day cares are government owned, and we offer them subsidised rating. So you ask what we do. We have doubled the places. Just under my watch alone, there are over 2,000 places, with 600 coming online this year; significant moneys into bricks and mortar; and moneys going into supporting the workforce. I think that is a clear demonstration that this government, under my watch, under this portfolio, shows a clear commitment to childcare services.

National Arboretum Canberra—anniversary

MS PORTER: My question is to the Chief Minister in her capacity as the minister responsible for the National Arboretum. Minister, can you provide information to the Assembly on the first year of the arboretum's operation and how the first year will be celebrated?

MS GALLAGHER: I welcome Ms Porter's continuing interest in the National Arboretum. The arboretum has had a very successful first year since it publicly opened on 2 February 2013 to kick off the centenary year. With over 520,000 visitors since its opening, the arboretum is fast becoming an iconic Canberra destination. It serves as a reason to visit Canberra as well as a unique place to reflect on our city's history. The arboretum also serves as an outlet for the community, through the excellent work that is done by the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra, one of the largest friends groups in the ACT, and the many volunteering opportunities as well as the events and programs the arboretum offers.

The arboretum runs events and activities to coincide with significant events in the territory, including Floriade and the 2013 centenary celebrations as well as the family festival that coincided with the opening of the children's pod playground. Examples of other activities held at the arboretum include educational and school holiday activities, self-guided walks through the forest, free guided walks and talks in and around the village centre, and specialised talks presented by the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra.

The arboretum is also contributing to the protection of tree species and tree diversity worldwide as well as generating new research opportunities and understanding about how trees grow, survive and adapt.

The arboretum has become a popular meeting ground for a diverse range of groups, including recreational groups, horse riders, artists, photographers, mothers groups, car enthusiasts and those with an interest in horticulture and botany.

At the heart of the arboretum is the village centre, with its panoramic views over Canberra, Lake Burley Griffin and beyond. The centre houses a range of interactive displays, the arboretum gift shop, the Sprout Café and the Conservatory Restaurant.

The opening of the pod playground expanded the arboretum's market reach considerably. On any day you go there, whether it is a working day or, when it reaches its peak, it is the weekend, there are hundreds of children using the playground. Over 800 children used the playground within the first hour of its opening, and it continues to be one of the most popular areas of the arboretum.

The Margaret Whitlam Pavilion, opening in May 2013, has given Canberrans a new and unique venue to host events and provides an alternative to the large village centre as an intimate event space to cater for smaller events.

The arboretum is becoming a preferred venue for events and functions celebrating the territory, especially those of particular significance. The Australian citizenship ceremony and the Australian of the Year event were at the arboretum. Over 10,000 people have attended an event at the village centre so far.

Overwhelmingly, the arboretum's first year has been an incredible success. It is a success beyond what we had imagined and hoped for. The first year celebrations will be held to coincide with Canberra's 101st birthday, in the second week of March, on Saturday, 8 March, when there will be a range of different activities, particularly for families to come and celebrate the very successful first birthday of the National Arboretum Canberra.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, can you outline the impact the arboretum has had in terms of our tourism and the local economy?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Ms Porter for the question. As I mentioned in my previous answer, over half a million people have visited the arboretum since opening one year ago. As well as building a solid local community following, the arboretum has attracted many visitors from interstate and overseas. We know these visitors spend time in other ACT institutions and utilise hospitality, accommodation, recreation and entertainment options that the territory has to offer.

The arboretum has also played a very important role of international significance as the home to many diplomatic ceremonial tree plantings, which has received quite an amount of international media attention. The arboretum has also accommodated international media and given exposure to overseas audiences, particularly in Asia and the Pacific.

The arboretum enjoys joint promotion with tourism bodies around Australia and is quickly becoming a must-see attraction for visitors to the ACT. The event facilities have also been popular with over 10,000 people attending a function at the arboretum and the third Voices in the Forest concert attracting 5,000 people last year.

I expect that as the trees grow and the forests really become older and more magnificent than they are now we will see the arboretum's reach as a tourist destination grow further and further.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how is the data collected and then verified to give you the number of half a million visitors in the first year?

MS GALLAGHER: Sorry, the number of—

MR SMYTH: How is the data collected and then verified?

MS GALLAGHER: It is collected based on visitors to the village centre by the Friends of the National Arboretum who count arrivals through the village centre.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Chief Minister, what further plans does the government have to improve the facilities at the Arboretum to ensure that it continues to attract local, national and international visitors?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Dr Bourke for his question. The National Arboretum's strategic advisory board has developed an infrastructure master plan that sets out a range of projects with specific time frames. This looks at projects for the next five years, five to 10 years and the long term. These projects will be funded through varying means as resources become available, with support from the ACT government when that is agreed through a budget process, while others will be supported through external funding such as sponsorship programs.

A number of projects that are currently being undertaken or due to commence within this financial year include an all-weather path from the village centre through to the Margaret Whitlam pavilion—anyone who has made that dash from the village centre to Margaret Whitlam will understand the need for that path—sealing and lighting for the main car park, the installation of solar-powered lighting to the event terrace and the continuation of the implementation of the irrigation master plan, which implements the irrigation infrastructure that ensures the young forests have the best chance of survival and growth in our climate.

Further projects will be planned over the next year, which is the propagation of healthy plant stock to replace existing forests where full establishment has not been successful, replanting and upgrading the existing landscape around the village centre, looking at how we can provide appropriate shade in the pod playground—which will be a challenge but I think we do need to provide some shade at that playground—completion of the main event lawn and associated infrastructure on the event terrace and a gallery of gardens behind the event terrace, fire trails and dirt track upgrades to the trails and tracks where needed, and then there are some longer term plans beyond five years.

Health Directorate—annual report

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, the latest Health Directorate annual report shows that 19,142 presentations were made to the walk-in centre in the last financial year. Nurses treated 13,665 presentations. Another 3,254 were referred by a nurse to other places such as GPs, medical imaging et cetera. No treatment is recorded for 2,223 patients. Of the 19,142 presentations, it seems that one in 10 were not treated or referred on. Is that the right figure?

MS GALLAGHER: I do not have that report in front of me. Is the question: are there one in 10 referrals away from the walk-in centre—or who did not receive treatment at all?

Mr Coe: Are not regarded as receiving treatment or being referred.

MS GALLAGHER: Okay, so the difference between—

Mr Hanson: “Did not wait”, essentially.

MS GALLAGHER: I see. I would have to check that, Mr Coe. I will take it on notice and come back.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: In addition to that, could you please do some analysis as to why that might be one in 10, if it is, in fact, that? Several years into the operation of the walk-in centre, has the government done any modelling or reconsideration as to what impact doctors being present at the centre would have?

MS GALLAGHER: We had a review into the operations of the walk-in centre where there was a recommendation around having some doctors in a mentoring relationship with the nurse practitioners. That has progressed through to looking at how we are going to open these walk-in centres in Belconnen and Tuggeranong, which are due to open in the first half of this year. It was not that doctors be present in the walk-in centre but, where necessary, to have the capacity for the senior practitioners, the senior clinical leaders, in the walk-in centre to seek information from a GP or a qualified medical practitioner available through ACT Health. I know one GP in particular has been working very closely with the nursing staff at the walk-in centre and provides a role as a mentor to those staff.

We are not looking to have doctors located in the walk-in centre, and I do not think, the community GPs in particular would support that. We are doing some work at the moment speaking with local GPs, the AMA and Medicare Local around the opening of the walk-in centres in the community to make sure there is seamless referral and that, if patients are being seen, say, in Tuggeranong and they have a GP in Tuggeranong, there is a good handover of information to that GP.

The way it is going at the moment is that whilst some of the GPs are not that happy about the walk-in centre opening in the community, they are working with us to make sure patient needs are cared for first.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, can you advise whether the walk-in centre at TCH will close once the centres in Belconnen and Tuggeranong are operational?

MS GALLAGHER: Yes, it will and I think I have been on the record saying that before. It will. Our commitment is to double the funding to the walk-in centres. We have done that. Also, there will be redevelopment in the area that the Woden walk-in centre is currently operating on.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, what services will be provided at the new walk-in centre at Tuggeranong?

MS GALLAGHER: All the services that are provided at the Woden one at the moment. It will be for similar-type patients—for minor injuries, low acuity illnesses, colds, flus, ear infections. They will be able to do some imaging and ordering of X-rays. They do wound management. So all of those types of services will be available at both Belconnen and Tuggeranong.

From my reading of the feedback that we have around the walk-in centre, it is still an incredibly popular option for people, particularly out of hours. I expect that that will continue with the model in both Tuggeranong and Belconnen when they open. They will be really well received. In fact I think 40 per cent of all presentations to the Canberra Hospital walk-in centre come from Tuggeranong post codes. So I feel pretty

confident that the Tuggeranong community in particular are going to welcome this new health service that will be provided seven days a week for extended hours and free of charge.

Roads—Clunies Ross Street

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, you would be aware that the CSIRO intends to vacate its Campbell headquarters site and move its headquarters to the Black Mountain facility. Fears were raised yesterday at the Canberra Business Council Vision 2050 luncheon that your government's plans to duplicate Clunies Ross Street will effectively divide the two organisations, dramatically reducing the effectiveness of the relocation and, in effect, splitting the ANU as an academic and research institution from the CSIRO as a research and development institution. Nobel Laureate Professor Brian Schmidt has called this a potential billion dollar mistake. Minister, what is your government doing to address this potential billion dollar mistake?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Mr Smyth for the question. This is the first time it has been raised with me, which surprises me if it has come from the Canberra Business Council because they have pretty frequent access to and dialogue with both myself and the Deputy Chief Minister. So I am happy to take a look at it if it is something that is at the development stage in TAMS. There is no funding for the duplication of Clunies Ross Street at this point in time. I have not even seen a feasibility study or a design and I certainly have not had any representations along the lines that you have outlined today. I am very happy to look at it.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, what alternatives were considered to the proposed duplication of Clunies Ross Street?

MS GALLAGHER: As I said, I have not seen any work being done—we have not funded a feasibility or a design study for that. So if it is getting in early, if people are speculating, then I think it is something where we can work with the business community, the CSIRO and Professor Schmidt, if there are concerns, to make sure that any concerns are addressed. As I said, there are no plans. It is not a matter that has come through the budget process previously and I am happy to look at it.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Chief Minister, are you aware of whether any agencies had communication with either CSIRO or the ANU regarding duplication of Clunies Ross?

MS GALLAGHER: Roads ACT are asked to speak with different organisations across a range of issues right across the city. So it would not surprise me if Roads ACT had had some discussion with someone about the traffic needs and how we deal with future traffic numbers along Clunies Ross. In any early discussion, it would not surprise me. I am very happy to chase that up. Perhaps the TAMS minister can follow that up and provide an update to the Assembly.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: This question may well be for TAMS, given your last answer: minister, with upgrades to Barry Drive, did those roadworks consider a duplication of Clunies Ross as part of the intersection?

MR RATTENBURY: Perhaps I can assist the Chief Minister on that one. As members are probably aware, some upgrade work was done to Clunies Ross Street at the northern end as part of the works with Barry Drive. But I am not aware of any other plans at this point in time. I will check that and I will endeavour to have an answer for you by the end of question time.

Multicultural affairs—Fringe Festival

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. On Tuesday, 25 February, in response to a question from me about the appointment of the director of the multicultural fringe festival, you stated:

Just at the outset, let us be very clear that no matter how you try to pitch this, it was within my rights of delegation to make that appointment.

Have you used the “rights of delegation” so mentioned to make other appointments in your portfolio areas?

MS BURCH: In reference to the National Multicultural Festival, there are a range of funds that are spent. There is the contract for Timomatic to come in—and other artists that were supported to be part of it. But as far as this festival is concerned, no. My appointment of Jorian Gardner was—

Mrs Jones: Point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Point of order, Mrs Jones.

Mrs Jones: The point of order is on relevance. It was not a question about this festival only; it was a question about the rights of delegation and whether they have been used in other portfolio areas.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think that maybe Minister Burch was getting there. I will give you some latitude, but I would encourage you to get to the point of the question, which was wider than the Multicultural Festival.

MS BURCH: Let us be clear: this was not employment; this was a deed of grant to someone to provide a service, and that was artistic direction, for the Fringe Festival for the Multicultural Festival in February of this year. Across my portfolios, there are probably times, and I do not have them in front of me, when I do sign off those delegations to buy a service through a deed of grant. But in most recent memory, Jorian Gardner is the one I recall.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, did you consult with the Chief Minister before making this delegation?

MS BURCH: I did not need to and I did not.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how many other deeds of grant have you personally signed off on?

MS BURCH: You will see that I actually did not sign this deed of grant. The deed of grant is between Jorian Gardner and representatives of the directorate.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, how successful has the contracting of Timomatic been for the festival?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Berry for her question. Indeed, the festival kicked off to a very fine start on the Friday night. There was a range of acts and, of course, the headline act for the Friday night was Timomatic. What is especially worthy of celebration is the history of Timomatic. I understand he is an ex-student of Narrabundah College and that he grew up with a local company, Kulture Break, which also performed on the Friday night. So it was a very strong connection—boy comes home after great success here and overseas to perform in his home town.

I know Mrs Jones was sitting up there in the front row observing Timomatic and the dancers taking their shirts off. She has not complained about that, though! I do not think too many women in town actually did complain about that, I will give you that, Mrs Jones.

MADAM SPEAKER: Would you address the chair, not Mrs Jones.

MS BURCH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Timomatic was a great success at the festival. I recall that Mrs Jones was there, and I am sure she enjoyed it. It is very good to see a local come back with great success and to share his success and his joy of Canberra with our community.

Sport—economic benefit

MS BERRY: My question is to the Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Sport and Recreation. Could the minister explain why the government's investment in sport is important for the local economy?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Berry for the question.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR BARR: I note the cynicism from those opposite about the sport and recreation industry. It is very disappointing. I would like to inform those opposite, because they probably were not paying attention, that in the 2010-11 financial year the government and ACTSport commissioned Access Economics to undertake a study into the value of the sport and recreation industry to the ACT.

In 2010-11, Access Economics found that the sport and recreation industry was worth \$250 million a year to the ACT economy and provided work for around 3,000 of our fellow Canberrans. The study also found that 27,000 Canberrans contributed more than three million hours annually in voluntary roles in the sector. That \$15 or \$16 an hour would equate to nearly \$50 million worth of labour contribution made voluntarily.

The study also showed that participation in sport and recreation saved the community nearly \$85 million annually in associated health costs. So there is no doubt that the government's investment in sport and recreation has generated significant benefits, both economic and social, for our community.

The government has invested significantly in our major event venues, such as Canberra Stadium, Manuka Oval and Stromlo Forest Park. The government has also supported significant investments in local and regional sporting facilities to assist local sporting organisations to encourage local participation, but also to encourage the hosting of events such as national championships.

Some examples of this investment include upgrades at the Lyneham sports precinct, the Narrabundah velodrome, the Woden athletics park, Gungahlin oval, Greenway oval, the Tuggeranong hockey fields, the Hawker synthetic football fields and the Hawker softball centre. Those are just some of the examples.

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MR BARR: There is a commitment to volleyball as well—yes, an Olympic sport, Mr Doszpot. There has been a commitment in recent times to Athletics ACT for new equipment as part of the Woden athletics park upgrade, to Fencing ACT for new equipment to support the national fencing championships being held in Canberra in 2015 and to the Canberra Dragon Boat Association for the procurement of racecourse infrastructure to support their major events on Lake Burley Griffin.

As members would be aware, both within our own country and internationally there is significant competition between cities to attract sporting events and high participation amateur events. So it is important that we invest in the city's venues to meet the standards and expectations of the sporting codes.

Leveraging off the outstanding success of the sporting program in our centenary year we look forward to bringing more and more major sporting events to our city. We have supported the Canberra Convention Bureau in assisting sport and recreation organisations to achieve that end. The bureau has delivered some outstanding results of that government investment.

It is an important area for the territory economy. It diversifies the territory economy and it brings a great deal of enjoyment to Canberrans to be able to participate in national sporting competitions in their home city and to be able to see the best in the nation and in the world in their own city. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, what major events will the ACT host in the next 12 months?

MR BARR: Starting on the coming weekend, we have the National Rally Championship. We are also looking forward to 2015, Canberra being the host to three Cricket World Cup matches at Manuka Oval in February and March. We also, of course, are one of four jurisdictions hosting matches in the Asian Football Cup. GIO Stadium will host six pool matches and a quarter final. There will be seven matches at the stadium. The final draw for this tournament will be announced later this month. So we will know the teams who will be based in Canberra for the pool rounds and likely quarter finalists later this month. But they are significant events for the city. We are only able to host them as a result of the investments in infrastructure and the success of our centenary year events.

I make the observation that these investments in facilities and in ensuring that ageing infrastructure is brought up to the minimum standard required for these competitions costs money—significant amounts of money—and we always need to keep an eye for the future and have a view not back to what we might have done 15 years ago but where we need to be in 15 years time.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, what are the economic benefits for hosting the Cricket World Cup and the soccer Asian Cup games?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Gentleman for the question. Both of these events obviously bring considerable economic and social benefits to the territory. Deloitte Access Economics has been engaged by the ICC Cricket World Cup organisers to undertake a pre-event economic impact and social benefits assessment for each of the host jurisdictions. At the time of that work, Deloitte Access Economics anticipated that the direct expenditure into the territory economy would be in excess of \$8 million, with a total added value to the territory in excess of \$7 million. These figures were based at the time on the ACT hosting only one pool match. We are now hosting three, so we can anticipate returns to our economy greater than those particular figures.

For the Asian Cup, the minimum estimated paying spectators for matches across the seven matches for the territory is around 55,000. This will clearly bring a significant amount of people to the territory, encouraging further economic activity in January, which is an important time of year for us to boost activity in our economy. It also provides a fantastic opportunity to promote our city throughout South-East Asia, and aligns particularly well with the government's economic development agenda, particularly around investment facilitation and direct flights into our city out of South-

East Asia. It is a fantastic opportunity and I am sure all members will enjoy the football. But the business development opportunities that come from hosting events like this are significant and the government and the Canberra business community intend to take full advantage of them.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, has “GIO Stadium” been gazetted as an official ACT government place name?

MR BARR: We do not own the asset; it is owned by the Australian Sports Commission. We have a leasing arrangement with them. The naming rights for the stadium were granted for a four-year period with an additional option for GIO.

Multicultural affairs—National Multicultural Festival

MR GENTLEMAN: My question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Can the minister inform the Assembly of the success of this year’s Multicultural Festival in promoting and welcoming our multicultural community? And how has this success been measured?

MS BURCH: It is with great pleasure that I can talk about the success of the 2014 Multicultural Festival. It won the whole-hearted support of the Canberra community, with over 250,000 people attending the event over the three days. This year there was a high quality cultural performance program across the eight stages and over 380 stalls providing food, information and craftwork.

The festival got off to an energised start on Friday, which I have spoken about, with the homegrown artist Timomatic the headline act, performing just after the local dance act Kulture Break. Other acts include Cossacks from Russia, Sol Nation, Benny Walker, Salsabor and Subsdance dance studios, the Bosnian Women’s Choir, Tibetan Yak Dance, the Canberra Bollywood school, Ethiopian cultural dance, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance classes and the popular rock’n’roll band Ol’ 55.

Every year, the Multicultural Festival brings together different cultures on a truly grand scale. This year was no exception. It is an affirmation of how much our city values and respects people from all backgrounds and loves coming together for a great party and celebration.

To assess the success of this year’s festival, a survey of spectators was undertaken. Initial results show a very high level of satisfaction.

Once again, I am very pleased that the report back from ACT Policing is that the event was largely incident free, with crowds very well behaved and without any major incident. That is a great outcome, with so many people—quarter of a million people—coming through our city centre over those three days. That report is very pleasing and shows that the community is out to enjoy our diverse and multicultural community over those three days.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who attended for helping to ensure that this important event was kept safe for all those participating. I would also like to congratulate the hardworking staff at the Office of Multicultural Affairs, all those people across government and the hundreds in the community sector organisations who, without a second thought, get involved in helping to bring such a great event together. And of course we all thank and acknowledge those who contributed to make another Multicultural Festival a great success—those who held stalls exhibiting fantastic food, the entertainers, the diplomatic corps, the vast array of sponsors who helped make this event possible, and the wonderful volunteers who were involved.

Importantly, what makes our festival so great is that the citizens of Canberra and the visitors that come to our city come together in their thousands to participate and appreciate Canberra being the multicultural community that it is today.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, does the government remain committed to supporting the Multicultural Festival in future years?

MS BURCH: We remain strongly committed to supporting the National Multicultural Festival in future years. It is a popular and widely anticipated event that brings the Canberra community together and provides a forum for cultural showcase and for the celebration of our city's diversity.

The festival's economic benefits include: generating increases in economic activity through engagement with entertainers and cultural groups and through attraction of tourists to the region; contributing to quality of life in Canberra and attracting people to live and to work and to study here; and attracting support and investment in cultural and community activities here in the ACT.

The festival has also important social and community benefits. It strengthens our community. It reduces social isolation and exclusion and generates a sense of identity and self-confidence. It changes the perception of the nature of our community, and it raises the profile of many of our diverse community groups.

The promotion of intercultural harmony is an important policy concern for the ACT. We as policymakers continue to face both the opportunities and challenges inherent in ensuring the successful integration of refugees, immigrants and members of diverse cultural communities.

For all those reasons, the government is unwavering in its commitment to the National Multicultural Festival for many years to come.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what was the process for awarding contracts to provide tents during the Multicultural Festival and why were local businesses overlooked for this opportunity?

MS BURCH: Many of the infrastructure support services that go to allowing us to have a successful multicultural festival are through a public procurement process, which would have been put out to tender. It would have been independently assessed.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, regarding the funding of the festival, has the extra \$100,000 not funded in the forward estimates yet been awarded or found in the budget process?

MS BURCH: It is my understanding that we had a budget for this year's festival. We committed those funds. It is yet to be fully acquitted, because you would appreciate that after two weeks those results are still coming in. But I am confident that we will deliver the 18th National Multicultural Festival on budget to the great satisfaction of a quarter of a million—

Mrs Jones: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Point of order, minister. Mrs Jones.

Mrs Jones: It is a point of order on relevance. I am not sure that the minister heard my question properly. I asked about the extra \$100,000 that is missing out of the forward estimates in fact in the last two years for the four-year forward estimates of the budget.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister Burch, have you got anything to add to that?

MS BURCH: No.

Canberra Institute of Technology—alleged bullying

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the minister for education. Minister, my question relates to your response to the report of the review of allegations of workplace bullying and other misconduct at the Canberra Institute of Technology. Minister, which are the—and I quote your comment—“small areas” within the CIT that the report confirmed had problems?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Doszpot for his question and his continued interest in occupational health and safety at CIT. Let us be very clear that the report that the commissioner put out back in September of last year was very clear in its statements that there were areas of poor practice. It covered a range of things. It covered communication; it covered how grievances were managed. The report was very clear in its statement that there was no evidence and no substantiation of systematic bullying. That does not mean to say that those individuals involved were not aggrieved, were not troubled and were not hurt by some individuals within CIT. I am not saying that. But there is a very clear distinction between an allegation of systematic abuse and bullying within a workplace and individual areas of concern and poor practice.

I would also refer back to the report of the commissioner, who said that the changes and the improvements put in place by CIT are the right changes and the right processes, and the right direction for an organisation to be in. I have confidence that they have certainly learnt lessons that needed to be learnt, that positive changes are put in place and that they are on the right track.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, as you have just stated, a lot of people have been hurt and—

MADAM SPEAKER: No preamble, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what if any actions have been taken against the perpetrators of those problems?

MS BURCH: It is my advice—and there are only small matters outstanding—that no cases have been substantiated. There have been internal improvements from a system approach about how the organisation as an entity goes about its business of good people safety and occupation health and safety and people management through to perhaps counselling or discussions with individuals concerned. But let us be clear: there is no evidence and there have been no findings of systematic bullying and no cases have been substantiated.

The apology from CIT management to those individuals was sincere. Some may not feel that, but as the minister responsible for CIT I can absolutely give assurance that that apology was sincere.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, how does CIT work with industry and government on OH&S programs within the CIT?

Mr Hanson: On a point of order on relevance, this line of questioning and the answers from the minister go directly to the issue of bullying and the report and response to that, not to the other elements.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think I am right that bullying of staff is an OH&S issue. I do recall that Ms Burch mentioned OH&S in answer to one of her questions. Mr Gentleman, would you like to repeat the question, because I have lost track of it?

MR GENTLEMAN: Certainly, Madam Speaker. Minister, how does CIT work with both industry and government on OH&S programs within the CIT?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Gentleman for his interest here and—

Members interjecting—

MS BURCH: Madam Speaker, I am sorry. Sometimes I do get distracted and I apologise for that.

MADAM SPEAKER: It happens to us all, Minister Burch.

MS BURCH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We work very closely as a government. We have an absolutely clear commitment that there is no tolerance for bullying in a workplace. I think the reality in any institution and in any workplace is that, sadly, it may happen but, as a government, our principle is that there is no tolerance for bullying and workplace harassment.

As part of the response and the change of practice within CIT, following quite an extensive—I do not think members in this place can underestimate the level of interrogation and review that was undertaken through the commissioner and independent investigators through this process. Since September last year when the commissioner's report was released, for example, Mr Gentleman, CIT has recruited and trained an additional 10 RED contact officers—that is, respect, equity and diversity officers—that are available to CIT staff across all campuses.

Prior to the commissioner's report, CIT engaged independent external investigators that were involved. Again, as this works through—there are still a couple of outstanding matters so it will probably be next month when all matters are concluded—there be a complete set of findings. But CIT has made an absolute commitment that if any findings show there can be improved practice they will get on and implement that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Hanson

MR HANSON: Minister, how can this report be the final report when there are more cases still under investigation?

MS BURCH: The report I am referring to was from the ACT public service commissioner, who put his final report out in 2013. Within that report there are a number of matters that CIT needed to conclude investigations on. So they have been working with independent investigators to conclude that process. It is my understanding from the last time I spoke to CIT about that—their advice to me is that those matters will be concluded—

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Doszpot!

MS BURCH: by March. So the commissioner concluded his report. As a result of that, there are still some matters that are being worked through, including by some independent investigators. Some of those investigators could be the investigators who were part of the commissioner's report. In short, we will come to the end of this process in March. Those actions that need to be done will be done.

But it is very clear that we have a great organisation here in the ACT—the Canberra Institute of Technology. Its enrolments, as I understand, are very strong. Its offerings are very attractive to our Canberra community and region. They have a strong place in making sure that this city and this region are prepared in an education sense and in a working with industry sense. It will do all it can to look after its workforce and make sure it continues to be the premier institution—

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Doszpot!

MS BURCH: that it is.

Energy—renewable

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development. Minister, a headline commitment under the action plan 2, the climate change action plan, was to achieve a 90 per cent renewable energy target for the ACT by 2020. As it is now over a year since AP2 was adopted, are you able to advise the Assembly as to how we are progressing towards meeting this target?

MR CORBELL: I thank Dr Bourke for his question. Yes, the government is making significant progress in the implementation of actions that are set out in action plan 2, the government's action plan to implement measures and policies to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent on the 1990 baseline year by the year 2020.

We need, of course, to do this work, because as a city we have a very high level per capita of greenhouse gas emissions. The government has set out a range of measures to achieve this. Since action plan 2 was released we have, first of all, put in place a range of measures to help home owners, to help commercial business operators to save money on their electricity bills and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. For example, we are running the ACTSmart program, reaching out to hundreds of Canberra businesses with programs to help them upgrade their refrigeration, their electrical systems, their lighting systems, to save money and reduce their energy consumption. Those programs have been overwhelmingly well received by small and medium business operators in our city.

We have implemented the energy efficiency improvement scheme, which is going to reach out to over 70,000 Canberra households and provide them with free or subsidised energy efficiency services, energy saving devices. Those programs have already reached 10,000 Canberra households. They are delivering savings of the equivalent of around \$300 off household electricity bills, and they are going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by around three-quarters of a million tonnes.

Finally, we are moving ahead with the deployment of renewable energy for our city. The government, through the solar auction process, has demonstrated how you can deliver large-scale renewable at an affordable price for Canberrans. We see the Royalla solar project now well underway south of Tuggeranong, adjacent to Royalla,

the largest solar photovoltaic generation facility yet to be built here in Australia. And we have two other projects, at Uriarra and at Mugga Lane, going through the appropriate assessment processes to determine whether or not they procure their approvals to be able to proceed to construction.

Finally, today we have new legislation on the table to expand the renewable energy capacity available in the large-scale feed-in tariff scheme, to lift it to 550 megawatts, to support the deployment of a 90 per cent renewable energy target, a target that we know is both achievable and affordable for Canberra households. This level of renewable energy generation will drive significant investment in our city and our region. It will support the abatement we need to achieve to meet our 40 per cent target by the year 2020, and it can drive opportunities for local Canberra businesses who are engaged in photovoltaic research in our research institutions, in firms that do work around wind resource assessment, which are all local Canberra businesses and who welcome a policy setting from a government that is committed to and supportive of the uptake and adoption of renewable energy technologies.

So not only is it about achieving abatement; it is about supporting local businesses, supporting local contractors, supporting local intellectual property, supporting local investment, as much as it is about bringing the best from around the world to make a difference for our city and our community. The legislation before the Assembly today demonstrates the commitment this government has to implementing action plan 2 and getting on with the job of cutting our greenhouse gas emissions.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you please advise the Assembly whether the innovative solar auction the ACT government has adopted has proven to be a successful process for allocating solar energy capacity?

MR CORBELL: I thank Dr Bourke for his supplementary question. Yes, it is the case that the solar auction process has proven to be a successful exercise for achieving large scale renewables at a low cost to ACT electricity customers. The government commissioned Sinclair Knight Merz to undertake a review of the operation of the solar auction process. I have tabled their summary report here in the Assembly today. SKM, as they are known, are a national consulting firm with specific expertise in energy policy. We welcome their work on the solar auction process.

Their report has confirmed that the solar auction process delivered large scale renewables efficiently and effectively and achieved value for money outcomes. It concluded that it was effective in meeting the objectives of the act and that this was reflected in positive industry and stakeholder feedback.

It also concluded that the auction process was an effective mechanism to generate strong competition from competing renewable energy operators. To quote from the report:

The Solar Auction effectively achieved all of its outcomes, resulting in a competitive process that provided the ACT Government with a number of high quality proposals to select from that offered relatively low FiT rates (thus providing value for money).

That is a strong endorsement of the policy architecture this government has put in place. That is also reflected in the prices that have been bid for large-scale renewables to date: the Royalla solar project, the lowest price per kilowatt hour ever put forward by the private sector in Australia for large scale renewables; the Zhenfa project at Mugga Lane, a full cent below the Royalla project; and the Uriarra project, the same price as Royalla. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Berry, a supplementary question.

MS BERRY: Minister, how will the ACT economy benefit from this renewable energy policy?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Berry for her supplementary. Obviously the lower the price that we achieve for large-scale renewable the more efficient it is for our economy as a whole and the less of a cost impost is passed through to electricity customers as we make this transition to a renewable energy future.

We also, of course, by investing in renewables, know that, once we have addressed the issue of up-front cost, the fuel of renewable energy generation, the sunlight and the wind, is free. When we think about the long-term investment that we should be making as a city, we need to be asking whether we should be continuing to find ourselves hooked into an energy generation system and network where the prices of fuel are going to continue to increase, as we have seen with gas just in the last few weeks in terms of the decisions coming out of New South Wales, or whether we should make the shift to fuel sources that in the future will be free of charge and that the generation capability will have been paid for.

That is why the switch to renewables is so important. But it is equally important in terms of encouraging activity in our local economy. As I was saying earlier, there are Canberra-based researchers in our academic institutions and in the private sector developing innovations in the renewable energy space. They welcome the opportunity to partner with companies on the ground that are helping to deliver large-scale renewable in our city and our region. We see that happening right now. We see that happening with companies that have been successful in the solar auction and who are partnering and putting money on the table in our academic institutions to support renewable energy research.

This is a good thing for our city. It is generating the capacity of our city. It is the type of policy we will need into the future as we make the shift to a renewable energy city.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, through AP2, how many homes took up the option of the home energy improvement scheme?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Porter for her supplementary. Around 10,000 homes so far have been reached by the energy efficiency improvement scheme—10,000 homes in less than a year. That is a fantastic reach-out to the broader community. We are seeing thousands of energy saving devices being provided to those homes. That is already having an impact on their electricity bills by bringing them down. As I have said before, the savings are anticipated to be around \$300 off people's electricity bills through this scheme.

Equally, we know we are going to reach, over the life of the scheme, about 70,000 Canberra households. The abatement that we are going to achieve, the cut in our city's carbon emissions, is going to be around three-quarters of a million tonnes. Here is a scheme that saves householders money, reduces their cost of living and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. And guess who was the only party that did not vote for it in this place: the Canberra Liberals.

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

Personal explanation

MRS JONES (Molonglo): I wish to make a personal explanation under standing order 46.

MADAM SPEAKER: Do you claim to have been misrepresented?

MRS JONES: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: She closed her eyes when he took his shirt off.

MRS JONES: Thank you for that, Minister Rattenbury.

MADAM SPEAKER: You have leave to make a brief statement under standing order 46.

MRS JONES: While I was very pleased to see Timomatic performing at the multicultural festival, it should be a matter of public record that he did not remove any clothing in my presence and I do not think that strip tease and nipple tassels were on the stage that he was performing on.

Supplementary answers to questions without notice **Child care—places**

MS BURCH: In response to a question around Precious Momentz, for the information of members, I wish to clarify a couple of things. The CPRU identified Mawson Primary School as an alternate. I said the McKillop precinct. It was Mawson primary. Precious Momentz visited that. They indicated that they would like to take that as a temporary alternate, but I have also just been advised during question time that Precious Momentz have indicated through the new owners that they can provide an extension up to 14 April. So we will continue to work with them, but they can stay where they are until 14 April.

Roads—Clunies Ross Street

MR RATTENBURY: I can provide a quick clarification on Clunies Ross Street. I can confirm to the Assembly that there is no current proposal to duplicate that road. However, Roads ACT has been looking at the road as a possibility for a future upgrade. A feasibility study on design is in the roads program forward for five to 10 years, but at this point in time has no budget funding.

Regional Development—Select Committee Statement by chair

MS BERRY (Ginninderra): I present the following paper:

Regional Development—Select Committee—

Chair's Draft, dated November 2013.

Alternative Draft, dated November 2013.

I seek leave to make a statement on the documents I am tabling.

Leave granted.

MS BERRY: Now we have an opportunity to show the Assembly and the residents of the ACT the important work of the Select Committee on Regional Development. The inquiry into regional development considered the ACT's relationship and engagement with its surrounding region, in particular the matters of economic development, service delivery, collaborative procurement, the environment, conservation and community resilience. The report goes into these points in great detail and we provide a series of recommendations, all of which aim to strengthen our already strong ties with our region.

Recommendations worth highlighting include that the ACT government make arrangements in the ACT and make representations to the New South Wales government so as to improve coordination at the state and territory level and across local government areas; that the ACT and New South Wales governments in collaboration develop a brand and marketing strategy for the region that draws on agricultural production, including wine and speciality foods, its clean green image, renewable energy production, and natural assets including the Snowy Mountains and the south coast; that the ACT government form coalitions with the region based on common interest to lobby for government funds for transport infrastructure; and that grants applications should be based on data collected on current and projected use, accident rates, projected economic benefits if the infrastructure is built, and opportunity cost; and that the ACT government, in association with the New South Wales government, establish a process to define and promote a tourism brand for the Australian Capital Region based on its clean green image, natural attractions, and wine and food producers. This will entail working with individual businesses and local government authorities in the region to position their attractions with the overall brand.

If this Assembly today had not moved the amendment that it did to table these documents, we would not be able to know these recommendations. We would never have known our ideas for building better relationships within our region. What we have today is a substantial 200 page report with considered, thoughtful recommendations that would be of benefit to a government regardless of their party or affiliation. When we look at Mr Smyth's draft report, and I will start with what I will charitably call recommendations, there are nine items listed here. But I fail to see that any of these are actually recommendations for government action.

Mr Smyth is really keen on condemning the government, but he has nothing to say about what we could do to develop our region.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MS BERRY: There are no positive plans, no engagement with the evidence the committee was presented with and definitely no new ideas for Canberra. I should not be surprised by this because it appears from reading this report that Mr Smyth was too busy reminiscing about ancient history to engage with the present day and the people who gave up their time to inform the ACT government policy. In this slim little report we have 16 citations. Only four of the sources actually refer to evidence received by this committee. In fact, Mr Smyth—

Mr Corbell interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MS BERRY: In fact, Mr Smyth has more to say about ancient history when he and Kate Carnell were hanging out being super cool at band camp. In all seriousness, it is okay for Mr Smyth to want to talk about the past as long as it informs visions for the future. In this report there is simply no vision to be found.

It is clear that the Liberals are jamming up our committee system because they have no plan for our region. I am pleased that we were able today to table Mr Smyth's report because it a sloppy little 11 page indictment of his complete disdain for the people of Canberra, for this parliament and for the region.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call you, Mr Smyth, I want members to understand that these papers are tabled. They are not executive documents. They have not been authorised for publication. They are available for members to peruse, but they do not attract privilege in any way and they are not available for members of the public outside this chamber to have access to without my express permission. I just want to make sure that people understand the status of these documents.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella), by leave: Members, I think you really should read both reports. It is interesting to note that when you go to the government's submissions—

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Barr: It didn't take long to read yours, did it?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR SMYTH: No, it will not take long to read our report because it is succinct.

Mr Barr: Succinct!

MR SMYTH: It is succinct. It is straight to the point.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR SMYTH: What it points out—

Mr Barr interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Barr! I call you to order. You had plenty of leeway.

MR SMYTH: I do thank members for their leave to go through the dissenting report that I put forward. Regional engagement should be a regular function of the ACT government. It should be. It has not been. That is the problem. There is an interesting quote—I think it is from George Orwell—that says that he who controls the past controls the future, and he who controls the present controls the past. It is about understanding what has happened. The draft report from the committee did not go to any of the history in any detail about the failures of this government. You really do have to understand that there was a system in place that was working reasonably well.

I think you only have to go to some of the quotes. It is stated that:

In May 1996 sub-regional partners consisting of the ACT and NSW Governments, NSW councils of Yass, Yarrowlumla, Gunning, Queanbeyan and Cooma-Monaro, and the Commonwealth commenced a strategic planning project to develop a Framework ...

It was happening. The regret from many of the councils that put in submissions is that it stopped when the Stanhope government came to office. Not only did it stop; the attitude of the Stanhope government for many years was so dismissive of the councils that they certainly did not look to the ACT government of the last decade for leadership at all.

That is what my report seeks to highlight, that there have been so many opportunities in the last decade that the government has failed to capitalise on. It is well and good for the Chief Minister to say, “I have got this portfolio called regional development. I do not know what to do with it; give us some ideas.” But clearly she did not even know what was going on within her own departments. When you look at the government’s own strategy it shows clearly how this government is out of touch—one, with what its department is doing and, two, with what is actually happening out there.

You only need to look at the number of things that they are engaged in. For instance, no clear advice was provided by the Chief Minister on the interplay between the strategy being developed and this committee’s finding. The government is working on the greater capital regional strategy. It was due to be finished by the end of 2013 but having put it in train I then asked whether there were any deficiencies in what she expected from that report. She said that there were no deficiencies.

Then we asked whether there were other matters being currently handled with the greater capital regional strategy and the ACT-New South Wales land use and infrastructure plan. We asked whether the select committee inquiry was addressing any deficiencies in the two other concurrent initiatives. The Chief Minister responded, “I do not think there is anything deficient.”

We have got all these bodies doing all this work. We have got all this duplication and then the Chief Minister says, “We will get a committee to do it as well.” What is the point of having public servants doing this work? Is it a lack of faith in them? Is it a smokescreen to have a committee here? Or is it that the Chief Minister just did not actually know what was happening inside her own government?

The same can be applied to the other government regional initiatives that they list, which are the Regional Development Australia (ACT) Committee; the remaining elements of the ACT-New South Wales MOU for regional collaboration; the New South Wales Cross-Border Commissioner; the South-East Regional Organisation of Councils; individual councils that they talk to; the COAG Regional Australia Standing Council and the Canberra Urban and Regional Futures group.

We have all these things happening. No wonder they have not had anybody interested in being the minister for this because there is so much going on. The problem is that they are not doing anything with it. Really, what the select committee process uncovered has been the government’s mismanagement of the ACT’s regional engagement. As we say in the report, this is a result of duplication of initiatives leading to inconsistent outcomes, a lack of coherent definition of what the government means by the region and delays on taking action to address known regional issues affecting service delivery in the ACT.

I can go on. I could read the whole report. It is probably worth reading the whole report because, again, at lunch time I was lucky enough to be with some of the regional leaders from Cooma-Monaro and Bega. Again, they are waiting for the government to do something.

A number of the regional leaders came together for a function at Parliament House but there was nobody from the government there. There was nobody from the government. The Canberra Liberals were there. There was a delegation from China there but nobody from the government could make it. That is why this government stands condemned. Yes, I think the word “condemned” is in all the recommendations. I think it is in all of them. It should be because it deserves to be there.

What we have had is a government that for 12 years failed to properly engage with the surrounding regions, and they should be condemned for that. They should be condemned for not having a clear definition of what the region is. They should be condemned for their confused and complicated approach to regional affairs. They should be condemned for failing to have a regional development strategy for the past 12 years. They should be condemned—the Chief Minister should be condemned—for failing to have a vision for the future for Canberra and its surrounding region. They should be condemned for failing to capitalise on the economic opportunities that the region presents—not just the region but the ACT. They should be condemned for failing to deliver an appropriate integrated infrastructure plan for the region. They should be condemned for the failure to show leadership on the issue.

A number of the councils were vehement in the way that they said they had been treated by the former Chief Minister. They called him patronising and dismissive. They said that he had a dismissive attitude to surrounding councils. That is your legacy. That is where we have come from. You have got this hotchpotch approach. It is like so many plans that the government puts together. They will have a release. There will be a nice glossary. I remember Jon Stanhope saying in opposition that there will not be circuses and there will be not be stunts. But really this is a government of circuses and stunts. The biggest circus has been your approach to regional development for which you all should be condemned.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education), by leave: I thank members for leave to add a few comments to the tabling of these documents today. I would congratulate Mr Smyth on an excellent address to the Assembly—one of classic political spin, of managing to hide the embarrassment of having to table the work—if you can call it a report—of the Select Committee on Regional Development and trying to turn it into a diatribe against the government.

It should come as no surprise that this is the input that the Canberra Liberals have been prepared to have in regional development. You do quote one quote from me in this report where you say, “It is a very genuine attempt to involve the Assembly in the regional discussion.” You have had the good honour of putting that quote in, which is exactly what we were seeking to do with the select committee.

Yes, the government is doing a range of work. We will do that regardless but this was also an attempt to enlist the interests and ideas of all Assembly members into how we grow and support the capital region. If you look back on my record on what I have been doing in regional development in the last two years we have made more progress in regional development than I think there has been since self-government.

I am not saying that to congratulate myself. I am saying that to actually prove the effort that has gone in to that makes a difference to regional communities. You asked the people whose lives have been saved from the cardiac partnership that it is in place. You ask the people who are getting renal dialysis out at Goulburn under the care of the Canberra Hospital whether it has made a difference to them. You ask someone who presents at the emergency department at one of the small hospitals and can get straight into a consultation with a senior staff specialist at the Canberra Hospital via a video link whether it makes a difference.

These are the practical steps we have taken to make sure that the regional community is strengthened by our role as the regional centre. This is a report that is either quoting the golden years of Kate Carnell or reminiscing on greener times, on more positive times for Mr Smyth personally. There are large quotes about that and then large quotes from Mr Smyth himself on page 4. That takes up a fair bit of it. It is probably the only report where he will be quoted from *Hansard*. Then there is a page of condemn and deplore motions. No wonder this committee could not put a report together.

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

That the papers be authorised for publication.

Legislation program—autumn 2014

Paper and statement by minister

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

Legislation Program—Autumn 2014—Key themes and priority bills.

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

Leave granted.

MS GALLAGHER: I am pleased to outline the key themes and highlights of some of the prospective bills that will be tabled in the autumn sittings. The second year of the term has begun as 2013 finished, with a strong government focus on delivering our commitments while responding to the changing needs of the ACT.

The broad suite of legislation we will introduce to the Assembly during the first half of 2014 takes important steps in a range of areas. It will reflect the values and vision of the government. Our legislative priorities will deliver on our priorities as a government—in particular our determination to protect local jobs and strengthen our economy in response to the headwinds brought on by contracting federal spending. These sittings will also see legislation to continue the local implementation of major national reforms for fairness and equity.

As the government continues to implement a long-term strategy of economic reform, we should all note the resilience our economy has shown during recent months of uncertainty. The government's strategy for growth and diversification, combined with a strong budget position and a fiscal strategy which supports rather than undermines local jobs, has helped maintain growth and kept unemployment at the lowest rate in Australia. Upcoming legislation will continue to support growth and development in the ACT through measures to simplify commercial leasing and lease variation arrangements.

Specifically, the government will propose amendments to the Planning and Development Act 2007. The Planning and Development (Project Facilitation) Amendment Bill 2014 will provide for efficiencies in the territory plan variation and development assessment processes.

The amendments seek to: allow the territory executive to declare a special precinct area through disallowable instrument; allow the territory executive to make a declaration on a proposed key project of major public importance by disallowable instrument; allow a development proponent to lodge a development application that applies a draft territory plan variation; allow an impact track development application to be lodged concurrently with an environmental impact statement; and allow a development proponent to apply for a development approval in situations where a proposed development is lodged primarily within one zone under the territory plan but has a small encroachment into another zone where the development is currently prohibited.

The amendments will bring new efficiency and responsiveness to the planning system and, in turn, greater certainty and confidence for business to identify and act on development opportunities. Importantly, the amendments will also create opportunities for the private sector to collaborate with the government on projects of major public importance.

These changes will be part of a measured, strategic, consultative suite of measures which the government is considering to provide economic stimulus. They will be complemented by the Duties (Commercial Leases) Amendment Bill 2014, which will create more effective and transparent commercial lease provisions and give business greater clarity on commercial lease duty. The bill will amend long-term lease provisions for leases exceeding 30 years to make sure anti-avoidance measures are not a burden for legitimate long-term leases, which have been unintentionally captured by these measures in the past.

Within government, we are also targeting new efficiencies to deliver effective and transparent government and direct resources to the areas of greatest need. The Red Tape Reduction Omnibus Bill 2014 will make a number of legislative amendments to remove unnecessary burdens on business in the ACT. The government is continuing to improve the business environment through red tape reduction, building on reforms already underway.

The government will also move to replace the Public Sector Management Act 1994 with the ACT Public Service Bill 2014. This bill brings forward a framework to reduce the complexity and red tape in the current ACT public service employment framework. It will reflect the modern approach to public sector legislation recently incorporated in changes to commonwealth legislation.

These sittings will also see the introduction of legislation with the potential to transform the lives of those living with major injury or disability, their families and carers. The Lifetime Care and Support Scheme (Catastrophic Injuries) Bill 2014, introduced today by Minister Barr, will guarantee the ongoing treatment and care of those who suffer catastrophic injury in a motor accident. This bill delivers to the ACT the first stage of the national injury insurance scheme—itsself a vital addition to the national disability insurance scheme. For accident victims, it removes the burden of proving fault before they can claim for long-term care and spares families the strain of a long litigation process.

The government will also take the next legislative step in preparation for the launch of the national disability insurance scheme. The Disability Services (Disability Service Providers) Amendment Bill 2014 will amend the Disability Services Act 1991 to embed quality assurance requirements for disability service providers which operate under the NDIS.

In its current form, the Disability Services Act 1991 is not compatible with the NDIS because it relies on a funding relationship between the ACT government and service providers. The government's legislation will redefine the ACT's jurisdiction and scope to remove our reliance on this funding relationship and provide for a strong safeguarding framework. This reform is vital to ensure the NDIS delivers on its promise to Canberrans living with disabilities through a consistent and high quality of care across the sector.

In mental health, the government will introduce the long-awaited Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Amendment Bill 2014 to significantly improve the experience for users of mental health services in the ACT and their carers and align us with national and international mental health law reform. The revisions will introduce the key concept of decision-making capacity to the act and improve opportunities for mental health consumers to have input to treatment, care and support planning.

Review and oversight of treatment orders is enhanced and compliance with the needs of the ACT Human Rights Act has been addressed. The amendments also introduce a new class of forensic mental health orders and provide for people who suffer as a result of another person's mental illness, similar to the way in which current provisions for victims of crime work.

This summary of bills provides just part of the government's legislative agenda for these sittings. They show the overarching priorities which continue to guide our actions, to create new opportunities for Canberrans and improve the working of government across the ACT.

We are pursuing these reforms in line with our fundamental commitments to equality, opportunity, fairness, safety and dignity. With these values firmly in mind, the government will continue to make Canberra an even better place in which to live, work and invest.

Papers

Ms Gallagher presented the following paper:

Gene Technology Act, pursuant to subsection 136A(3)—Operations of the Gene Technology Regulator—Quarterly report—1 April to 30 June 2013, dated 26 September 2013.

Mr Barr presented the following paper:

Financial Management Act—Instruments, including a statement of reasons, pursuant to section 18A—Authorisation of expenditure from the Treasurer's Advance to the Legal Aid Commission (ACT), dated 14 February 2014.

Bushfire preparedness—government submission Paper and statement by minister

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

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Inquiry—Auditor-General's Report 5/2013—Bushfire Preparedness—Government submission.

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

Leave granted.

MR CORBELL: Today I have tabled the government's submission to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiry into the Auditor-General's audit report of July 2013 on the ACT's bushfire preparedness. The government welcomed the release of this audit report which praises the framework the government has in place for bushfire preparedness.

The Auditor-General found that the legislation the government has in place, as well as the strategic bushfire management plan and bushfire operational plans, effectively provide the framework needed to manage the risk of bushfires in the ACT. It provides us with an assurance that the ACT Emergency Services Agency staff and volunteers are working well to ensure they are ready to respond to, and that the community is prepared for, bushfires which will inevitably occur. The Auditor-General's report also provides the government with recommendations on where improvements can be made, which the government welcomes.

The government's submission is a considered and measured response to the Auditor-General's report. The government has agreed, or agreed in part, to the 24 audit report recommendations. Six of these were considered as a high priority by the Auditor-General. The ESA, in consultation and cooperation with other ACT government directorates, agencies and local organisations with roles defined within the Emergencies Act, such as the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, has already commenced action in the areas recommended for improvement.

I can advise members of the Assembly that seven of the recommendations have already been addressed. Recommendation 2 was that the ESA should comply with the Emergencies Act requirements for the SBMP by including in this plan an explicit statement of all resources needed to meet the objectives of the plan. I tabled this statement of resources in the Assembly in November last year.

Recommendation 4 related to a review of the SBMP implementation working group. I am advised the implementation working group terms of reference were reviewed and finalised in September last year and that group has been meeting regularly.

Recommendation 10 related to a review of the ACT Bushfire Council within two years against its terms of reference. The terms of reference were endorsed by the Bushfire Council and a review of the council will occur by mid-2015.

Recommendation 18 was that the ESA and TAMS Directorate should continue to improve working relationships between the ACT RFS, parks brigade and ACT RFS headquarters. An MOU between the ESA and TAMS has been reviewed, finalised and signed off as of October last year. An annual review is built into this MOU.

Recommendation 22 was that the ESA and TAMS should clarify the timing of the requirement for meeting firefighter fitness requirements as set out in the ACT RFS operating procedures. The ACT RFS standard operating procedures for rural firefighter fitness have been updated and revised wording has been included in the draft TAMS enterprise agreement which is yet to be finalised.

Recommendation 23 was that the ACT RFS headquarters should implement a system to provide assurance to the Chief Officer, ACT RFS, that personnel and equipment readiness meet requirements. I understand that equipment checks were finalised in November last year, and the results recorded and endorsed by the Chief Officer of ACT RFS. Fire readiness assurance is part of the annual business and pre-season preparations for the RFS.

Recommendation 24 was that the ESA should develop and test administrative procedures for the communications systems used for the distribution of public warning and emergency alerts. I am advised that the procedures are in place, and the process for the regular testing of the backup system has been implemented.

As members can see, the Assembly can be assured today that the ESA, JACS, TAMS and the Environment and Sustainable Development directorates are actioning the

remaining recommendations. The government is committed to ensuring that the territory remains well prepared for bushfire, and that bushfire plans and resources are maintained in place.

The Auditor-General has previously stated that the government's prevention and preparedness activities position the community to meet the challenges of living in the bush capital. The audit report also found that the legislation the government has in place, as well as the SBMP and bushfire operational plans, effectively provide the framework needed to manage the risk of bushfire.

The ESA's capability has been tested and proven once again during the current fire season. ACT ESA personnel have been well prepared, and have effectively suppressed a significant number of grass and bushfires that have occurred in the territory since the beginning of this year's fire season. The ESA has also assisted in recent major fires in New South Wales and Victoria.

The Auditor-General's audit report has certainly contributed to further strengthening the ACT's bushfire preparedness and management. The approach of shared responsibility has always been a constant theme since the 2003 firestorm. The Auditor-General's report and recommendations support the ESA's commitment to continuing to build shared responsibility by improving the resilience and capacity of both the community and the government for bushfires.

I can also advise the Assembly, in conclusion, that a review of the SBMP started in late September 2013. I launched the SBMP community consultation process last Wednesday, calling for comments through local media, online and social media, as well as a series of public meetings.

The government's key message for this review, "Living on the edge: help shape bushfire management in the ACT", is designed to draw the attention of Canberrans living in at-risk areas where the city meets the bush and people who travel through these areas to get to work or use them for recreation.

The core principles that underline the current SBMP remain sound, and will carry over into the revised plan, such as the ACT's comprehensive hazard reduction, burning and fuel removal program. Some key areas that have also been identified for the review include vulnerable people at risk during bushfires, ensuring the community better understands the risk of living in bushfire-prone areas, and urban vegetation management to identify better gardening techniques to ensure household gardens do not become fire hazards. I commend the submission to the Assembly.

Papers

Mr Corbell presented the following papers:

Australian Crime Commission (ACT) Act, pursuant to subsection 51(5)—Board of the Australian Crime Commission—Chair annual report 2012-13, dated 2 December 2013.

Action Plan for Accessible Public Transport in the ACT—2013-2018.

ACT Criminal Justice—Statistical Profile 2013—December quarter.

Heavy Vehicle National Law as applied by the *Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012* (Qld)—

Heavy Vehicle (Fatigue Management) National Regulation—Subordinate Legislation 2013 No 78.

Heavy Vehicle (General) National Regulation—Subordinate Legislation 2013 No 79.

Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Amendment Regulation—Subordinate Legislation 2014 No 9.

Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation—Subordinate Legislation 2013 No. 77.

Heavy Vehicle (Transitional) National Regulation—Subordinate Legislation 2014 No 10.

Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation—Subordinate Legislation 2013 No 76

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Radiation Protection Act—Radiation Protection (Student) Exemption 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-7 (LR, 13 February 2014).

Road Transport (General) Act—Road Transport (General) Fees For Publications Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-6 (LR, 7 February 2014).

Road Transport (General) Act and Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Act—Road Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2014-2 (LR, 7 February 2014).

Ms Burch presented the following paper:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act—Pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports—2012-2013—Education and Training Directorate, dated 25 September 2013—Corrigenda.

Government—unnecessary laws and regulations
Discussion of matter of public importance

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Gentleman): Madam Speaker has received letters from Ms Berry, Dr Bourke, Mr Coe, Mr Gentleman, Mr Hanson, Mrs Jones, Ms Porter and Mr Smyth proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, Madam Speaker has determined that the matter proposed by Mrs Jones be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of removing unnecessary laws and regulations.

MRS JONES (Molonglo) (4.15): Today I am very pleased to speak on the great importance of removing unnecessary laws. It is not just important to remove unnecessary laws here in the ACT; it matters also to ensure that our city is well governed and people are given every opportunity to live their lives with freedom.

We would all agree that there are certain laws that are important for ensuring that our society runs smoothly, and we acknowledge and appreciate the implementation of these laws. But we can go too far. Take, for example, the overreaching Greens motion this week to ban pig stalls in a city that has no pig industry and the banning of caged hens where there are no caged hens.

It is a matter of not only not enacting silly laws, but also keeping an eye on laws that are out of date. There are practical reasons for removing unnecessary laws. For example, I believe it to be the case that it is still illegal to drive after dark on any of the main roads of Hobart in Tasmania in a carriage which does not have a lantern burning. While we may not have anything this archaic, laws not allowing a front fence may seem ridiculous to new arrivals in this city.

The federal government has established a regular “repeal day” where the coalition will seek to repeal more than 8,000 redundant federal laws. This is a process which would be of great benefit to the Assembly, as the legislation register should be assessed for laws that are no longer applicable.

If we look at what legislation has been implemented under this Labor-Greens government, it is clear that they are sometimes seeking new areas to impose rules and controls over. Government control via laws in this place seems to be the standard response. As a result, we run the risk of imposing stifling levels of controls over good citizens who are trying to get on with the important business of their daily lives.

The government should act and make decisions to allow people the freedom to better their lives as they see fit. Yet those opposite seem to have another focus sometimes. The use of legislation to “make a point” or “educate people” is, in my view, an abuse of this place, which is why we are unsupportive of the pig stall legislation and other such actions.

We have to guard against intrusion into the private realms of people’s lives. Human freedom must be protected from the political temptation to create a nanny state telling people what a small but powerful group of legislators think is best for them. Some examples of a lack of vigilance in this area include the sausage sizzle debacle, regulations regarding the colour of people’s fences, the banning of soft drinks in schools, the banning of power boats on the lake and the owners of supermarkets being liable if a shopping trolley is removed from their shop. Not only are we trying to force shop owners to police their customers; we are imposing an added cost of doing business to these sometimes small business owners. And we must not forget the plastic bag ban, which has increased the cost of doing business for many business owners and become an added burden for mums and dads.

As Tony Abbott said in his book *Battlelines*, conservatives are not against change but they do not change anything unless they are genuinely convinced that the new option is absolutely and definitely better than the current system.

Unintended consequences of well-meaning but poorly thought out policies must be avoided where possible. But as politicians, we need to be mindful that we are only human too. We are not necessarily the first people to try and solve the many concerns that human nature creates. One well-known political thinker I was pleased to come across during my studies was Frances Fukuyama. He asked the question, “Are we done yet?” Do we have enough laws? We set up a legislature to set some rules and parameters by which citizens can co-exist without overly impacting on each other’s freedom. After 25 years of the Legislative Assembly, are we done yet? Do we just increase the number of regulations, the dos and don’ts by which we are allowed to live? Does it really improve our lives?

I am suggesting not that we all go home, but that we do not fall into the trap of always believing that more is better. We have to continually ask ourselves the question: is a law really necessary? Will it achieve the intended outcomes? Are there unintended consequences? Is the outcome we are trying to achieve more important than the freedom we are curtailing?

Fukuyama explains that the nature of government, if not constrained, is, over a period of time, for it to continue to increase its influence in areas of interest, further and further into our daily lives, like an oozing behemoth with tentacles now reaching into the homes and bedrooms of its citizens.

The government is no better and more capable of deciding what is best for people’s families and lives than the people are themselves. What makes those in the legislature better or smarter than those on the street? My premise is that we have a preference on our side for fewer laws because more laws equal a curtailment of human freedom. More laws mean less freedom.

Some on the other side of this place believe that more laws make people good. It simply is not true. Humans have a certain nature, and it is best harnessed for social good by the incentive of self-improvement, on the whole—a natural human trait—rather than by curtailment. I am sure we can all imagine that if we tell someone they cannot do X, human nature dictates that they are very likely to react in a resentful manner to being nannied and controlled. However, if they are told that X will give them more opportunity, they are far more likely to jump at the opportunity—that is, one to benefit them or their families. This is the carrot rather than the stick. It is called harnessing human nature rather than squashing it, and it is one of the fundamental differences between this side of the chamber and the other.

On this side of the chamber, we have a philosophical preference for harnessing the drive and motivation that people naturally hold for their lives and those of their families. On the other side, perhaps the temptation is to legislate people into submitting to their will. One of the key problems with a very long term Labor government is the natural tendency to want to keep rolling out laws to prove that they

are working hard. I recall that Prime Minister Gillard was very well known for accrediting her government with success based on the number of laws passed. Rob Oakeshott and Tony Windsor boasted that more than 550 pieces of legislation were passed by the minority parliament. It is true that Prime Minister Gillard had a difficult parliament to work with. However, the functionality of the law-making process does not mean a successful government; it only means governance is occurring.

In conclusion, laws are no better than the people thinking them up. We in here are not a superior race of people. As a result, we should consider very carefully all new legislation, as being worthy of serious testing as to whether or not it is necessary. Will it have the consequences it intends or is it vexatious, silly or poorly thought through? Bad laws should be removed out of respect for the human freedom of those we represent—those human freedoms which are precious and not for others to take away lightly.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.22): I thank Mrs Jones for raising this important issue today. I think there is probably one thing that everyone in this place is unanimous on—that we do not need unnecessary regulation. What we do not all agree on is what exactly is unnecessary. Mrs Jones has ably demonstrated this in her remarks.

The Greens think that regulating things like safe road rules, fair workers' pay and conditions and making workplaces safe is necessary and that they require regulation. We also think that regulating to create cleaner waterways and creating a taxation system that requires accountability on greenhouse emissions is fair.

We have just had quite a dissertation on how requiring the clean-up of shopping trolleys in our suburbs is a constraint on freedom. I can report, from the letters that constituents write to me, that people really appreciate the fact that these things are no longer a blight in the suburbs and a hazard on cycle paths. The Canberra Liberals seem to want to restrict regulations to removing pigeon poo from awnings, regulating what can be used to make lines on football fields and controlling which performances will be allowed at fringe festivals.

The corollary of Mrs Jones's MPI today is the importance of retaining necessary laws and necessary regulations. Given the federal government's stated intention of scrapping the price on carbon pollution, there is no better time to remind my colleagues here of the importance of retaining necessary laws and regulations. The human population of our planet is currently consuming resources and producing pollution at a rate that is impacting the biosphere so strongly that it is compromising the planet's ability to sustain life. The possibility of ecological collapse is so serious a problem that it should be keeping policymakers awake at night. Given that market economics is currently the dominant philosophy in our society, a market response to the problem has been trialled through the national price on carbon pollution. The carbon price was never going to be a silver bullet to all of our environmental problems, but for our fragile blue planet it was a small step in the right direction. The carbon price is necessary law. It is necessary regulation. I would urge Mrs Jones to contact her federal colleagues and suggest that they point to them.

Further on the topic of necessary regulation, I would like to point out that the federal government is currently trying to remove 74,000 hectares of Tasmanian forest from world heritage protection. Such a move has been condemned by both the logging industry and environmental groups. It is considered that this deal is likely to plunge the region back into the protracted forestry conflicts of past decades. Laws and regulations like the carbon tax and world heritage listing are not developed just for fun; they are developed because they deliver a public good that the community has identified as necessary.

If we talk about unnecessary laws, I would like to raise the federal legislation known as the Andrews bill that took away the right of the ACT to make laws with regard to euthanasia. The bill inserted section 23(1A) into the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act, and it still exists. It says:

The Assembly has no power to make laws permitting or having the effect of permitting ... the form of intentional killing of another called euthanasia ... or the assisting of a person to terminate his or her life.

It is like we in the ACT being able to make our own laws in relation to civil unions. The ACT has now come of age and we deserve to be able to make our own laws in relation to anything that does not conflict with the federal constitution, just as other states are able to do. This includes euthanasia. Obviously, as we discussed at some length yesterday, this is a sensitive topic and one that will need, necessarily, an entire community conversation before this Assembly would want to move. But, at the same time, I think it is an affront to democracy that somebody bothered to put a law in place simply to take away our right to do our job as the ACT parliament.

It is also an affront to the people of the ACT. ACT residents want to be able to make choices about their own life and death. A Newspoll survey from 2012 found that 82.5 per cent of Australians believe that a terminally ill person should be allowed to access physician-assisted suicide. It is not easy these days to find an issue that this many Australians would agree on. Policymakers in Australia are lagging behind the community, and we have to be brave enough to tackle this very difficult issue. The Legislative Assembly should be able to legislate on this issue, just as the states of Australia can, free of unnecessary laws implemented by Kevin Andrews and his associates in the federal parliament.

When it comes to planning and building issues, I often hear concerns raised about excessive government regulations. We had that discussion again yesterday. As I said, I can understand that people get frustrated at times; there certainly are many rules. But at the same time, most of these regulations are there for a good reason, such as ensuring building safety and quality. Over the past decade we have heard many complaints about shoddy building construction. The Liberals have joined in on these concerns at times, if I remember rightly, because our constituents—all of our constituents—have been raising these concerns. It is precisely these government regulations that we need to ensure that these problems do not arise.

One process that the government—largely TAMS but also other relevant agencies—is currently undertaking is to review the design standards which all developers need to adhere to to ensure that they are best practice, they deliver sustainability long into the future and they are aligned with the territory plan. This is being done with red tape reduction in mind. We are aiming for a high level of infrastructure development, high quality, while at the same time creating a clear and certain environment so that developers clearly know what the rules are. TAMS are working closely with industry stakeholders to ensure that this review takes their views into account.

The ACT Greens advocated for the solar access provisions that were brought forward in variation 306, protecting solar access rights for new dwellings, as we discussed yesterday morning. Without laws and regulations, people would still be able to build houses that are completely inappropriate for Canberra's extreme weather conditions, ignoring all the science and all the architectural research and the knowledge that has been gained over the last few decades. People who have benefited from these new laws appreciate them.

In the same vein, the ACT has quite tight laws and regulations about asbestos—its handling, safety around buildings, renovations, disposal, the keeping of a register. I do not think anybody doubts the necessity of those laws.

In this case, I suspect we come back to the definition and delineation between “necessary” and “unnecessary” regulations. I agree completely that we do not need regulations that duplicate other ones. For this reason, I fully support the ACT government's current work in the red tape reduction task force to identify regulations which could probably be streamlined. I hope that today we hear some concrete suggestions—specific, useful ones—on sensible areas to tighten, rather than more hyperbole about red tape and nanny states. As I cited earlier, there are certainly different examples of where people think we need regulations.

I know the TAMS directorate is undertaking some other work in identifying regulations which can be better streamlined. The Public Unleased Land Act, PULA, is a direct result of this. PULA has provided the framework for greater flexibility for authorisations and has facilitated clearer guidelines and administrative processes, such as online smart forms for people who want to use unleased territory land for an event of some description. This is leading to better outcomes for the public. PULA now enables better protection of the amenity and natural value of public unleased land. It also facilitates better and fairer management of the use of that land without the clutter of excessive and prescriptive legislative requirements. PULA has reduced duplication of application processes, as permits can be authorised for two years—an extension from one year. Work is underway to further refine the application process so that previous applicants and application information can be auto-populated onto the application process.

I understand there is some frustration in the community about how difficult it can be to hold larger events and festivals and also to organise some sporting events. This is an area of work which will gain from red tape streamlining. I have started a project to try and tackle that, because in my time in the community I have certainly heard some clear feedback on that. There is also progress on outdoor dining permits and

authorisations to be administered through a single portal for events to be managed in a similar manner.

Another example might be the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, which is currently being streamlined. I think there is scope for streamlining that kind of legislation, but we must not step away from having necessary approval processes and stepping away from the responsibility of ensuring that we protect the environment for future generations. It does worry me to see the ways that governments—particularly, say, the Queensland or Western Australian governments—see streamlining as a complete vacating of responsibility.

In conclusion, let me say that I think we need to find that balance between acknowledging that we need rules and acknowledging that we need to step away from clichés about the nanny state. We need to have a real debate on each occasion about whether this is a necessary rule or not. The Greens will continue to advocate for clear and effective rules to deliver outcomes that work for the community, both for now and also for the generations that follow us.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (4.32): The government shares the view that regulation should only exist when it is needed for protecting public safety and a well-functioning economy. There is a constant need for government to evaluate the statute book and make sure unnecessary legislation is repealed, and this is the work that we are already doing.

Just this afternoon I have tabled a document which shows some of the priorities of our legislative program for these sittings. They include amendments to the Planning and Development Act to bring new efficiency and responsiveness into the planning system, amendments to the long-term lease provisions to free up business unfairly captured by current duties arrangement, and red tape reduction and legislation which will remove a number of unnecessary burdens on business across the ACT. We come to this work with an attitude and a willingness to consult, to listen and to balance priorities, as that is a critical part of striking the right balance in any regulatory environment.

As an example, last week's fire in the Sydney Building affected many businesses. Eight are still unable to open while the building is made structurally safe. Before the emergency was even over, government mechanisms were being put in place to support business owners and keep them informed. Arms of government sometimes criticised for their regulatory roles were on the ground with our business community, and still are. Additional advisory services are being provided for affected businesses through Canberra Business Point, including support for cash flow management and recovery planning.

Where there are opportunities to simplify the regulatory environment, the government is actively pursuing them. Through the red tape reduction panel, a number of ideas have been progressed to improve the ACT's regulatory environment. There are runs on the board, including giving businesses easy access to governments through the fix my red tape website; extending business licence periods from one to three years for industries such as vehicle repairers and real estate, travel and employment agents; and removing registration stickers for light vehicles.

Work is progressing on a second phase of the process to streamline approvals and licensing processes for outdoor dining areas. This reform has the potential to open up commercial space and create new atmospheres in precincts across the ACT, building on extensive work the government has carried out at local shops. I have also recently established a dedicated unit in the Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate to focus on regulation and process reform to ensure the momentum in this area is maintained.

Another part of ensuring regulation does not overburden both business and the community is to make it easy to comply with. As part of our digital agenda we have put significant resources into designing services which make dealing with government easier. They will save time, travel, paperwork and stress and they will save families and businesses money. It is worth knowing that both selected entries from round 1 of the Canberra digital challenge are developing projects with government to achieve this goal. DigiActive is working with TAMS on an online event permit system and Design Managers Australia is working with JACS on a new online capability for booking government services. This will continue to be a focus of our work on the government's interface with the community.

It is also important to remember that major tax reforms to the business environment are creating some of the best business conditions in Australia. The raising of the payroll tax threshold to \$4.7 million, the phased abolition of insurance tax and the accelerated abolition of conveyance duties for transactions in excess of \$1.65 million are market-leading reforms happening here in the territory.

We are also actively contributing to the national deregulation agenda being pursued through the Council of Australian Governments. COAG's deregulation agenda was announced following the December 2013 meeting and four areas have been identified as the starting point for further joint work on reducing duplication of regulation: end-to-end regulation for small business, higher education, early childhood, and manufacturing.

The government is fully aware of the need for balance in all of our regulatory activities, and often when there is commentary around them it is between stakeholders who will have a different view about where it is right to strike that balance. I can give you the example I am working through at the moment in relation to food safety. Many owners of food venues would prefer less regulation, while many customers who want to eat at those places would like more regulation. It is genuinely difficult to find the right balance in that area that will address the concerns of business and make sure the community is protected from the potential of very significant illness if something goes wrong.

We try to strike the right balance between public interest and individual concerns of businesses and other stakeholders. The process needs to be dynamic as technology and community attitudes evolve and as new regulatory challenges emerge.

Equally, there is far more to supporting our community, particularly our business community, than just through a two-dimensional view of regulation. In our broader economic agenda, our support during crises, our consultative approach to government, we are constantly working with the business community to make our Canberra business environment as dynamic and free to excel as we can.

There is much more to do; as the statute book grows every time the Assembly sits and passes legislation, it is incumbent upon us to constantly review and make sure that legislation and regulation is still relevant, that it is still doing the job that we want it to do and that it is meeting the needs of the community.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (4.38): I, too, want to highlight the importance of removing unnecessary laws and regulations, and I commend Mrs Jones for raising this MPI today. The need for the ACT Legislative Assembly to concentrate on a limited number of areas but doing them properly cannot be underestimated. I believe we in this place have a role to make sure that what we are doing we are doing thoroughly and with the best interests of the community in mind. Too often we get into a situation whereby we have a scattergun approach with our laws, regulations and local instruments, which are often well intentioned but perhaps not the best thought out, especially in terms of unintended consequences.

Too often, despite the best of intentions, something gets implemented and then gets forgotten about. What tends to happen in that situation is that the good guys comply and the people the legislative instrument was actually targeted to go on doing as they were before. It ends up being a regulator on those doing the right thing rather than a regulator on those doing the wrong thing. That is why we have to be so careful, whenever we put anything at all into the statute book, that we are doing so not only with the best of intentions but also with the knowledge that we will be able to properly implement what we are doing.

It was interesting hearing from Minister Rattenbury about some of the things he thought were appropriate and that somehow putting a tax on people through the carbon tax was consistent with the MPI today. If it is, there is a bit of a worry about his world view, as I have spoken about in this place before.

The other thing that was quite disingenuous was his accusation that we somehow believe in widespread censorship. This is, of course, absolutely wrong. We believe what happened at the Fringe Festival was an inappropriate use of public funds. It is as simple as that. The way in which the minister expended the money was not right, and we will not back down from that position. Quite aside from the artistic merits of what happened on the night or what did not happen on the night, the fact is that the process this minister engaged was not appropriate. We will not for one moment take a backward step in bringing this issue to the attention of the public.

Something I talked about yesterday was the complexity of the territory plan. As it stands at the moment, the territory plan is a largely inaccessible document. I doubt if there are many members of this place who are that familiar with it, mainly because it is pretty hard to be familiar with. I doubt many members have actually seen a printed copy of the territory plan. You can go to a council and print their ordinance and it would be 100 pages and cover the exact same things our plan does in terms of its breadth. Yet somehow, ours is thousands of pages long.

I agree it has the best intentions, but when it is thousands of pages long it is no wonder we have so much cost in trying to submit and assess DAs. Mr Rattenbury said

we have all these regulations and these rules to prevent shoddy building. We have thousands of pages but we still get shoddy buildings. It is just not working. It has to be hit from both ends: we have to be realistic about our expectations of what the territory plan can achieve and what plans can achieve, but we also have to be realistic in what we can reasonably implement.

I do not intend to waste any more of the Assembly's time other than to simply thank Mrs Jones for this MPI.

Discussion concluded.

Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee Reference

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (4.43): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the importance of ensuring a strong integrity framework is in place to support the work of Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly and to maintain community trust in our parliamentary processes;
- (b) the recent implementation of the Members' Code of Conduct and the appointment of the ACT Legislative Assembly's first Commissioner for Standards;
- (c) the valid role for lobbyists to advocate on behalf of stakeholder clients; and
- (d) that the ACT does not have a public register of lobbyists or an accompanying code of conduct; and

(2) agrees to the Administration and Procedure Committee drafting a lobbyist register for the ACT Legislative Assembly, including an associated code of conduct, principles and guidelines for report back to the Assembly by May 2014.

This motion provides a good opportunity to discuss the importance of our integrity framework and move towards bringing greater transparency and openness to members' interactions with lobbyists. A strong integrity framework is vital if the Legislative Assembly is to be effective in serving the ACT. The community has high expectations of us as their elected representatives and we are rightly held to high standards of accountability and integrity. If we are not able to demonstrate integrity in our actions, the community will be quite justified in withdrawing the trust that they have placed in us.

I have always placed great importance on government being open and accountable for its decisions and actions. I think this is reflected in a number of reforms which have strengthened the integrity framework in which we serve across government, but also

some of the recent changes that we have seen in this place with the implementation of the code of conduct for members of the Legislative Assembly, which sets out the standards expected of elected members. It is a statement of general ethical principles rather than a prescriptive set of rules and is designed to be sufficiently flexible to provide guidance on a range of circumstances.

Importantly, the code not only outlines how we should conduct ourselves as MLAs but also sets out the standards against which our behaviour can be measured. It provides a statement of values to guide behaviour and reminds us of our obligations as MLAs. The code of conduct for members complements the ministerial code of conduct, which has also been revised in recent years. Just recently, Madam Speaker has appointed the first Commissioner for Standards, which has come from a resolution of this Assembly in terms of ensuring independence in the investigation of any complaints that are made against MLAs by members of the public, members of the ACT public service or MLAs. It is an important step in the right direction. However, I think that a lobbyist register would be a positive enhancement to the systems and processes that are already in place.

A key part of the role of any MLA is to listen to and understand the needs of different constituents and interest groups, and these groups can be represented by lobbyists. Lobbyists play an important advocacy role on behalf of their own clients. They have become an intrinsic part of the work of government over recent years, making sure MLAs are aware of a range of stakeholder views and perspectives. This has been controversial at times in recent years as attention has been drawn to the role of professional lobbyists and whether they have undue and undeclared influence on decision-making. Therefore, as with other aspects of decision-making, it is important that there be transparency around such interactions.

Here in the ACT we do not have a public register of lobbyists. I believe it is critical to the integrity of our system of representative government that the factors which contribute to policy setting are transparent and open for scrutiny. We should not leave any room for improper influence or lack of transparency in this space and we need to ensure the transparency of lobbying activities and interactions with ministers and, I believe, MLAs.

With this principle in mind, we are keen to progress work towards establishing a lobbyist register. As the motion states, we would see the admin and procedure committee as the appropriate forum to progress this further, and we hope to receive support to do so. I believe Mr Rattenbury will have an amendment to move to this motion to allow admin and procedure to provide advice to the Assembly rather than immediately implement or design a lobbyist register. The government will support that amendment, acknowledging that there are mixed views and a difference of opinion between, in particular, Madam Speaker and me about whether the lobbyist register should cover all members or just the executive.

In a parliament of our size, where all members are able to pass legislation and have been influenced by lobbyists, I cannot actually see a problem with everybody being covered by it. In fact, I think it would offer some protection to non-executive members to be covered by a system which seeks to enhance transparency around lobbyists, their work, and the issues that they are lobbying on.

But I accept that there are differences of opinions and that, in the first instance, as we move down this path, advice should be sought from admin and procedure. I would say that I did seek advice from admin and procedure, I think, in 2012 and have not received any information back. As long as this motion is responded to in the time outlined we can take the next step of looking at what arrangements should be put in place and who should be covered; how that would work; and some of the other implications of it, including guidelines and the associated code of conduct. I would like to thank members for considering this motion. Hopefully they will support it with the amendment moved by Mr Rattenbury.

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) (4.50): I move the amendment circulated in my name:

Omit paragraph (2), substitute:

“(2) requests that the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure provide advice on the implementation of a lobbyist register for the ACT Legislative Assembly, including an associated code of conduct, principles and guidelines, and report back to the Assembly by the last sitting day in May 2014.”.

As Ms Gallagher has flagged, I am moving this amendment to adjust slightly the expectation that, certainly in the initial discussions that I had with members of the administration and procedures committee just on Tuesday when this was first flagged, there was a sense that there are some differences of views on both the scope of what a lobbyist register might cover and who it might cover, and some of the design features. The intent here is to simply ask that the admin and procedures committee, which is a good, representative view of this Assembly, canvass a range of those issues and report back, including perhaps whether it is best run by the Office of the Legislative Assembly, through the Speaker’s office, or whether it is run by the executive—if a register is to exist.

I do not have a view on most of those issues at the moment. I am still thinking about it. The intent of this amendment is to give the committee some scope to canvas those issues, at least amongst members of the Assembly in the first instance. We might determine then how to go forward from there. I have just had brief discussions with members of the opposition. Their concern is there is not adequate time here by May. So, with the leave of members and the agreement of the chamber, we might change that reporting date to the last sitting day in June 2014. I believe I can do that without circulating it if I have the leave of members.

Mr Coe: I have got one here for you.

MR RATTENBURY: I will let Mr Coe move that in a second. I simply say that I certainly look forward to this discussion, having in a former life been an in-house lobbyist for an NGO and not covered by what is now the federal system. I think there are some interesting questions around exactly who it covers. The federal system

covers you if you work for a recognised lobbying firm, but if you are an in-house lobbyist for a large organisation I understand you are not covered by it. I think this raises interesting questions because, to my mind, there is not much difference between those two individuals. These are the sorts of questions that I think the committee will need to work through. I will look forward to those conversations.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (4.52): I move the amendment in my name to Mr Rattenbury's amendment:

Omit "May 2014", substitute "June 2014".

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Lawder): The question is that Mr Coe's amendment to Mr Rattenbury's amendment be agreed to. Mr Coe, before we continue, could you explain to the chamber what your amendment is?

MR COE: My amendment seeks to replace "May 2014" with "June 2014".

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (4.53): And a fine amendment it is, too—one of the finest, might I say. It might actually get up. I think it is one of the more succinct speeches we have heard from Mr Coe. It was quite eloquent. It is good to see that there is a moment of harmony breaking out here in the Assembly.

I think that some good points were made by the Chief Minister and also Mr Rattenbury. This is an interesting issue to look at. Certainly, this has been an issue looked at in other parliaments. I have a report from the government administration committee from the New Zealand House of Representatives which considered a lobbying disclosure bill. The government administration committee, when they looked at it, recommended that it not be passed. I am happy to table this document, when I have finished reading it, for the information of members.

Some of the points raised in it—and I will quote from it—is that it would affect everyday dealings with the public by members of the parliament and could discourage constituents from engaging with members. It could capture, for example, a person contacting their member of parliament—

It being 45 minutes after the commencement of Assembly business, the debate was interrupted in accordance with standing order 77. Ordered that the time allotted to Assembly business be extended by 30 minutes.

MR HANSON: The report goes on:

There are also significant differences in the decision-making spheres of Ministers and of other members of Parliament. Members who are not Ministers do not have executive decision-making powers, and the ability to individually decide the fate of legislation.

It goes on further:

We consider that an appropriate balance is needed between the disclosure of communications that might influence decision-making, and ensuring that participation in democratic processes is not deterred by an erosion of crucial protections.

I think that is the nub of the issue, that there is some argument for a lobbyist register for the executive. Ultimately, the executive control the decisions and the expenditure. The function of the other members of parliament is important, but clearly we are not in a position where we can make decisions that have such influence on government policy. We do not make ministerial decisions. We are not making appropriations and so on.

I think it is important that this matter be looked at in more detail. I think that the admin and procedures committee is in a position to do that. I support Mr Coe's amendment, which just gives the admin and procedures committee a little more time, because there are a lot of complex issues and no doubt there are issues that have not yet been canvassed in this place that will arise as the committee does further work on it.

The opposition is very happy to refer this to the admin and procedures committee to have a look at the issue. We always want to make sure that when we and the government, particularly the executive, are doing their business, they are doing so in an ethical and open way and are free from any inappropriate, or suggestion of inappropriate, influence, be it from lobbyists or anyone else. If a lobbyist register could be shown to support that then that would be a good thing. But we do not, in the process, essentially want to encumber all members of parliament or the executive to a point where it is then an interference in the normal course of business that we conduct. We will be supporting the motion as amended by Mr Rattenbury and by Mr Coe.

Amendment to proposed amendment agreed to.

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

(Quorum formed.)

Nature Conservation Bill—exposure draft Roundtable

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.01): I seek leave to amend my notice by omitting "Nature Conservation Bill" and inserting "exposure draft of the Nature Conservation Bill", twice occurring.

Leave granted.

I move the amended motion:

(1) notes:

- (a) the exposure draft of the Nature Conservation Bill which was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 31 October 2013 by the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development;
- (b) the length and complexity of this legislation; and
- (c) the concerns raised, by various environmental organisations in the ACT, regarding the short time available to provide submissions; and

(2) refer the exposure draft of the Nature Conservation Bill to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services.

I thank the Assembly for giving me the opportunity to move this motion today. The exposure draft of the Nature Conservation Bill 2013 was tabled on 31 October last year. The aim of the exposure draft of the bill was to strengthen the ACT's existing nature conservation framework, and this bill has certainly been written with the best intentions. However, I am here today to raise a few points of contention that need to be addressed.

The Nature Conservation Act 1980 has been the primary ACT legislation for more than 30 years in this area. It covers an extensive area of nature conservation policy and, as well, has flow-on effects to other legislation. We have had this legislation for in excess of 30 years, so it is essential that we get its replacement right. We need to ensure proper scrutiny of the exposure draft of this bill from all stakeholders in order to guarantee that a new bill will place our nature conservation activities in a better position than before.

The government spent extensive time putting this exposure draft together, so it was therefore quite surprising it provided the community with only six weeks to submit feedback on such a complex and intricate piece of legislation. The explanatory statement was 108 pages, while the bill itself was more than three times that size. Yet the community only had from 31 October to 13 December to provide feedback. It was impossible for the conservation and environment groups, not just because it was a mere six weeks that they were given but because it was the six weeks leading up to the Christmas shutdown when many community organisations have staff going away.

After the tabling of the exposure draft and early on in the consultation process, groups contacted the minister to advise that they would need more time, to no avail. It was not until the minister was contacted on numerous occasions towards the end of the consultation process that he extended the time frame over the Christmas period until 31 December. The problem here was that due to the Christmas shutdown many of those groups were already away and did not receive that notification of the extension. In early January, when some groups returned to work, they became aware of the changed date, but there was some confusion with media reports about extensions of time which, again, sector organisations seemed unaware of.

With such an important piece of legislation, which the government spent a lot of time developing, you would think that more time for consultation would be appropriate and clear communication about this deadline would be essential. I am here today to request the support of members of the Assembly for the exposure draft of this bill to be referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services. This is a logical way forward for this. We want to give community groups a chance to thoroughly review and scrutinise the exposure draft and contribute their own suggestions and comments.

We would like it to go to the committee so that there is the time and ability for the exposure draft of this bill to be compared and contrasted with the old Nature Conservation Act and to review the impacts it may have on other legislation, such as the Planning and Development Act. This, we believe, would give conservation and environment groups the chance to provide their input and detail. We want to ensure we get the best possible piece of environmental legislation. We need to get the basics right and include all stakeholders in the consultation. I encourage members to support this motion today.

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) (5.05): I thank Ms Lawder for raising this issue today. The Nature Conservation Act is an important piece of legislation as it establishes a range of protections for various aspects of our natural environment, such as native animals, fish and plants. It establishes criteria, processes and guidelines for nominations and declarations, endangered and threatened species and communities, including the requirement for action plans for particular species or communities.

It dictates management requirements for national parks and nature reserves. It establishes the parks and conservation service. It establishes the roles and responsibilities for the Conservator of Flora and Fauna and the Flora and Fauna Committee. The Nature Conservation Act gives legislative force to the nature conservation strategy. It restricts the clearance of native vegetation. It establishes rules around the creation of land management agreements and it creates many offences and licences in relation to all of these issues. Thus, this legislation is of utmost interest to conservation groups and other stakeholders across the ACT.

The legislation was first drafted in 1980, long before self-government. It has been amended many times over the years, of course, as a response to the continual evolution of best practice management of our biodiversity. In 2004 the ACT Labor Party promised to revise the legislation, importantly, to strengthen the role of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, and the conservation community have been waiting for this important revision since that time.

Given the length of time that the groups have been waiting for this new bill, I think we all agree that there is no rush at this point. Adding a few months to finalise the bill to allow for thorough discussion of the issues will not hold up any current management processes, and I think it will result in a much better outcome.

I was certainly pleased by and welcome Minister Corbell's move to make the bill available as an exposure draft. I do note—and Ms Lawder has spoken about this—that some organisations clearly stated they felt there was inadequate time made available for preparation of submissions. I think that was reflected in the fact that when the discussion paper first came out three years ago there were 32 submissions on the initial discussion paper, but in the period available for submissions on the bill there were only eight submissions. I think that reflects not a lack of interest but the fact that people did find it difficult to make a submission in the time that was available, given the extensive complexity and length of the legislation.

For this reason, I think this bill will be best served by a roundtable process, which allows all the relevant and interested people to sit in a room at the same time to discuss the issues in detail. I move the amendment circulated in my name:

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

“(1) notes:

- (a) the ACT Nature Conservation Ordinance was initially drafted in 1980 by the Federal Government, and precedes self-government in the ACT;
- (b) there have been many iterations of the Nature Conservation Act 1980 since then, and many changes in the ACT's built and natural environment;
- (c) it has been an ACT Labor commitment since 2004 to revise the Act; and
- (d) that a draft of the proposed new Nature Conservation Bill was available as an exposure draft for comments during 31 October to 13 December 2013; and

(2) calls on the government to:

- (a) establish a roundtable to explore the issues relating to the draft Nature Conservation Bill. This roundtable is to:
 - (i) be chaired by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment;
 - (ii) include all relevant stakeholders, including:
 - (A) Territory and Municipal Services Parks and Conservation Service;
 - (B) Conservation Planning and Research and legislative drafters from the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate;
 - (C) key conservation and rural lessee groups; and
 - (D) representatives from each of the three political parties;
 - (iii) allow sufficient time for full discussion of the issues; and

- (iv) provide a detailed report to the Assembly by May 2014 on the range and extent of issues raised by stakeholders on the draft Nature Conservation Bill.”.

This amendment, rather than establishing an Assembly committee process, establishes a roundtable process. It commits the government to doing it. That is because that format will allow for good discussions with all the key stakeholders. Rather than just having a “hearing evidence” approach and then producing a report, we can actually negotiate what needs to be done in the legislation in that classic roundtable format.

The proposal is that it be chaired by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, who I know is right across the detail of this legislation. I think he will provide good skills there. It calls for key stakeholders to be involved, including the parks and conservation service from TAMS, the relevant officers from the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, key conservation and rural lessee groups and, importantly, representatives of each of the three political parties, so that we can really work on this.

In a way, it is an Assembly committee but in a much more roundtable style. This will allow for a full discussion of the issues and then provide a detailed report to the Assembly by May this year on the issues raised in that roundtable. I have suggested May because we want to get on with this. It is that happy balance between getting on and getting this done, because it is well time that we did, whilst at the same time allowing that space for discussion.

The intent is to provide that environment so that we can bring the stakeholders to the table and get these matters resolved and get the best possible bill brought to the Assembly in just a few months time. I commend my amendment to the Assembly.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (5.10): The Labor Party will support the amendment proposed by Mr Rattenbury today. There has been some commentary on this proposal from different stakeholders which I think seeks to diminish the extent to which the government has sought, and I as the minister have sought, to get feedback from interested parties.

The exposure draft was available for public comment for a two-month period, which is a very reasonable period and, indeed, well in excess of the period set down in the Chief Minister’s guidelines for public consultation. The periods of time have, in my view, been reasonable and consistent with those set out in the consultation guidelines.

That said, I accept that the views of some stakeholders remain that they would like more time to comment on and participate in this matter. I am, of course, keen to see this issue brought to resolution. It has been a longstanding body of policy work. It has taken an overly extended period of time to be completed. That has been due to the very detailed work that has had to be undertaken by policy officers and the extensive range of comments that were made, as Mr Rattenbury alluded to, at the discussion paper stage.

Would I have liked it to have been done quicker? Yes, I would have, and I am keen to bring a bill to the Assembly as soon as possible. But I acknowledge that it remains the case that stakeholders still wish for more time to comment. Therefore, the roundtable is a useful way forward.

I do not believe an Assembly inquiry would assist in bringing a timely resolution to these matters and a bill before the Assembly. The preference would be for the roundtable to be convened, for the issues of concern to be canvassed and discussed, a report prepared, as suggested in Mr Rattenbury's amendment, and then the capacity for a bill to be considered by the government and introduced in this place. I think that is a sensible way forward, a sensible compromise, and the government will accept the amendment proposed by Mr Rattenbury.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (5.13): I could not resist the opportunity to come down and speak in this debate, from experience. I welcome the suggestion of a roundtable, but it seems to me this is not an either/or situation. Members who have been around this place for a while have probably heard me speak on this subject before. There is a precedent for roundtables with environment bills. When we passed the environment protection legislation in 1998 there was an extensive roundtable process before the bill was introduced; the bill was introduced into this place and there was a committee inquiry. There were recommendations for amendments to the bill through the committee inquiry and the bill passed without dissent in this place because of the work that was done through the roundtable system and through the committee process.

What we have heard here today from government ministers is effectively a vote of no confidence in the committee system. They cannot guarantee that they could get something through the committee system because the committee system is not working, because members on both sides of this place are gaming the standing orders to make sure that the committee system does not work.

With respect to what we have done here today, Minister Rattenbury and Minister Corbell have said that it is not necessary to have a committee inquiry. The committee system should be the jewel of this place. It has been the jewel of this place. But it has been undermined by all members of this place in this Assembly to the point that the government no longer has confidence in taking a matter to a committee for a proper and dispassionate approach to the matters.

I think it is unfortunate that we can only have the roundtable and not the committee inquiry. In other parliaments all matters of substantive policy go to a committee for inquiry. We are one of the few parliaments that do not, as a regular thing, consider referring matters of substantive policy for inquiry.

Yes, it has taken a long time. Mr Corbell should have been more interested in roundtables in the last eight years when this government has been getting its act together and trying to get this legislation to this point. Ms Lawder came up with the right approach—a committee inquiry to look at this, a transparent way of looking at this. We know who says what to whom if we have a public inquiry. We do not know

who says what to whom in a roundtable. Roundtables are valuable, but the real way to look at policy is through the prism of a committee inquiry, and it shows here today that this government no longer trusts the committee system that it set up.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.16): I will speak to the amendment and conclude. I thank Mr Rattenbury for his amendment, which has an eminently sensible suggestion on the way forward, and that is to enable greater consultation with key stakeholder groups. I know firsthand that many community organisations are under a lot of pressure. They do a lot of work with very limited resources, and they try their very hardest to put forward the best possible submissions. Giving them the opportunity to contribute through this roundtable process will enable them to put forward their views, so I think it is a good solution.

Far be it from me to suggest that Mr Rattenbury's suggestion to go to a roundtable illustrates perhaps his disenchantment with the committee system, but I think what we have here is a tripartisan way to go forward. A roundtable will be of great benefit and comfort to the conservation and environment groups, and we will support the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Executive members business—precedence

Ordered that executive members business be called on forthwith.

Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services— Standing Committee Reference

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (5.18): I move:

That:

(1) this Assembly notes that:

- (a) NOAA recorded that the monthly average level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in January 2014 was 398 parts per million, 25% higher than recorded levels in 1959, and that the rate of increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is increasing each year;
- (b) according to ice core samples from NOAA, current levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are much higher than the range of 170 to 300 ppm recorded over the past 800 000 years;
- (c) the UNFCCC set a global goal to keep concentrations of CO₂ under 450 ppm to give us a 50% chance of stabilising the average global temperature at a 2°C increase over the pre-industrial period;

- (d) OECD climate modelling indicates that we will reach 685 ppm by 2050 and temperatures will be 3-6 degrees higher by 2050;
 - (e) NASA states average global temperatures have increased by around 0.77 degrees Celsius since 1880, and that January 2000 to December 2009 was the warmest decade on record;
 - (f) the Federal Government Environment Department states that the ACT will be impacted by climate change in the following ways:
 - (i) annual rainfall could decline by up to 10 per cent by 2030 and 25 per cent by 2070, relative to 1990;
 - (ii) the ACT is likely to experience rising temperatures and a greater number of extreme hot days as a result of climate change, increasing from 5 days currently to up to 26 days by 2070 without global action to reduce emissions; and
 - (iii) an increase in temperature and evaporation is also likely to increase the days of very high or extreme bushfire risk from 23 days currently to between 26 and 29 days in 2020;
 - (g) the impacts of climate change will require targeted management of our urban and non-urban environments to ensure that these areas are habitable;
 - (h) Australia's per capita emissions are amongst the highest in the world, nearly twice the OECD average and four times the world average;
 - (i) the ACT's emissions are primarily from the electricity and transport sectors;
 - (j) the most effective ways to reduce the ACT's greenhouse emissions are to reduce electricity consumption, and decrease reliance on coal-fired electricity while increasing consumption of renewable energy;
 - (k) as a city with one of the highest standards of living in the world, we have a strong moral imperative to reduce our emissions; and
 - (l) in 2010, all political parties in the Legislative Assembly supported greenhouse gas emission reduction targets of at least 30% by 2020; and
- (2) the Members of the 8th Assembly recommit to supporting greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for the ACT of at least 30% by 2020 on 1990 baseline levels.

Just over three years ago we had a debate in this place that committed all of the political parties represented here today to strong action on climate change. The ACT Greens, along with the Labor Party, supported targets of 40 per cent emission reductions by 2020 on a 1990 baseline while the Canberra Liberals supported a target of 30 per cent by 2020. It was not ideal that the Canberra Liberals did not support the 40 per cent target, but it was reassuring that the target they were advocating was, by

most people's definition, substantial. Not completely aligned with the science, but substantial nonetheless. It was the kind of target that would have required many of the substantive changes to the way we consume and produce electricity if we were to meet it. It was aspirational and it was achievable. Not enough, but achievable.

However, I have been concerned that the commitment of the Canberra Liberals made to the Canberra community was wavering, and so I have brought this motion here today as an opportunity for this Assembly to reaffirm the commitments we made to the Canberra community in 2010. I am not suggesting any of the parties represented here today should change their position, just reaffirm their position. The ACT Greens still strongly stand by a 40 per cent emissions reduction target by 2020 and support the legislation that is in place that delivers that.

So why has this become of concern to me? Two weeks ago, one of my Assembly colleagues wrote a piece of commentary and had it published in the *Canberra Times*. It was a piece called "Helping the environment needs a realistic approach" and it was written by Ms Lawder in response to an issue of local governance to do with the water quality at Giralang Pond. The main thrust of this article was that the ACT government should be more focused on keeping our ponds clean than we should on lofty, unattainable goals to do with cutting our emissions through moving to clean energy generation. Ms Lawder described the ACT's 40 per cent greenhouse emission reduction target and our 90 per cent renewable energy target as: "Big words. High goals. Utterly unachievable."

If Ms Lawder thinks our target of 40 per cent is utterly unachievable then what does this say about the Canberra Liberals' target of 30 per cent? Is that, too, in her view unachievable? You can see why I was concerned to read that article. When the 40 per cent target was implemented, the people of the ACT had a commitment that there was tripartisan support for strong targets. Ms Lawder's comments bring that assumption into question, and so I am concerned today to understand exactly what the position is. Perhaps there is an intention on behalf of the Canberra Liberals to change their position to align with their federal colleagues, who are certainly no supporters of action on climate change. I certainly hope not because I believe Canberrans deserve better than that.

You might ask: why does it matter what the opposition in the ACT think? I think it does matter. It matters that our political leaders are clear about what they believe in regard to climate change and what actions they support. It matters because we need to not have the constant undermining of climate action we have seen in other jurisdictions. It is destructive when people sit on the sidelines and throw rocks while others are trying to move forward to solve a problem. It matters because of the scale of the problem we are talking about, the scale of the policy response we are implementing, the scale of commitment that will be required by political leaders, the community, consumers and business.

My motion outlines in some detail a number of facts, facts inasmuch as they are statements made in regard to our changing climate by reputable agencies. I am not going to spend any time discussing those points in detail, in part because I believe they paint a clear picture. The only reason I would discuss them in detail would be to

highlight the immense severity of the situation we human beings have got ourselves into. To be honest, I struggle with this sometimes. When I read the impacts that scientists anticipate for us: when I imagine the horror of those who will live through and die in the storms, floods and bushfires that are starting to occur with greater frequency and greater ferocity around the world; when I imagine the struggle of people, particularly in poorer countries, trying to access clean water and fresh food in the aftermath of extreme weather events or even just in the face of spreading drought.

I am not a climate scientist, but I respect those who are expert in the field and the consensus of scientific opinion that climate change is happening, that it is happening faster than predicted, and that this is due to man-made activities, primarily burning fossil fuels.

I will take some time to respond to some of the issues that Ms Lawder raised in her article a couple of weeks back. Firstly, on the ACT's capacity to meet the targets, I think, with respect, that Ms Lawder is wrong. There is nothing unachievable about the ACT's targets. They are high goals, but they are not unachievable goals. Yes, it is likely that it will entail the ACT purchasing electricity from generation sites that are interstate, but we do this now. It is just that we currently purchase power from fossil fuel-based generators both in New South Wales and in Victoria. Our large-scale feed-in tariff will ensure that our purchasing power goes towards green electricity production either in the ACT or outside its border.

Secondly, it is entirely technically feasible and affordable that Australia can be 100 per cent renewable. We would not have to buy green electricity from other countries at all, as Ms Lawder suggested in her article. Indeed, it is more likely that Australia would be a net exporter of green electricity if the facility to connect to the Asian grid ever eventuated. Either way, worldwide emissions trading is inevitable, something recognised by conservative governments around the world.

Ms Lawder makes some valid points in her article: that our personal consumption patterns, choices and demands for better lifestyles and amenity contribute to the climate change problem significantly. This is true, and individuals can make personal decisions to reduce their own emissions. However, government intervention is required to drive the shift from coal to renewables and to reduce emissions in the industrial sectors.

The other valid point Ms Lawder made was that good environmental works at a local level would have a flow-on effect to other areas. Yes, that is true, but to suggest that a local government should focus exclusively on management of local environmental issues to the exclusion of taking action in regard to climate change and energy is flawed. The reality is that some of our local environmental issues will be exacerbated by the problems of climate change. Indeed, years of local conservation efforts risk being undone by the impacts of climate change.

How will these impacts look in real terms? They will look a lot like Giralang Pond after a heat wave. The fish at Giralang Pond were most likely lacking enough oxygen as a result of low inflows of water and ongoing hot temperatures. Extended dry periods will also affect the health of urban and non-urban forest, our native species including our birds, even the koel, and the health of our wetlands and waterways.

One of the things I hear about the place is: why should we do anything when others are not doing anything? If I had time, I would refute that others are not doing anything—they are, and in droves. But this is the moral question: if we as wealthy Australians, as people who have quality clothes on our backs, food on our tables and money in our bank accounts, do not take action to reduce our emissions, then who do we think should? If we as a clever, creative city with an educated community do not take action, then who will? If we as a compassionate and caring city want to improve the quality of our own lives and also of others who do not take action on climate change, who will? Australians have one of the highest rates of per capita greenhouse emissions of people on the planet. How can we ask others to take action to reduce their emissions if we do not take action ourselves? What barometer of morality would allow us to think that that was tenable?

The other thing I often hear about taking action on climate change is cost: how much will it cost us? Many people say that the cost is too high. I guess the question is: how much would you pay to ensure that we can transition to clean energy and give up using polluting fossil fuels? Perhaps 5c per kilowatt hour, maybe 10, perhaps even 12? When we think about what we are getting for our money, it is likely that we as a community would pay quite a lot more. We are not just giving up polluting fossil fuels but also investing to keep the world's atmospheric carbon at safe levels, to prevent up to six degrees of global warming, to prevent so-called tipping-point events such as the release of methane from permafrost, to prevent chaotic storms, fires, freezes and bushfires. We certainly should not expect to get it for free, and as a community we also need to acknowledge that it is something definitely worth paying for.

We always need to be mindful about how any costs are spread across the community and to consider the impact on low income families in particular. Some actions that are required to meet targets can disproportionately affect some in our community, in part because they are already struggling financially but also because some people are more significantly affected by the measures themselves due to their lifestyles. For example, people who are at home a lot during the day perhaps due to a disability may have disproportionately high electricity use.

To the sceptics I say this: if nine doctors told you that you had an operable cancer and one doctor told you that you did not, would you not consider going ahead with the operation? You would not sit around and argue if the cancer was real, how it might have come about, whether it was happening faster or slower than it otherwise would have happened or that it was caused by moon rays or the food you had eaten. No, you would proceed with the operation and make the changes that were needed. It is called risk assessment—look at the balance of the evidence and take action based on the evidence. The overwhelming evidence of climate change is that we have a problem. We owe it to the people we work for to take action.

In summary, the issue of global climate change is a dastardly one. There is little doubt that the global community is moving too slowly to remedy the problem and that we will not be able to keep global emissions at a safe level. We are heading for a train wreck. Right now, it is not always easy to see how the train wreck is going to be avoided. But I know this: for the global community to even have half a chance of stopping dangerous climate change, we need everyone on board.

We need leaders and entrepreneurs who can show us how change can happen. We need governments at all levels to show leadership by setting targets and policies to drive the right type of investment in renewable energy. We need politicians to stop bickering about how and why, and start working together within terms of government and across terms of government to build consensus about how to fix this. We need this entire Assembly to work together, to deliver real action on climate change as a local environmental action and as part of our contribution as global citizens. I commend my motion to the Assembly.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.30), by leave: I move the amendments circulated in my name together:

(1) Omit subparagraph (1)(k), substitute:

“(k) as a city with one of the highest standards of living in the world, we have a commitment to reduce emissions while still recognising that there are people in our community on low incomes who are struggling with the cost of living;”.

(2) Add new paragraph (3):

“(3) the Assembly refer the greenhouse emission reduction targets to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services to review how this target affects the cost of living in the ACT and consider viable methods of achieving this target at the lowest possible cost.”.

I put forward these amendments because one of the most important things for the Canberra Liberals is the welfare of Canberrans. The Canberra Liberals have been leaders in the area of the environment many times. In fact, I am sure some of you would recall that it was a Liberal government that first introduced an ACT minister for the environment in the early 1990s. It was also a local Liberal government in 1997 that introduced the first greenhouse gas reduction targets for any jurisdiction in Australia. We do support and always have supported environmental initiatives, but we need to know the cost impact for households. We must always keep in mind in this place that the decisions we make, whether they be on ideological grounds or based on scientific research, have a huge impact on the everyday lives of Canberrans. It would be irresponsible for us to support any initiative at any cost.

This is the point we have been making about light rail and it is the point we make here. We would not support any initiative blindfolded without an understanding of the costs or the ramifications. The Canberra Liberals have in the past committed to the 30 per cent greenhouse gas reduction targets based on 1990 levels. It is obvious that in this place the debate is no longer about targets or whether or not we should have them, nor is it about whether we should or should not take action. The debate now is about understanding what it will mean for our community, for Canberra families. Will we get the result that justifies the pain?

It was made clear in the report released by Minister Corbell on Tuesday that electricity bills will go up by 16 per cent. That is not an insignificant amount for the average family. The Canberra Liberals stated on 21 October 2010 that we thought a 30 per cent greenhouse emissions target was reasonable and a sensible way forward. We believed 30 per cent showed leadership and would ensure that we increased energy efficiency and improved public transport. It was a target that would ensure we reviewed how we operated as a territory, and that is still the case today.

I am not quite sure what the point of today's motion is since we already have a commitment to that target based on previously released policies. In fact, the motion includes a page of information to note and hardly calls on the government to do anything. That page full of information to note could perhaps have been placed in an opinion piece in the *Canberra Times*, which seems to be the point of Mr Rattenbury's speech today. He seems a little upset the *Canberra Times* had the gall to publish an opinion piece not been written by a member of the government or the Greens.

Canberrans are not all living the high life. We have many vulnerable people in our community and many for whom day-to-day costs are already a struggle. To refer the targets to committee so we can all understand the cost impact on ordinary families in Canberra and how the targets will achieve seems a logical thing to do. We simply want to make sure there is a balance between the impact on Canberrans and the environmental gain we will receive. We are not disputing the other information.

I ask that you support us here today in the referral of this to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services to enable detailed analysis on how we can do this in the most cost effective way, how we can achieve these targets in a manner that our community can afford, and what changes we can make to achieve these goals without crippling families who are already doing it tough. We need a practical, measured and considered approach to achieving these targets. I commend the amendments to the Assembly.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (5.34): I move the following amendment to Ms Lawder's proposed amendments to Mr Rattenbury's motion circulated in my name:

Omit paragraphs (3), substitute:

“(3) the Assembly refer the implementation of Action Plan 2 (Climate Change Strategy) to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services for review, taking into account overall effectiveness of measures, including measures to assist low income households.”.

I welcome this debate today. We are now engaging in an exercise to shift our city to a more sustainable future and we are doing that to a comprehensive action plan released in 2012 which sets out the principle elements—indeed, all of the elements—of achieving the abatement we need to achieve to meet our 2020 greenhouse gas

reduction target. That target equates to a very simple figure: two million tonnes of carbon less in the year 2020 compared to the baseline performance. At the moment we are tracking at about four million tonnes of carbon a year as a city. We need to get it down two million tonnes and we need to cut omissions by about two million tonnes. It is my job as the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development to implement measures that achieve that target.

I was dismayed to read the comments of Ms Lawder in her opinion piece. I welcome the fact that we have a shadow minister who is willing to write opinion pieces and engage in some sort of public debate because we have not had one for some time from those on the other side of the chamber. I welcome Ms Lawder's engagement, but I was dismayed by her lack of knowledge, as reflected in that opinion piece.

She said, first of all, that 90 per cent renewable was unachievable, yet she is just so poorly informed on that. What does 90 per cent renewable look like for the ACT? It looks like about 490 megawatts of renewable energy generation. That is what it looks like. Is that a lot? Well, it certainly is a lot of renewable energy. But is it a lot compared to what the private sector was already planning in our city and our region? No, it is not.

In our region, in the 17 local government areas that surround us in the Australian capital region, there was close to 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy generation already planned and, in many instances, already approved by the New South Wales department of planning for development but not yet constructed. That is an enormous amount of renewable energy which, in this case, is wind generation—the cheapest form of renewable energy generation currently available to us. So there you have it. Is it unachievable? Is it unattainable? No, it is not. The private sector are planning for it right now. We just have to seize that opportunity.

I was also disappointed to see in Ms Lawder's article that she spoke about how we would have to cover the ACT in solar farms to achieve 100 per cent renewable. This showed a lack of understanding of principal elements of the government's renewable energy program, which are on the public record and have been on the public record since 2012. It failed to recognise that, first of all, our policy around renewables is not just about solar; it is about wind and waste-to-energy technologies.

I have already mentioned the fact that our feed-in tariff legislation, which the government is seeking to amend in a bill introduced today, facilitates renewable energy generation not just in the ACT but in the broader region. We actually operate in an integrated national electricity market where we source our generation not just locally but from generators many kilometres away across our borders in other places.

If we do that already, as Mr Rattenbury said, for fossil fuel powered generation, we can do it for wind, because why would we not tap into wind and, indeed, solar that is located in places where there are good natural resources that give us the capacity to generate efficient and cost-effective renewable energy generation? Regrettably, the comments from Ms Lawder really did belie, it would appear, a real lack of understanding of established policy.

Of course, we also hear from the opposition their disappointment that this is all going to impose extraordinary cost on households. It is the case that we have to be highly cognisant of cost impacts when it comes to our renewable energy policies. But, of course, what critics of the government's renewable energy policies fail to acknowledge is that there are ons and there are offs. Yes, increasing renewable energy, increasing the supply of renewable energy, particularly in the short term, does see some increase in the price of energy. It is nowhere near the increase you see from the need to augment electricity networks to drive the uptake and demand for a whole range of different appliances, such as air conditioners—it is nowhere near that magnitude of increase—but there is, nevertheless, an increase.

But what critics fail to acknowledge is that there are also offsets like, for example, the energy efficiency improvement scheme, a law enacted by this place in 2012, a law that mandates our electricity suppliers to deliver energy saving devices into people's homes so that they can reduce their electricity usage, save money on their electricity bills and, of course, use less electricity and therefore generate less greenhouse gas emissions.

That scheme has been in operation now for nearly 12 months. It has reached 18,000 households in that time. Over the three years of the scheme it is going to reach 70,000 Canberra households. That is about half of all of the residential dwellings in the ACT. It is going to abate three-quarters of a million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. But, more importantly, when it comes to the argument around cost, it is going to save households about \$4 a week off their electricity bills. What is the cost of switching to 90 per cent renewables? About \$4 a week. We can have the assertions from those opposite that renewable energy comes at a price and, yes, it does, but I would argue a very modest and one that is offset by other measures such as energy saving schemes that householders can take advantage of.

As a Labor government, we are very committed to protecting those on the lowest incomes—those on pensions, those on social security benefits, those who have very little room to move when it comes to their expenditure. The government has set up a specific scheme designed to assist those households. It is called the outreach program. The outreach program is designed to assist very low income households to manage their electricity and energy use and save money on their electricity bills. The outreach program is delivered by social and community organisations like St Vincent de Paul, Communities@Work and other charitable groups, people who are in touch at the grassroots with those low income, vulnerable households.

The government funds this program, first of all, to do energy audits on an individual basis in those homes. It can be a rented property, it can be a public housing property or it can be someone who is in their own home but on a very low income, perhaps due to disability or sickness. Once that audit is done the government funds the replacement or upgrade of energy saving measures in the home.

I will never forget a story I was told about this scheme. There was one family, an elderly pensioner couple, who had a very old fridge. The fridge was so old that all the seals had deteriorated around it so it would not seal properly when you closed it. What that meant was that the fridge used a lot of energy just to try and maintain temperature.

It was pushing this pensioner's electricity bill through the roof. The outreach program found this family, they did the audit and, with the government funding provided, they replaced the fridge. That alone dramatically reduced that household's electricity bill.

I am very proud that we run a program like that because it helps those individual families. There have been hundreds of interventions in low income households across the ACT to do just that. So when those opposite criticise the cost of renewable energy, remember the story of the fridge. Remember the pensioner couple who got their fridge replaced and their electricity bill reduced because of a program introduced by this government which delivered savings well in excess of the cost of increasing our renewable energy supply.

I think this is a very important motion that Mr Rattenbury has introduced today. It is timely that the Canberra Liberals really restate what it is they stand for on this very important issue. It is not an issue that can be left simply to national governments. Yes, national action is critical, absolutely critical, and many of us remain dismayed at the approach taken by the Liberals' federal counterparts, but that is a debate for another day.

The fact is that there are some national governments and state, provincial, territory and city governments that are taking real and practical action on climate change. There are alliances of cities across the world who are focusing on achieving abatement similar to, equal to or even greater than the abatement targets that we now have legislated here in the ACT. We are not alone; we are not radical; we are not exceptional. We are part of a worldwide movement of cities and sub-national governments who are taking action, even when national governments cannot get agreement in international fora. Our programs are critical and they will deliver jobs and economic opportunity as much as they will deliver abatement and improved environmental outcomes.

I have moved the amendment to Ms Lawder's proposed amendments because I would indeed welcome the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services looking at our greenhouse gas reduction targets. I do not think it is about having a debate again about what the target should be. It should, instead, be an opportunity to review progress. How are we going in implementing action plan 2? What steps have we put in place? How are we going in terms of continuing to assist low income earners? How are we going? How effective are these measures to achieve the abatement we need achieve? I think that would be a very worthy thing to do, and that is why I have moved the amendment that I have circulated in my name. I commend the amendment to the Assembly.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (5.47): I will speak to the amendment and close the debate, which I think seems to suit the Assembly. I will be supporting Mr Corbell's amendment and Ms Lawder's amendments as we move through them. I think that the point of clarification Ms Lawder has sought is fine. The establishment of the committee will provide us with an excellent opportunity to examine the implementation of the ACT's targets and how effective they are and look at issues such as the costs. I think that will stack up very well.

Some of the points that Mr Corbell has just made really underline the fact that this is actually quite a small cost. I go back to my earlier remarks that I believe we really need to think about the fact that, yes, there are some costs attached to this, but the costs we are avoiding, the price we will not have to pay if we take some of these initiatives, really settle the score quite well. Rest assured, Ms Lawder, I am happy for you to print an op-ed any time you like. I just hope that next time it is more easily understood than the fact that we had to draw this out today. But it has been fascinating.

Just while I have been sitting here there has been a new story posted on the *Canberra Times* noting the fact that the ACT has just recorded its hottest summer on record with Canberra sweltering through three heatwaves and average top temperatures of almost 30 degrees. The ACT has recorded a maximum average temperature of 29.9 degrees, the highest average ever recorded, breaking the record previously held in 2006.

On top of this, Canberra endured three days over 40 degrees during the 2013-14 summer, bringing the total to 11 over the last five years. This compares to the ACT average which has been just one day over 40 degrees every 10 years. So we have gone from having one day every 10 years over 40 degrees to having 11 of them in the last five years. These are extraordinary records. Sean Carson from the weather bureau noted that several records have been shattered this summer, including the number of days over 37 degrees in a row, which was broken twice. Again, we see just extraordinary numbers of records being broken, and that is just the ACT ones. Of course, we have seen similar things right across the country both this summer and last summer.

I am pleased with the outcome of today's discussion. I think it is important that we have affirmed that the ACT is committed to strong climate action. We have got a long way to go. We have got a lot of work to do to achieve the targets we have set ourselves. I am very proud of the fact that I have been a member of this Assembly at a time in which we have legislated to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent, a target that I think is utterly achievable and which we are well on our way to.

The legislation introduced this morning to move the ACT towards our 90 per cent renewable energy target by 2020 will help us deliver on that 40 per cent goal. I think we are setting this in train, and the community is equally proud of the fact that we as a jurisdiction are playing our part. I thank members for their support for this motion today. I look forward to working with members of the Assembly to continue to put the policies in place that will deliver more renewable energy to this territory, that will cut our greenhouse gas emissions and that will position the ACT for the future.

Amendment to proposed amendments agreed to.

Amendments, as amended, agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MR SMYTH (Brindabella): Pursuant to standing order 246A I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A. Continuing resolution 5A was agreed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 August 2012. The requirements of the resolution set out a transparency mechanism to promote accountability in the consideration of statutory appointments. The resolution requires relevant standing committees which consider statutory appointments to report on a six-monthly basis, and present a schedule listing appointments considered during the applicable period. The schedule is required to include the statutory appointments considered; for each appointment, the date the request from the responsible minister for consultation was received; and the date the committee's feedback was provided.

For the applicable reporting period—1 July to 31 December 2013—the committee considered three statutory appointments. I therefore table the following paper showing a schedule of statutory appointments for the period 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2013 as considered by the Eighth Assembly's public accounts committee in accordance with continuing resolution 5A:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Schedule of Statutory Appointments—
8th Assembly—Period 1 July to 31 December 2013.

I also wish to make a statement about a number of reports relating to inquiries about certain Auditor-General's reports currently before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to inquiries about certain Auditor-General's reports currently before the committee.

On 21 December 2012, Auditor-General's report No 10 of 2012 was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for inquiry. This report provides a summary of the results of the audits of financial reports and reviews of statements of performance completed during 2011-12, covering the territory and its agencies. The report contained 10 recommendations—one recommendation on improving processes for resolving audit findings; four recommendations on the quality of reporting in financial statements and statements of performance; and five recommendations on IT governance and controls.

The committee received a private briefing from the Auditor-General in relation to the audit report on 5 February 2013 and a submission from the government dated 21 March 2013. In its submission, the government agreed to eight recommendations and agreed in part to two recommendations.

In its report inquiring into the 2011-12 annual reports, tabled on 6 June 2013, the committee considered the findings of the audit report as they related to audits of financial reports and reviews of statements of performance, including comparisons with previous years, for the 2011-12 reporting period for the following matters:

timeliness of access to electronic versions of annual reports; inclusion of correct versions of audited documents; timeliness of financial reporting processes; the quality of statements of performance; and the usefulness of performance measures and accountability indicators. The committee has resolved to make no further inquiries into the audit report.

On 26 April 2013, Auditor-General's report No 2 of 2013, *Executive remuneration disclosed in ACTEW Corporation Limited's (ACTEW) 2010-11 financial statements and annual report 2011* was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for inquiry. This report responded to a request from the public accounts committee at a public hearing on 2 April 2013 at which the Auditor-General undertook to provide further information relating to (1) the Auditor-General's responsibilities in relation to ACTEW's annual report and financial statements and (2) incorrect reporting by ACTEW of the remuneration of ACTEW's managing director in its 2011 annual report.

The report contained two recommendations. The committee received a submission from the government dated 8 August 2013. In its submission, the government noted and supported recommendation 1 and agreed to the second recommendation. The Auditor-General's two recommendations to address the audit findings were:

1. ACTEW should be required to include information provided in remuneration tables in its annual report in its financial statements so that it is audited by the Auditor-General.
2. Communication processes between the Government and ACTEW should be documented.

The committee is of the view that these recommendations will promote public accountability by improving transparency with respect to communication processes between ACTEW and the government, and consistency in relation to financial statement reporting.

In its report inquiring into 2011-12 annual reports, tabled on 6 June 2013, the committee considered the findings of the audit report. The committee has resolved to make no further inquiries into the audit report.

On 3 July 2012, Auditor-General's report No 6 of 2012, *Emergency department performance information*, was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for inquiry. This report presented the results of a performance audit that examined the circumstances associated with the alleged manipulation and misreporting of emergency department performance information at the Canberra Hospital.

The report contained 10 recommendations focusing on improvements to the management of the emergency department information system, EDIS, and data integrity. The government accepted all the recommendations. The committee received a private briefing from the Auditor-General in relation to the audit report on 5 February 2013.

The committee notes that the Seventh Assembly public accounts committee resolved to inquire further into this report on 10 July 2012 and tabled an interim report on 21 August 2012. The government response to that report was tabled on 16 May 2013.

Given the significance of, and public interest in, the matter central to this report, the committee has actively followed up on progress regarding implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations. The committee has recently received a progress update for each of the recommendations, reflecting their status at the end of January 2014.

The committee notes that significant work against each of the recommendations has taken place, and progress has been achieved in relation to each, with work complete, close to completion or well underway. The committee emphasises that it is the action taken by applicable agencies to implement audit recommendations that is all important in helping achieve better efficiency and improving accountability of the government, not the recommendations per se.

The committee has resolved to make no further inquiries into the audit report. However, the committee has written to the health minister requesting that a further update on the implementation of recommendations be provided to reflect their status at the end of the 2013-14 financial year.

The last report is Auditor-General's report No 8 of 2012, *Australian Capital Territory public service recruitment practices*. On 25 October 2012, Auditor-General's report No 8 of 2012 was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for inquiry. This report presented the results of a performance audit of the recruitment practices of four ACT public service agencies—the Health Directorate, the Education and Training Directorate, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and CIT. The audit report reviewed these agencies' compliance with the Public Sector Management Act 1994, relevant standards, policies and guidelines.

At 6 pm, in accordance with standing order 34, the debate was interrupted. The motion for the adjournment of the Assembly having been put and negatived, the debate was resumed.

MR SMYTH: The report contained seven recommendations. I know members are hanging out to find out what they were. The committee received a briefing from the Auditor-General in relation to the audit report on 5 February 2013, and a submission from the government dated 7 May 2013. In its submission, the government agreed to all seven recommendations.

Given the significance of recruitment action and practice to the territory budget, in the form of recurrent liabilities, the committee has actively followed up on progress regarding implementation of the audit report recommendations. The committee has received a progress update for each of the recommendations reflecting their status—in February 2014. The committee notes that significant work against each of the recommendations has taken place, and progress has been achieved in relation to each, with work complete, close to completion or well underway.

The committee has resolved to take no further action on the audit report.

Estimates 2014-2015—Select Committee Appointment

MADAM SPEAKER (Mrs Dunne): I have been notified in writing of the following nominations for membership of the select committee on estimates. I note that I was not notified by the set time, but we will pass lightly over that. The nominations are for Ms Berry, Mrs Jones, Ms Porter and Mr Smyth.

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

That the Members so nominated be appointed as members of the Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

National Multicultural Festival

MRS JONES (Molonglo) (6.01): I was very pleased to be able to attend the National Multicultural Festival again this year in my capacity as shadow minister for multicultural affairs. The three-day festival was held from 7 to 9 February and it was a very good event. Canberra is home to people of many different cultures and the festival really is a wonderful display of the various ethnic groups bringing colour to our society. There were many thousands of people who visited the festival and 380 stalls from organisations involved. I was fortunate enough to meet many of the different stallholders and I am so thankful for their commitment and hard work to make the festival a success.

I would like to thank: John and Aylwen Gardiner-Garden, Earthly Delights; Jean Lambert, Capital Petanque Club; Margaret Blessington, Taoist Tai Chi Society; Tom Dzaja, Australian Croatian Club; Ms Boonsri Benn, Thai Community of the ACT; Suresh Thambipillai, Sulkyo Mahikan Canberra; Suraj Thomas, Kevala Food; Rashid Benz, Moroccan Association of Australia; Darin Men, Cambodian community; Her Excellency Ms Koleka Mqulwana, South African High Commission; His Excellency Mr Beraki Jino, Solomon Islands High Commission; Linda Eberhardt, Nigerian High Commission; Jay Altmann and Hans Stoeher, Harmonie German Club; Jose Villatobas, Spanish chorizo barbecue; Tom Babic, Croatian Deakin Club; Saju Abraham, Canberra Malayalees; Ane Sitauti, Talisola Cultural Group; Adrienne Johns, ACT Writers; Mrs Alison Charlton, Q Writers; Julie McKay, International Women's Day UN Women; Ms Iris Elgueta, Women's Legal Centre; Denis O'Brian, Sing Australia; Javad Mehr, ACT Community Language Schools Association; Mrs Brigitte MacArthur, Central Spears Gridiron; Mr Sorin Clenci, Piroy Football Aid Inc; Ms

Lily Spelic, Croatian Tours Food; Ms Anita Gambrill, Jaija Beauty Salon; Mr Asif Hossain, Tigers Sporting Club Bangladesh; Richard Dixon and Tom Dixon, cold craft beer and regional wine; Mr Carlos Torres, Colombian food stall and Spanish Speakers Association; Robert Carloff, Freemasons Canberra; Samir El-Sabagh, Mercy Underprivileged Association; Ray Sikman, White Eagles Serbian Club; Mrs Lisa Ramshaw, Italian English Bilingual School; Mrs Sammai Burge, Siam dance troupe; Mr Stuart Trower, Queen's Head; Zeenat, Zeenat Henna Tattoos; Alex Tine, Monaro Panthers Football; Nanti Nee Khiewchann, Thai street food stall; Mostafa Esmraeilpour, Delicious Iranian Food; Troy Klep, Dutch Pancakes; Peter McArdle, Rotary; Mrs So Nam, Bhutan Association of Canberra; Jennifer Singh and Sarah Sing, Indian Affairs in the city; Chris Lee, Sahaja Yoga; Chin Wong, Federation of Chinese Associations of the ACT; and Dean Sahu Khan and Willie Senanayake, Canberra Interfaith Forum. I also thank Sukyo Mahikari Canberra, Zaija Day Spa, Ositos Cool—Spanish School for Teens, and the many others who I met on the day.

Without the hard work of these people and the many other volunteers who give up their time, the Multicultural Festival would not be possible, as the minister mentioned today. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the work you have done on the festival and for our community throughout the year.

Remembrance Driveway

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella) (6.05): I rise tonight to talk about an event I attended on 5 February this year representing the Chief Minister. It was the celebration of the diamond jubilee of the Remembrance Driveway. It was great to be able to attend this event. The Remembrance Driveway is an excellent monument to our fallen soldiers and also an important feature of infrastructure for the ACT and New South Wales connecting Canberra with Sydney.

There were several great speakers and I would like to thank the following people: Air Commodore Ian Scott; Mrs Jenny Scott; Peter Hatfield; Rear Admiral Tim Barrett; Brigadier Mark Brewer; Air Vice-Marshal Mel Hupfeld; Councillor Robyn Kemmis; the Hon Stuart Robert MP; the Hon Barry O'Farrell; Marie Bashir, the Governor of New South Wales; Peter Duncan; Auntie Mille Ingra; Don Rowe and Chaplain Catie Inches-Ogden.

I would also like to put in a plug for Steve Amos, our TAMS ranger who was on the board of the Remembrance Driveway and does a lot of work on behalf of the ACT. The driveway was launched by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip in 1954. The Remembrance Driveway is designed to be a living memorial to all soldiers who have served Australia overseas. They are represented by VC recipients after whom the rest stops are named along the route. The route is lined with native trees which provide shade areas at the rest stops, perfect for a picnic on the way to Sydney.

The idea of planting trees is aimed at representing hope for the future and also acts as a monument which continues to grow and become more beautiful as time goes on. The idea for this type of monument was launched by Mrs Margaret Davis, who was the founding president of the Garden Clubs of Australia. It was her idea to create a living memorial, as opposed to a regular memorial, for soldiers who served in World War II.

It was a great start but obviously for such an enormous project help was needed from other bodies. In order to get the project underway Mrs Davis employed the help of Lieutenant General Frank Berryman and Robert Anderson, who was the curator and chief botanist at the Sydney Botanic Gardens. Charles Moses, who was the general manager of the ABC at the time, was also involved.

In April 1952 the committee was formed and chaired by Charles Moses. The inaugural meeting was held in May 1952 with various other interested people invited to discuss the idea of a memorial driveway from Sydney to Canberra. After a year and a half of work the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon JJ Cahill, through a statement on the ABC in 1953, agreed to launch the project. The commonwealth was on board, with the federal minister for the interior, Mr Kent Hughes, making a statement.

Once the announcement was made a public appeal for donations was begun. People were asked to pay \$20 to be able to plant a tree along the route. By far the most pertinent contributions to the Remembrance Driveway were the Queen and Prince Philip in February 1954. They each planted a London plane tree in the corner of Macquarie Place in Sydney where the Remembrance Driveway begins. I know Mr Smyth in a previous life had a lot to do with this event.

The Queen also planted a snow gum at the war memorial here in Canberra, which unfortunately did not survive a vandal attack in 1965. After the planting of the royal trees, the pace of planting increased to form the more familiar busy drive we all know today. The burst lasted until the end of the 1960s when enthusiasm waned a little bit and planting largely ceased. Luckily, in the early 1990s enthusiasm rebuilt and more planting occurred.

The road is a great example of the connection between the cities. It has meaning and substance and presents a lovely set of views and rest stops on the drive to and from Sydney. As it stands, the Remembrance Driveway Committee is looking to construct new formal rest stops in the near future. They include the Mark Donaldson VC rest area, the Keith Payne VC rest area, the Benjamin Roberts-Smith VC rest area and the Daniel Keighran VC rest area.

The existing rest stops on the Remembrance Driveway already promote safe driving amongst the New South Wales and ACT communities. Providing such tempting green and picturesque rest points encourages people to stop, revive and survive and creates a perfect space for kids to have a stretch and play on the long drive, which often epitomises the Australian family car trip.

The addition of these new four rest areas in the future will only add to the legacy of our service people past and present and provide additional opportunities for people to be safe and rested on the journey between Sydney and Canberra.

Scouts ACT Ordination of deacons

MR COE (Ginninderra) (6.10): I rise this evening to speak about the work of scouts in the ACT. Scouts provide fun and challenging opportunities for young Australians aged six to 25. There are over 68,000 members in Australia which makes the scouts the largest youth movement in the country. Scouts are able to participate in many outdoor activities, including camping and bushcraft, abseiling, overnight hiking, rafting, canoeing, snow activities, rock climbing, sailing and flying. Scouts are also involved in performing arts, leadership development, community service, amateur radio operation, environment projects, cuborees, jamborees and ventures, international events and service projects in developing countries. They also learn practical skills like first aid and cooking.

Scouts ACT offer a unique youth program which includes issues like youth health, responsible risk taking, vocational skills and issues relevant to Indigenous Australians. The awards scheme encourages scouts to participate in a range of available activities and recognise their achievements.

On 19 January I was delighted to visit the Scouts ACT cuboree at Camp Cottermouth. The scouts hold a cuboree every three years for cubs between the ages of eight and 11 years. This year's cuboree was attended by 600 scouts and about 300 adults. Each cuboree has a special theme, and this year's theme was "under construction—creating a better world". At the cuboree scouts were apprentice tradies and travelled to six building sites looking for clues to build a better world. They found something lost, rescued a civilisation, found a lost planet, ran an inn, climbed a mountain and planned a city of the future. As part of this adventure, they went rock climbing, water sliding, sang and danced, operated slot cards, went geocaching and built an aqueduct. At the end of the cuboree the scouts graduated as tradies and were presented with cuboree woggles.

Of course, to undertake such a task requires an enormous amount of commitment from volunteers, whether it be setting up obstacle courses, inventing exercise bike operated hoses, writing risk management plans, arranging truckloads of food, serving as first-aid attendants, managing the car park, ensuring security, collecting dietary information, managing medication, writing and printing instruction manuals, collecting permission forms, and on and on. To everyone that made the event a roaring success I congratulate and thank you. In closing, I commend the chief commissioner, Peter Harris, and the president, Leo Farrelly, on a very successful camp.

Madam Speaker, I wish to briefly speak about an event I attended on 22 February—the ordination of deacons with collation of an archdeacon at St Saviour's Cathedral, Goulburn. The celebrant was the Right Reverend Bishop Stuart Robinson; Dean of the Eucharist was the Reverend Andrea de Vaal-Horciu; the Dean, the Reverend Canon Mark Cooper; the organist, David Johnson, and the choirmaster, Greg Oehm. The sermon was delivered by the Reverend Patrick Cole of Christ Church, Hawker in my electorate.

The lovely service saw Elizabeth Dykes installed as Archdeacon for the Queanbeyan, Monaro and Alpine Region. The service also included the ordination of Jonathan Cole, Tracey Jacob, David McLeannan and Peter Malone. Whilst these people have all travelled varied journeys, they all have a common purpose—to serve.

Regardless of whether one is a member of the Anglican Church, a member of another faith community or not a member of any faith community, I doubt that anyone here in the Assembly would question the sacrifice and commitment these people and their families have embarked upon. I thank them and all faith leaders in Canberra for the commitment they make.

In this place we often talk about the role of volunteers and those in the community sector. This attention is justified. However, I think we sometimes forget the role that faith communities play in serving our communities too. They assist those not only in their immediate faith community but also beyond. The welfare mechanisms that these communities provide are invaluable and form a strong part of our community. I wish Jonathan, Tracey, David, Peter, Elizabeth and their families all the best for their service in our region.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (6.14): This evening I rise to talk about the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee, on which I sit as the ACT representative and, in particular, the successful young women's forum and the work with women parliamentarians and young women of the Pacific region.

The first forum for young women was held by the CWP Steering Committee in Canberra, enabling 10 young women from across Australia to meet in the federal parliament and to hear from and engage with many women parliamentarians and other influential women over a two-day period two years ago.

This was followed by a very successful two-day forum in Sydney of women parliamentarians from across the Pacific and also Australia itself, enabling all who attended the opportunity to discuss the different issues and the challenges that are faced by women parliamentarians in their different jurisdictions. This work continues through twinning arrangements, of course, and individual opportunities to mentor and support women in the Pacific through mutual visits and exchanges.

The second young women's forum was held recently in Sydney when, again, young women from every state and territory including Norfolk Island, and this time from across the Pacific and accompanied by Pacific women parliamentarians, came together.

The second forum was very successful, and the ACT-nominated participant, Ms Hannah Wood, tells me that she was so encouraged and motivated by the experience that the forum afforded her to seek employment in a parliamentarian's office. She has indeed secured a position in the office of the newly elected senator for the Northern Territory, Senator Nova Peris OAM. I would like to congratulate Hannah on her appointment and wish her all the best for her future endeavours.

I reported the success of the latest young women's forum to the latest ACT CPA meeting, and also reported that the Northern Territory representative of the CWP organised a one-day forum for young women in the territory in the alternate year. This is again something I reported at the recent CPA meeting in this place. I suggested that the ACT hold its own young women's forum, and this idea was warmly received by members at the meeting.

The CWP Steering Committee will meet in April this year for its all-day face-to-face planning session. I will be able to report plans for the young women's forum, and the Pacific partnership program in particular, after this meeting. Members can log onto w.comm to read about all the activities of the steering committee and its initiatives.

Mount Stromlo High School St Edmund's College

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (6.17): A few weeks ago on 17 February I had the pleasure of accepting an invitation from a high school teacher, Mr Lancelot Yu, teacher of humanities at Stromlo high. The invitation was to address his year 9 students doing a civics course called "People, power and politics". Mr Yu gave me a short briefing about his civics course, which he indicated has attracted a very bright cohort of students, and the students had prepared a list of questions they would like to put to me about my work as a member of the Legislative Assembly, my shadow portfolios and my engagement with my constituents of the Molonglo electorate.

I have to say that Mr Yu's description of his young charges was very accurate, and I compliment him and the students for their preparation for our meeting. I spent a very interesting hour with a group of young people who exhibited an enthusiastic attitude and sound knowledge of our political process. I particularly enjoyed their direct questions on a wide range of topics, which I hope I answered to their satisfaction. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to meet Mr Yu and his students and would very much enjoy hosting them for a visit to the Assembly some time over the next year.

I would also like to thank the principal, Dr Michael Kindner, for his hospitality and congratulate him for the initiative that sees Stromlo high renamed Mount Stromlo High School. I understand the change will assist in fostering the school's relationship with the ANU and its astronomy and research centre, and I congratulate Dr Kindner, the school board, the education directorate and the minister for this initiative.

Last night I had a very pleasant evening spent with the St Edmund's College of Canberra community at their opening mass. It was originally meant to be at Manuka Oval but because of the impending inclement weather it was transferred to St Christopher's Cathedral, which was filled to capacity.

St Edmund's was celebrating as well as their opening mass their 60 years of being a school in Canberra. Being founded in 1954, 2014 obviously means it is their 60th anniversary. It was a celebration of their community last night that was very well handled by their principal, Mr Peter Fullagar. An inspirational mass was conducted by the principal celebrant, Archbishop Christopher Prowse. His concelebrants were

Bishop Pat Power, Monsignor John Woods, Father Luke Verrell, Father Stephen Fletcher, and Father Bony Abraham. I understand that except for the archbishop, they are all former old boys of St Edmund's College. It was great to see them as well as all of the old boys who came back, including some of the brothers from 30 to 40 years ago. Some of the people who came back last night met up with a lot of old friends.

Presentations were made to the house leaders who were commissioned and to year 12 students by college principal Mr Peter Fullagar and former headmaster Brother Robert Wallace. Brother Wallace was principal of St Edmund's from 1979 to 1988. I add that he was also my teacher back at Lewisham Christian Brothers in 1964, so it was good to catch up with Bob Wallace. Brother John O'Shea, principal from 1989 to 1994 was there as well as Dr Christopher Hayes, principal from 2005 to 2008.

Commissioning of the college leaders took place, and congratulations to college captain, Jack Gibson, college vice-captains, Rosario Trimboli and James Kenny, college academic captain, Jacob Buddee and all the house captains and year 12 students.

There was a community gathering afterwards, and the celebration does not stop there. There are further events to celebrate the 60th anniversary this year: St Eddie's community street fair on 22 March, the open day for old boys on 10 May from 12 to 4 pm, the anniversary ball at the Canberra Southern Cross Club on 6 August, the EdMum's luncheon on 5 September, and the staff past and present function at Regatta Point on 31 October. There is a lot of celebration to be conducted by St Edmund's College current and past students. I congratulate them for a very significant event last night, and I thank them for inviting me to share that occasion with them last night.

Australian Bravery Association

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (6.22): It was a great honour recently to welcome members of the Australian Bravery Association to Canberra for their annual dinner and conference at Duntroon earlier this month. Australian bravery decorations were established along with the Australian honours system in February 1975. The group bravery citation was added in 1990 to recognise a group of people involved in an incident. Nominations are considered by the Australian Bravery Decorations Council, which makes recommendations to the Governor-General.

The Cross of Valour is Australia's highest civilian bravery decoration. It is awarded for acts of conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme peril and has been awarded five times since 1975. The first Cross of Valour was awarded in 1989 to Mr Darrell Tree of South Australia. He saved a three-year-old boy from an electrified crane despite being knocked out several times by high-voltage electric shocks.

The other Cross of Valour recipients are: Tim Britten and Richard Joyce, for efforts to rescue others in the immediate aftermath of the Bali nightclub bombing in 2002; Mr Victor Boscoe, for his lengthy pursuit of armed robbers in Brisbane in 1993; and president of the Cross of Valour Association Mr Allan Sparkes, who, in 1996, repeatedly entered flooded stormwater drains in Coffs Harbour to find and rescue a missing boy. It was an honour to be in the company of four of the five Cross of Valour winners at Duntroon.

I was also especially proud that Canberrans Jason and Jodie Roff and Navy commander Scott Palmer were being honoured as new members of the association. Last year the Roffs each received the commendation for brave conduct and Commander Palmer was a recipient in a group bravery citation.

In 2009 Jason and Jodie Roff stopped their car on seeing smoke coming from a house in Langdon Avenue, Wanniasa. They went into the burning house and were able to save two elderly occupants struggling to save possessions and their cat.

During the 2011 Queensland floods, Navy commander Scott Palmer was on the crew of a Navy Sea King helicopter undertaking evacuations in very dangerous conditions when they spotted a man being swept along Laidley Creek. The crew attempted a hazardous winch rescue, lowering a team member down within three feet of the man, but were unable to grab hold of him. The stricken man was finally able to climb into a tree, allowing the crew to winch down and rescue him.

On behalf of the ACT community, I thank these three Canberrans for their bravery and congratulate them on their official recognition and inclusion in the Australian Bravery Association.

The stated aim of the Australian Bravery Association is to maximise the support available to those members in our community who conduct themselves bravely to save life, property or the environment and thereby experience physical, emotional or personal hardship. The association recognises that in earning their awards members will have been subjected to enormous physical and/or emotional stresses and, as a result, they suffer in varying degrees from some form of psychological damage. It has an honorary chaplain who is trained in trauma counselling and another member, a qualified professional counsellor, is the association's honorary post-traumatic stress disorder counsellor.

The Australian Bravery Association is a testament to human compassion and selflessness that are the best qualities we have to share with one another.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 6.26 pm until Tuesday, 18 March, at 10 am.

Answers to questions

Insurance—third-party (Question No 157)

Mr Smyth asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 24 October 2013:

- (1) For each financial year since Compulsory Third-Party Insurance (CTP) reforms, can the Treasurer provide the (a) number of people eligible for the scheme and (b) total financial value of all claims, including (i) highest value, (ii) lowest value, (iii) mean average, (iv) median value and (v) mode value.
- (2) What jurisdictions are currently in negotiations with the Government regarding CTP reforms, and can the Treasurer include the date of (a) commencement of negotiations and outcome and (b) last negotiations and outcome.
- (3) What further CTP reforms are the Government anticipating and when.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1)(a) Compulsory Third-Party (CTP) insurance indemnifies vehicle owners and drivers who are legally liable for personal injury caused to any other party in the event of a motor vehicle accident. CTP insurance is a mandatory requirement for registration of a vehicle in the ACT. As such, there can be no eligibility requirements for the CTP Scheme. A measure of the number of participants in the Scheme is the number of registered motor vehicles in the ACT.

Year ¹	ACT registered motor vehicles
2008	241,762
2009	246,985
2010	253,848
2011	258,904
2012	267,164
2013	273,924

- (b) Claims data for the ACT CTP Scheme is subject to considerations of commercial sensitivity due to the existence of a single insurer in the market up until 1 July 2013. In the future it is expected that it will be possible to disclose more information once time is allowed for competition to take full effect in the market. (See **ACT Civil & Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) decision- Council of the Law Society in the ACT & ACT Treasury Directorate and NRMA Insurance (Administrative Review) [2012] ACAT 13**).

In response to the questions, I can provide as follows:

		2008-2013
Total value of claims in aggregate for period	Finalised	\$80-120m
Number of claims	Total	3,596
	Finalised	2,167
Highest/Lowest	Average of highest value in each year	\$8.8m
	Average of lowest value in each year	\$0

- (2) The Government is not currently in negotiations with any other jurisdictions regarding CTP reforms. Negotiations with other jurisdictions are not necessary as each CTP scheme is stand alone in its jurisdiction.

It is normal practice to keep a watching brief on all jurisdictional reviews of CTP schemes. The Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate regularly participates in inter-jurisdictional consultation on schemes and proposals for change in all Australian jurisdictions and New Zealand.

- (3) The Government will continue to pursue CTP reform as priority this term.

¹ ABS Motor Vehicle Census data for number of registered motor vehicles published each year.

ACT Rural Fire Service—vacancies (Question No 161)

Mr Smyth asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, upon notice, on 24 October 2013:

- (1) Will the Minister list all vacant positions at the ACT Rural Fire Service.
- (2) What interim measures have been put in place to ensure that functions from these roles are still being carried out.
- (3) For each position referred to in part (1), since when have the positions been vacant and what initiatives have been taken to fill these roles.

Mr Corbell: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) As at 2 December 2013 there are two vacant positions out of a total of 14 paid positions at the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS). These are:
 - RFS Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) – the RFS Operations Manager is acting in this position.
 - Community Awareness Officer – the person in this position has been seconded to the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan review team within the ESA.
- (2) The Operations Manager retains his substantive duties while acting as the DCO to meet the statutory requirement as set out in section 53 of the *Emergencies Act 2004*. Some aspects of the Operations Manager functions have been allocated to the other senior RFS staff.

In relation to the Community Awareness Officer, the substantive duties of this position have been retained by the RFS Manager for Community Awareness. Some aspects of the Community Awareness Officer position's functions have been allocated to the other senior RFS staff.

- (3) The former ACTRFS DCO retired from this position in July 2013. This position is currently being filled in an acting capacity by the RFS Operations Manager.

The Community Awareness Officer position became vacant in September 2013 and its functions have been retained by the RFS Manager for Community Awareness. Some aspects of the Community Awareness Officer position's functions have been allocated to the other senior RFS staff.

**ACT Emergency Services Agency—savings initiatives
(Question No 163)**

Mr Smyth asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, upon notice, on 24 October 2013:

- (1) Will the Minister list all savings initiatives that have been identified in the ACT Emergency Services Agency.
- (2) What is the breakdown of source of identified savings by sub-agency, including (a) ACT Ambulance Service, (b) ACT Fire and Rescue, (c) ACT Rural Fire Service and (d) ACT State Emergency Service.

Mr Corbell: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Similar to other agencies, savings and efficiency initiatives are targeted across a broad range of administrative and employee expenses for the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA).

Savings initiatives include:

- Provision of tea, coffee and milk for general consumption by ESA staff
 - Cessation of subsidised parking for staff at Fairbairn
 - Reduction in use and payment of on call/close call allowance for duty officer roles
 - Reduction in leased vehicle fleet
 - Procurement savings through ongoing review and management of procurement, such as limiting provision of ESA corporate uniform to non-operational staff, standardisation of stationery, etc
 - Limitations on backfilling and non-essential recruitment
 - ACT Fire & Rescue fee increases (pg 86, 2013-14 Budget Paper No 3)
- (2) Savings initiatives apply across the ESA, including ACT Fire & Rescue, ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service.

**Land—commence and complete charges
(Question No 164)**

Mr Smyth asked the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, upon notice, on 24 October 2013:

Can the Minister detail all blocks that received a waiver to Commence and Complete Charges in the last five years, including (a) block and section numbers, (b) value of each the blocks listed, (c) value of each waiver for the blocks listed and (d) reason for waiver.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question as of 21 November 2013 is as follows:

* Block and Section numbers have not been provided to respect the privacy of taxpayers.

Date of waiver	Block *	Section *	Division	Commercial/ Residential/ Mixed use	Value of block	Value of each waiver	Reason for Waiver *
30/10/2009			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$749,000	\$5,104	The ACT Government provided a two-year moratorium on EOT fees for commercial and industrial leases for the defined period from 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2011, which was in place to assist industry, protect jobs and support the economy in response to the Global Financial Crisis.
26/11/2009			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$4,700,000	\$50,009	
27/11/2009			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,080,000	\$33,125	
03/12/2009			KAMBAH	Commercial	\$560,000	\$26,510	
07/12/2009			CHARNWOOD	Commercial	\$751,000	\$36,208	
21/12/2009			KAMBAH	Commercial	\$417,000	\$16,636	
23/12/2009			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$662,000	\$3,076	
13/01/2010			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$1,175,000	\$43,326	
15/01/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,116,000	\$35,837	
15/01/2010			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$929,000	\$9,984	
11/03/2010			CHISHOLM	Commercial	\$3,000,000	\$12,911	
12/03/2010			BELCONNEN	Commercial	\$1,139,000	\$55,115	
22/03/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,188,000	\$46,413	
25/03/2010			GUNGAHLIN	Commercial	\$10,520,000	\$56,822	
07/05/2010			KINGSTON	Commercial	\$2,800,000	\$21,302	
02/06/2010			HUME	Commercial	\$405,000	\$9,345	
08/06/2010			GREENWAY	Commercial	\$3,000,000	\$27,857	
08/06/2010			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$620,000	\$6,136	
25/06/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$641,000	\$26,354	
25/06/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,310,000	\$47,160	
29/06/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$828,000	\$12,382	
06/07/2010			CANBERRA	Commercial	\$403,000	\$5,766	
13/07/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$752,000	\$44,859	
23/07/2010			BELCONNEN	Commercial	\$482,000	\$5,469	
13/08/2010			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$1,900,000	\$51,659	
13/08/2010			DEAKIN	Commercial	\$9,368,000	\$287,211	
20/08/2010			GUNGAHLIN	Commercial	\$10,520,000	\$57,574	
20/09/2010			GUNGAHLIN	Commercial	\$451,000	\$16,202	
22/09/2010			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$2,413,000	\$21,351	
12/10/2010			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$1,213,000	\$64,744	
27/10/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$609,000	\$25,151	
27/10/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,176,000	\$45,971	
08/11/2010			CANBERRA	Commercial	\$10,790,000	\$45,899	
08/11/2010			GREENWAY	Commercial	\$2,850,000	\$24,995	
14/11/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$580,000	\$10,495	
15/11/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$746,000	\$36,564	
15/11/2010			PHILLIP	Commercial	\$3,325,000	\$200,600	
15/11/2010			BELCONNEN	Commercial	\$1,153,000	\$82,226	
15/11/2010			BELCONNEN	Commercial	\$482,000	\$2,215	
15/11/2010			KALEEN	Commercial	\$550,000	\$3,518	
15/11/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$876,000	\$23,660	
15/11/2010			PHILLIP	Commercial	\$2,708,000	\$126,891	
15/11/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$889,000	\$29,779	
17/11/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,300,000	\$12,572	
23/11/2010			BELCONNEN	Commercial	\$1,850,000	\$40,363	
23/11/2010			DICKSON	Commercial	\$4,390,000	\$21,048	
21/12/2010			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$746,000	\$35,242	
31/01/2011			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$656,000	\$40,761	
03/02/2011			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$1,213,000	\$9,151	
03/02/2011			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,129,000	\$48,004	
09/04/2011			FYSHWICK	Commercial	\$3,600,000	\$116,589	
20/06/2011			KAMBAH	Commercial	\$379,000	\$21,039	

23/06/2011			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,026,000	\$107,738	
23/06/2011			CANBERRA	Commercial	\$403,000	\$1,331	
04/07/2011			LYNEHAM	Commercial	\$2,470,000	\$147,840	
04/07/2011			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$1,077,000	\$2,159	
04/07/2011			GUNGAHLIN	Commercial	\$474,000	\$13,692	
16/02/2012			LYONS	Commercial	\$8,190,000	\$151,104	Criterion 1
16/02/2012			LYONS	Commercial	\$9,100,000	\$201,225	Criterion 1
10/05/2012			GORDON	Residential	\$373,000	\$20,071	Criteria 1 & 3
05/07/2012			FORDE	Residential	\$206,000	\$1,340	Criteria 1 & 3
13/07/2012			BRUCE	Residential	\$434,000	\$19,904	Criteria 1, 3
31/07/2012			BANKS	Residential	\$388,000	\$2,464	Criterion 3
13/08/2012			FRANKLIN	Residential	\$260,000	\$979	Criteria 1 & 3
22/08/2012			NGUNNAWAL	Residential	\$443,000	\$20,489	Criteria 2 & 3
31/08/2012			FRANKLIN	Residential	\$220,000	\$1,010	Criterion 3
11/09/2012			DUNLOP	Residential	\$268,000	\$6,755	Criterion 3
27/09/2012			HARRISON	Residential	\$423,000	\$18,082	Criterion 3
05/10/2012			HARRISON	Commercial	\$1,378,000	\$173	Criterion 3
17/10/2012			OXLEY	Residential	\$309,000	\$3,263	Criteria 2 & 3
26/11/2012			PHILLIP	Commercial	\$2,885,000	\$293,006	Criteria 2 & 3
22/02/2013			BELCONNEN	Commercial	\$5,130,000	\$8,769	Criterion 2
28/02/2013			FORDE	Residential	\$315,000	\$871	Criterion 3
04/04/2013			GUNGAHLIN	Residential	\$333,000	\$20,156	Criterion 3
19/04/2013			FRANKLIN	Residential	\$464,000	\$1,787	Criterion 3
30/05/2013			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$746,000	\$629,480	Criterion 3
07/08/2013			PHILLIP	Commercial	\$150,000	\$77,984	Criterion 2
19/08/2013			NGUNNAWAL	Residential	\$224,000	\$16,038	Criterion 3
20/08/2013			MITCHELL	Commercial	\$861,000	\$20,033	Criterion 3
10/10/2013			GUNGAHLIN	Mixed use	\$231,000	\$23,585	Removal of land tax component of EOT fee.
18/10/2013			GUNGAHLIN	Mixed use	\$223,000	\$50,873	
23/10/2013			PAGE	Commercial	\$2,214,000	\$131,922	
31/10/2013			CALWELL	Commercial	\$804,000	\$155,133	
15/11/2013			CONDER	Commercial	\$601,000	\$138,605	

* Criteria for waiver:

1. The legislation is producing an unforeseen and perverse outcome; or
2. the Territory has contributed through action or inaction of one of its agencies, to the liability for, or value of, the fee; or
3. a fair or just result can be brought about only by a waiver of the fee.

Housing—rates (Question No 165)

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 24 October 2013:

For each suburb in the ACT what is the average amount of rates (a) payable, (b) payable for single dwelling properties and (c) payable for multi-dwelling properties.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Average 2013-14 Rates			
Suburb	Suburb Average (\$) (a)	Standard Residential (\$) (b)	Residential Units (\$) (c)
INNER NORTH			
LYNEHAM	1,283	1,908	852
DICKSON	1,761	2,034	934
O'CONNOR	2,189	2,530	1,111
AINSLIE	2,381	2,505	1,517
TURNER	1,375	3,311	932
BRADDON	1,112	2,728	897
CITY	764	0	764
REID	2,255	3,459	1,014
CAMPBELL	2,399	2,825	1,031
DOWNER	1,836	1,929	1,035
WATSON	1,456	1,831	836
HACKETT	1,938	2,109	980
INNER SOUTH			
YARRALUMLA	3,101	3,548	1,889
BARTON	1,320	4,098	1,053
DEAKIN	2,945	3,358	1,198
FORREST	3,694	6,784	1,417
KINGSTON	1,119	2,323	1,008
NARRABUNDAH	2,063	2,392	996
GRIFFITH	2,054	3,674	990
RED HILL	3,563	3,961	1,695
PIALLIGO	2,601	2,601	0
OAKS ESTATE	1,099	1,271	715
WODEN			
HUGHES	2,132	2,329	1,023
CURTIN	2,066	2,238	1,001
LYONS	1,646	2,040	951
GARRAN	2,133	2,678	952
PEARCE	1,785	2,152	999
TORRENS	1,869	1,956	1,044
MAWSON	1,493	2,031	986
FARRER	2,026	2,140	1,052
O'MALLEY	2,786	3,185	1,731
ISAACS	1,825	2,030	1,228
CHIFLEY	1,656	1,958	1,013
PHILLIP	1,004	1,428	938
WESTON			
WESTON	1,601	1,715	952
WARAMANGA	1,593	1,660	1,003
FISHER	1,590	1,698	901
CHAPMAN	2,055	2,063	1,444
RIVETT	1,528	1,562	992
DUFFY	1,646	1,720	990
HOLDER	1,540	1,652	968
STIRLING	1,549	1,652	945

BELCONNEN			
GIRALANG	1,438	1,472	996
KALEEN	1,538	1,563	959
BRUCE	1,179	1,881	929
ARANDA	2,086	2,139	1,181
COOK	1,632	1,953	1,032
MACQUARIE	1,614	1,767	1,001
BELCONNEN	945	1,480	845
FLOREY	1,440	1,533	972
PAGE	1,419	1,592	974
WEETANGERA	2,031	2,114	1,158
HAWKER	1,782	2,175	1,012
SCULLIN	1,394	1,487	943
LATHAM	1,353	1,379	944
HIGGINS	1,488	1,506	1,036
HOLT	1,204	1,348	848
MACGREGOR	1,186	1,209	903
CHARNWOOD	1,219	1,256	872
FLYNN	1,449	1,459	1,011
MELBA	1,457	1,522	973
EVATT	1,429	1,453	908
MCKELLAR	1,529	1,558	1,018
SPENCE	1,415	1,423	1,064
FRASER	1,409	1,432	936
DUNLOP	1,212	1,231	898
TUGGERANONG			
KAMBAH	1,408	1,458	932
WANNIASSA	1,502	1,537	977
MONASH	1,355	1,486	909
GOWRIE	1,354	1,367	1,021
FADDEN	1,640	1,666	1,133
MACARTHUR	1,506	1,524	953
RICHARDSON	1,325	1,343	905
GILMORE	1,398	1,427	988
CHISHOLM	1,466	1,484	942
THEODORE	1,289	1,356	879
CALWELL	1,346	1,431	876
ISABELLA PLAINS	1,226	1,339	884
CONDER	1,316	1,387	926
BANKS	1,314	1,381	1,009
GREENWAY	1,014	1,315	966
GORDON	1,266	1,390	886
BONYTHON	1,202	1,403	926
OXLEY	1,427	1,529	950
THARWA	1,206	1,206	0
GUNGAHLIN			
CASEY	1,146	1,170	874
NGUNNAWAL	1,151	1,218	884
AMAROO	1,328	1,384	1,021
NICHOLLS	1,492	1,602	1,029
PALMERSTON	1,260	1,361	1,043
GUNGAHLIN	1,194	1,332	847

HARRISON	1,288	1,310	973
CRACE	1,139	1,139	0
FRANKLIN	1,204	1,284	731
FORDE	1,256	1,292	914
BONNER	1,106	1,118	862
HALL	2,415	2,585	832
MOLONGLO			
Wright	1,744	1,744	0

Legal Aid Commission—eligibility criteria (Question No 191)

Mr Hanson asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 27 November 2013:

- (1) In relation to the Legal Aid Commission's Annual Report 2012-2013, pages 19, 37 and 46—Legal Services, can the Minister advise, in view of the financial resourcing shortfalls, what changes has the Commission made to the criteria it uses to assess whether clients are eligible for legal aid.
- (2) To what extent is it now harder for people in need to get legal aid assistance.
- (3) What reduction in grants does the Commission anticipate in 2013-2014.
- (4) Why is the Government refusing to fund the Commission sufficiently to keep pace with the demand for client services.

Mr Corbell: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) In 2012-13 the Commission has applied a tighter exercise of discretion to grant assistance for representation under the existing Guidelines. The Commission only made a minor change to the criteria in the Legal Assistance Guidelines under which the reasonableness test for Territory and Commonwealth matters were aligned.
- (2) While the number of grants for representation is lower than in previous years, the provision of assistance in other areas such as information and referral, advice and Helpline services has increased.
- (3) The Commission made 2214 grants of legal aid in 2012-13. The Commission forecasts making 1980 grants of legal aid in 2013-14.
- (4) The ACT Government has maintained funding for the Legal Aid Commission in recent years. In addition, the Legal Aid Commission has improved efficiency and reduced overhead costs through measures including the following:
 - The implementation of an e-grants system in 2011, which allowed for online invoicing of private practitioners (increasing convenience to them and their clients);
 - The establishment of the Legal Aid Helpdesk, to help triage incoming requests from the community; and
 - The establishment of the ACT Legal Assistance Forum in 2008, which brings Legal Aid ACT and community legal centres together to coordinate services.

The Government has also made a strong contribution to ACT legal assistance services in other ways. For example, the Government has funded the ACT's Community Legal Centres at \$1.05 million over the next four years to rent new accommodation and co-locate their services.

**Crime—victim assistance
(Question No 192)**

Mr Hanson asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 27 November 2013:

- (1) In relation to the Financial Assistance Scheme Review being undertaken in the context of the victims of crime scheme, what consideration has the Government given to, or analysis made of, the view of the Victims of Crime Commissioner that “it should be not a court-based scheme but an administratively based scheme, which is what Queensland and New South Wales have” (Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety Inquiry into Annual Reports 2012-2013, 6 November 2013, Hansard Proof, p17).
- (2) In relation to the Victim Support ACT annual report 2012-2013, and apart from the recommendation of the Victims Advisory Board to Government for a review of the financial assistance scheme, what other advice has the Board given to the Minister and what was the Government's response.
- (3) In relation to the Victim Support ACT annual report 2012-2013, page 6, what consideration has the Government given to, or analysis made of, the Victims of Crime Commissioner's proposal for the introduction of time limits to reduce court delays.
- (4) In relation to the Victim Support ACT annual report 2012-2013, page 10 (a) what consideration has the Government given to, or analysis made of, the Victims of Crime Commissioner's proposal for establishment of a victims of crime trust fund and (b) how will the fund be managed and by whom.
- (5) Has the Government, through the Victims of Crime Commissioner, made a submission to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; if so, what are the main themes of the submission; if not, does the Government intend to make such a submission.
- (6) In relation to the Victim Support ACT annual report 2012-2013, page 27—Structural challenges and issues, (a) what kinds of strategies will be employed to address these issues, (b) what are the main elements of and differences between the Commissioner's two separate statutory responsibilities, (c) is the Commissioner advocating a split in the agency to deal with them; if so, (i) what model is proposed and (ii) how will a split make them more effective and (d) will the range of identified priorities require additional resourcing; if so, to what extent.
- (7) In relation to the Victim Support ACT annual report 2012-2013, page 36, Chart 1—New referrals over the past four financial reporting periods, has the Commissioner received additional resources to provide the services needed for the significant increase (10%) in new referrals in 2012-2013; if not, how has the Commissioner managed those additional referrals and have the needs and expectations of clients been met.

- (8) What de-briefing services and other mental health support services are provided to case managers and other staff of the Commission and what do these services cost.
- (9) What were the financial outcomes for Victim Support ACT compared to the budget allocations and were there any differences; if so, why.

Mr Corbell: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The issues paper released in April 2013 on the Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme specifically considered the possibility of introducing an administratively based scheme. The issues paper outlined the administratively based schemes in place in Queensland and New South Wales and requested stakeholders indicate their preference. Fourteen of the 19 stakeholders who made submissions supported a move to an administratively based scheme.

A working group, which includes the Victims of Crime Commissioner, and representatives from the Magistrates Court, the ACT Solicitor General and Treasury, is now considering options for a move to an administratively based scheme in detail. Directorate officials have been in contact with New South Wales and Queensland officials, to obtain information about the experience of the schemes in these jurisdictions. I am expecting advice about options for changes to the scheme to be provided in early 2014. Before any changes are made to the existing scheme, I will ensure that there is appropriate consultation including with the Victims Advisory Board (VAB).

- (2) In 2013, the Board worked on providing advice to me in relation to Recommendation 3.8 of the Bimberi Review, procedural arrangements supporting cancellation of parole provisions, and trends emerging from data in relation to sex offending and the jurisdiction the offence took place in. The board is currently finalising formal advice on this.
- (3) The Forward Work Plan of the Sexual Assault Reform Program (SARP) Reference Group includes planning to conduct further research and consider the practicalities of implementing a time limit on commencement of sexual offence cases in the ACT. The SARP Reference Group is currently finalising timeframes and priorities for the Forward Work Plan. The SARP Reference Group is made up of representatives of 15 agencies involved in the provision of services to victims of sexual offences.
- (4) (a) The Victims of Crime Commissioner's proposal related to an increase in the 'victims of crime service levy' (the levy) contained in the Victims of Crime Act 1994. In November 2013, the Government implemented the proposal to increase the levy. Following commencement of the *Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 (No 4)*, the levy was increased from \$10 to \$30 for both court imposed fines and traffic infringements. This allows for full cost recovery for the operations of Victim Support ACT which is a service that supports victims of crime to cope with the impact of what has happened, including the provision of information on accessing their rights and entitlements. It was not considered necessary to establish a trust fund for this purpose.
- (b) The working group for the review of the Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme is considering the New South Wales model for payment of financial assistance. Section 14 of the *Victims Rights and Support Act 2013* (NSW) creates a Victims Support Fund from which payments of financial assistance are made to victims of crime. The working group is yet to consider the implications of adopting the New South Wales model of a trust fund as an option for the ACT.

- (5) The ACT Victims of Crime Commissioner made a submission regarding the terms of reference for the Royal Commission. I am advised the main themes of that submission were that the Royal Commission should have regard to the support services that will be required to enable victims to give their submissions and that the Commission should include recommendations about reforms to prevent future institutional child sexual assault, support services for survivors of sexual assault and their families and opportunities for compensation for survivors of sexual assault.

The ACT Government has responded to three of the Issues Papers released by the Royal Commission in 2013. They are available on the Royal Commission website (which is at: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/our-work/issues-papers>).

- (6) (a) The Victims of Crime Commissioner has advised me that he will employ the following strategies.
- Internal review of the organisational structure of Victim Support ACT and of case management systems
 - Renewal of the organisation's strategic plan to reflect the values that have been identified in the JACS Strategic Plan
 - Defining the role of the Domestic Violence Project Coordinator in the context of the ACT Family Violence Intervention Program and the work of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, and defining this role as separate to the functions and responsibilities of the Victims of Crime Commissioner.
 - Identifying opportunities that arise through the interagency activities of the Domestic Violence Project Coordinator and the Victims of Crime Commissioner and identifying areas of reform that have interagency support.
 - Stakeholder relationship management will be better managed through the development of written protocols with key stakeholders and this work will be supported by the Victims Advisory Board.
 - Advocacy as the public voice of victims of crime: the review called for a better articulation of the model of systemic advocacy that would be most effective. The Commissioner will continue a consultative approach with stakeholders to identify the most effective model for advocacy within the agency.
- (b) The Victims of Crime Commissioner's functions are set out in the *Victims of Crime Act 1994* and the *Victims of Crime Regulation 2000*. Those functions apply to victims generally in the criminal justice system. The Domestic Violence Project Coordinator's functions are separate to that of the Commissioner's functions and are set out in the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986*. They focus on assisting agencies providing support to victims of domestic violence to provide services of the highest standards and facilitating cooperation between those agencies.
- (c) The Commissioner is not advocating a split in the agency to deal with the two statutory responsibilities.
- (d) The Commissioner has not identified a requirement for additional resourcing to address the identified priority.

- (7) The Commissioner did not receive additional resources for 2012-2013. The Commissioner has embedded changes to intake and assessment processes, including improved database efficiencies. The client allocation system has also been streamlined and waiting lists have reduced from eight weeks to two weeks. These administrative changes have allowed the service to continue to meet the needs and expectations of clients despite the increase in referrals.
- (8) All ACT Government staff have access to counselling and mental health support through the Employee Assistance Program (PCC Worldwide).

Victim Support ACT staff also have access to debriefing via internal and external clinical professional supervision. In 2012-13 staff undertook psychological assessment to measure vicarious trauma and were provided with training to better understand and manage the risks associated with exposure to traumatic content. Victim Support ACT staff also have ongoing access to activities that support health and wellbeing.

The cost to the organisation for the external professional supervision and the assessment and training related to vicarious trauma was \$8467.43 in 2012-13.

- (9) Victim Support ACT expended \$2.299M from a budget allocation of \$2.434M. The under expenditure was attributed to efficiencies achieved against employee and non-employee related expenses.

Roads—Cotter Road and Streeton Drive (Question No 193)

Mr Smyth asked the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, upon notice, on 27 November 2013:

- (1) When were the plans for the roadworks on Cotter Road and Streeton Drive, Weston first implemented.
- (2) Why were the road works in 2011-12 and subsequent work in 2013 not combined.
- (3) Are there traffic management plans for these road works and who is responsible for them.
- (4) Did the Chief Minister state on 7 September 2012 that the 2011-12 roadworks were valued at \$14 million (for 850 metres of road way) and has Mr John Husband stated in 2013 that the current roadworks are valued at \$14.5 million; if so, (a) does that mean that \$28.5 million has been spent on this road, (b) what is the reason for the expenditure on this project, which equates to approximately \$33,500 per metre and (c) why is the Cotter Road and Streeton Drive road works costing more than the Majura Parkway, which is costing \$288 million or approximately \$25,000 per metre.
- (5) Why is it necessary to rip up the new road which was completed only a few months ago and to then start again.
- (6) What consultation has the Government had with residents of Weston Creek with regard to disruptions on the Cotter Road and how many complaints has the Government received regarding this matter.

- (7) What is the time line for this project and why has it taken so long to complete.
- (8) Is the rest of Cotter Road to be made into dual carriage way; if so, what is the cost of that.
- (9) Has Heysen Drive, Weston also been disrupted during these roadworks and has it taken five months to complete one small roundabout; if so, what was the cost of this and why has it taken so long.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The upgrade of the intersection of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive was part of the planning for the new suburbs of Molonglo. The final design for these works was completed in October 2012 and tenders were called in November 2012 for the construction works.
- (2) The Economic Development Directorate (EDD) advised the disruption to traffic from combining the construction works would have been untenable due to the traffic controls required at the new intersection of Kirkpatrick Street and Cotter Road and at the Cotter Road and Streeton Drive intersection. The Kirkpatrick Street intersection also created a new access into the new suburb of North Weston, which was required to be open before the Cotter Road / Streeton Drive works could commence.
- (3) The Temporary Traffic Management plans are the responsibility of the contractor. The plans were developed in conjunction with EDD and the contractor and then approved by Roads ACT after significant public consultation had been carried out.
- (4) (a) The total approved budget for the two intersections is \$28.5 million.
 - (b) This budget has been generated using the most up-to-date costs for similar works. There were considerable costs involved in relocating of major services that run parallel to Cotter Road and services that run across the intersections of Streeton Drive with Unwin Place and Dixon Drive.
 - (c) A simplistic comparison of the per metre unit rate for these two projects does not account for the traffic controls required to build the Cotter Road intersections while under traffic and the costs for the relocation of the major services which are not applicable to the Majura Parkway project.
- (5) The only recent work that has been removed is the temporary pavement that was placed as part of the first stage of the John Gorton Drive Project. This pavement was just east of the new bridge that crosses over the drainage channel that drains into the Weston Ponds. The area of Cotter Road that has been removed east of Streeton Drive is old pavement that needs to be replaced as part of the new works to provide for the level differences in the new works. The current project will tie into the recently completed works at the intersection of Cotter Road and Kirkpatrick Street.
- (6) EDD completed significant public consultation that included a number of letters to all the residents of Weston Creek; a presentation to the Weston Creek Community Council; road closure notices in the Canberra Times; notices in the community noticeboard and personal notification by the contractors representative regarding the closure of Dixon Drive. Advice on the two projects has also been posted on both the EDD and Weston Creek Community websites. All public queries for this project are

recorded in a Public Liaison Register that is maintained as part of the project. To date 25 queries have been received regarding the Cotter Road / Streeton Drive intersection upgrade project.

- (7) The contract period for the Cotter Road / Streeton Drive intersection project is twelve months. Onsite construction works commenced July 2013. It should be noted that this particular project was delayed for eight weeks to ensure the other project on Cotter Road, at the intersection of McCulloch Street, was completed before work on this major intersection commenced.

This decision was made to minimise the disruption to the traffic travelling along Cotter Road and to provide access to the new suburb of North Weston at the intersection of Kirkpatrick Street and Cotter Road. The contract period for this project was established after investigating similar intersection works completed in the ACT.

- (8) Cotter Road will be made into a dual carriageway. A design consultancy covering the duplication of Cotter Road is currently underway by Territory and Municipal Services, which will establish the cost of these works.
- (9) The intersection upgrade on Heysen Street is being completed by Defence Housing Australia (DHA) associated with a new estate development. Details of the costs and program should be requested from DHA directly.

Sport—Woden athletics track (Question No 194)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Sport and Recreation, upon notice, on 27 November 2013:

- (1) Was the Synthetic Woden Athletics Track Development on Ainsworth Street, Phillip due to commence in October or November 2013; if so, why has this project not commenced.
- (2) When will construction begin.
- (3) What is the expected completion date.
- (4) What is the budget allocation for this work.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The original program for the Woden Park redevelopment detailed that construction was due to commence in late October 2013. The design process to inform construction was extended to incorporate a range of additional requirements and amendments suggested by the priority sporting stakeholders (athletics and football).
- (2) Subject to the finalisation of the tender process and a contract being awarded, construction will commence in mid December or early in 2014 (subject to the Christmas shutdown of the construction industry).
- (3) The final program to complete this project will be subject to contract negotiations and finalisation once a contract has been awarded. It is currently anticipated that priority works will be completed by mid 2014.

- (4) The budget allocation for priority works will be subject to the tender evaluation process being completed. Consistent with the ACT Labor election commitment, a minimum of \$4.5 million will be committed towards this project. The capital cost to redevelop Woden Park will also be subject to further site investigations (e.g. geotechnical) being undertaken once a contractor has been appointed.

Schools—fencing (Question No 195)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Education and Training, upon notice, on 27 November 2013:

- (1) Which public schools in the ACT are currently fenced.
- (2) How does the Government determine which public schools require fencing.
- (3) Which public schools will be fenced in the next (a) 12, (b) 24 and (c) 36 months.

Ms Burch: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) In total, 64 ACT public schools have a partial or full security fence. The list of schools with a security fence is attached.
- (2) Security fences are installed for students, staff and public safety reasons as well as building and equipment security reasons. Schools formally submit requests to the Education and Training Directorate for the installation of a security fence. The requests are signed by the school Principal, the Board Chair and the President of the Parents and Citizens Association.

In assessing the priority for schools, the Directorate takes into account the formal requests from schools and the reported incidences of vandalism and building entry to assess those schools that are at a higher risk of security breaches.

- (3) Security fences are scheduled to be installed at Mt Rogers, Red Hill, Macgregor, Maribyrnong and Fraser Primary Schools, Wanniasa School senior campus and Lake Ginninderra College in the 2013-14 schools Capital Upgrades Program. The 2014-15 and 2015-16 security fence programs will be developed in consultation with schools.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS	Turner School
Ainslie Primary	Wanniasa Hills Primary
Aranda Primary	Wanniasa School (junior)
Arawang Primary	Weetangera Primary
Bonython Primary	Yarralumla Primary
Calwell Primary	SPECIAL SCHOOLS
Campbell Primary	Malkara School
Chapman Primary	Cranleigh School
Charles Conder Primary	Woden School
Charnwood Dunlop	Black Mountain School

Caroline Chisholm Primary	EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOLS
Curtin Primary	Franklin ECS
Duffy Primary	Isabella Plains ECS
Evatt Primary	Lyons ECS
Fadden Primary	Narrabundah ECS
Farrer Primary	Co-operative School
Florey Primary	Southern Cross ECS
Forrest Primary	P-10 SCHOOLS
Fraser Primary	Amaroo P-10
Garran Primary	Harrison School P-10
Gilmore Primary	Kingsford Smith P-10
Giralang Primary	Namadgi P-10
Gold Creek School (junior)	Telopea K-10
Gordon Primary	COLLEGES
Gowrie Primary	Canberra College (The)
Hawker Primary	Melba Copland (college)
Hughes Primary	Dickson
Jervis Bay Primary	Erindale
Kaleen Primary	Gungahlin
Latham Primary	Hawker
Lyneham Primary	UC Lake Ginninderra
Macgregor Primary	Lake Tuggeranong
Macquarie Primary	Narrabundah
Majura Primary	HIGH SCHOOLS
Maribyrnong Primary	Alfred Deakin
Mawson Primary	Belconnen
Miles Franklin Primary	Calwell
Monash Primary	Campbell
Mt Rogers	Canberra
Neville Bonner Primary	Caroline Chisholm
Ngunnawal Primary	Gold Creek School (senior)
North Ainslie Primary	UC Kaleen
Palmerston Primary	Lanyon
Red Hill Primary	Lyneham
Richardson Primary	Melba Copland (high)
Taylor Primary	Melrose
Theodore Primary	Stromlo
Torrens Primary	Wanniassa School (senior)

Parking—Manuka (Question No 198)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, upon notice, on 27 November 2013 (*redirected to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development*):

Are there any plans to add new car parking facilities in Manuka; if so, how many car parks will be created and where will they be located; if not, how will adequate parking be provided for this growing area.

Mr Corbell: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

There are no plans to add to parking capacity at Manuka. Major centres surveys undertaken in recent years have indicated that there is sufficient parking available to meet the demand generated by activities in Manuka. Much of the time, demand is less than half the available capacity.

However, during busy lunch-time periods, people may not always be able to park close to the locations of their visit and may have to walk a little. However, the distances involved are within the criteria, which are set out in the Parking Code and are reasonable for a busy centre like Manuka.

Community Services Directorate—outputs and savings (Question No 200)

Mr Wall asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

- (1) Further to (a) Output Class 3.1: Community Relations and (b) Output Class 3.2: Community Affairs, within the Community Services Directorate in Budget Paper 4 of the 2013-2014 Budget Papers, will the Minister provide a breakdown of supporting programs and initiatives for each output, including (i) the value of funding for each program/initiative, (ii) dates of commencement and completion (or ongoing) for each program/initiative and (iii) performance measures for each program/initiative.
- (2) What are the staff numbers and corresponding employment levels for each output.
- (3) Will the Minister provide a list of capital works and upgrades for each of the listed outputs and, where applicable, include (a) commencement and completion dates and (b) the budgeted and actual costs of the projects.
- (4) Have identified savings been identified within these outputs; if so, will the Minister provide (a) a list of identified savings, (b) the value of identified savings, (c) program/initiative impacts as a result of these savings and (d) staffing impacts as a result of these savings.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The ACT Government prepares its budget on an outputs basis. Data at that level is published in the Budget Papers, along with budgeted financial statements for agencies. More detailed information on activities within outputs is available in annual reports. This includes audited financial statements. Data is not available in the form and at the level requested without diversion of significant resources from the Community Services Directorate's ongoing business that I am not prepared to authorise.

Disability ACT—employees (Question No 201)

Mr Wall asked the Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

- (1) How many Disability ACT employees are currently employed at each of the respite facilities at (a) Teen House, (b) Kese House, (c) Hughes House, and what is the status of their employment.
- (2) How many Disability ACT employees are currently classified as disability support workers.
- (3) Will the employees currently working at Teen House, Kese House and Hughes House be deployed elsewhere within Disability ACT once the tender process for these services is complete.
- (4) What communication has taken place between the current employees working at Teen House, Kese House and Hughes House and the Government about their future employment prospects, once the tender process for these services is complete.

Ms Burch: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

(1)

Respite	Full time staff	Part time staff	Casual staff
Teen	1	3	0
Kese	1	2	2
Hughes	1	3	1

(2)

	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent
Permanent	214	196.11
Temporary	18	16.22
Casual	40	29.32

(3) Yes

- (4) Senior and Executive staff have met with Disability ACT respite employees on a regular basis during team meetings.

All permanent respite staff received email correspondence from the Director on 20 October 2013. This correspondence included detailed information about the process for transfer; available shifts within the service; and how their preferences and skills would be taken into account.

Staff were reminded of the provisions and protections applicable to them under the Enterprise Agreement and were invited to meet individually with their relevant Manager /Supervisor to discuss any concerns or requirements.

Multicultural affairs—scholarships for translators and interpreters (Question No 204)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

- (1) In relation to the provision of scholarships for members of emerging community groups to train as interpreters and translators through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) listed in the 2013-2014 Budget as a priority, which community groups are defined as emerging.
- (2) Will the Minister advise (a) which of these groups and (b) how many people in each of these groups have accessed the scholarships.
- (3) How much is awarded for each scholarship.
- (4) How many scholarships have been awarded to date.

Ms Burch: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Community Groups defined as emerging are listed at **Attachment A**.
- (2) For the 2013-14 period:
 - (a) Members of the Sudanese Arabic, Dinka and Kurdish language groups completed a preparatory course at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)
 - (b) Of those who had completed the preparatory course, there was one from the Dinka language group, one Kurdish and two Sudanese Arabic speakers.
- (3) Approximately \$600 is awarded for each scholarship which covers testing and accreditation fees with NAATI.
- (4) One complete scholarship has been awarded.

Attachment A: Emerging Community Groups

Acholi	Kikuyu	Nepali
Amharic	Kingoni	Nuer
Arabic (Sudanese)	Kinyarwanda	Oromo
Bari	Kirundi	Pojulu
Burmese	Kono	Rohingya
Chaldean	Kpelle	Shilluk (Chollo)
Creole	Krio	Sinhalese
Dari	Kuku	Siym
Dinka	Kunama	Somali
Dzhongka	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	Sukuma
Eastern Kaya	Kurdish (Sorani)	Susu
Ewe	Kurdish, Southern (Feyli)	Swahili
Falam (Chin)	Lao	Tamil
Fanti	Liberian Pidgin	Temne
Fula	Lingala	Tidim (Chin)
Fur	Lisu	Tigre
Gan	Loko	Tigrinya
Haka (Chin)	Luo	Tshiluba
Hazaragi	Madi	Twi
Hmong	Mandingo	Uighur
Ikbo	Mara (Chin)	Uzbek
Kachin	Maru	Watchi
Kakwa	Mende	Yalunka
Kannadai	Mina	Zande
Karen	Mizo (Chin)	Zomi (Chin)
Khmer*	Moru	Zonot (Chin)

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate—outputs and savings (Question No 207)

Mr Doszpot asked the Minister for Ageing, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

- (1) Further to (a) Output Class 3.1: Community Relations and (b) Output Class 3.2: Community Affairs, within Budget Paper 4, page 327, will the Minister provide a breakdown of the supporting programs and initiatives for this output, including (i) the value of funding for each program/initiative, (ii) dates of commencement and completion (or ongoing) for each program/initiative and (iii) performance measures for each program/initiative.
- (2) What are the staff numbers and corresponding employment levels for each output.
- (3) Will the Minister provide a list of capital works and upgrades for each of the listed outputs and, where applicable, include (a) commencement and completion dates and (b) the budgeted and actual costs of the projects.
- (4) Have identified savings been identified within these outputs; if so, will the Minister provide (a) a list of identified savings, (b) the value of identified savings, (c) program/initiative impacts as a result of these savings and (d) staffing impacts as a result of these savings.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The ACT Government prepares its budget on an outputs basis. Data at that level is published in the Budget Papers, along with budgeted financial statements for agencies. More detailed information on activities within outputs is available in annual reports. This includes audited financial statements. Data is not available in the form and at the level requested without diversion of significant resources from the Community Services Directorate's ongoing business that I am not prepared to authorise.

ACTION bus service—service reliability (Question No 209)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

What was the service reliability for ACTION buses in the (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14 to-date financial years, broken down by (i) month and (ii) bus route.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The service reliability for ACTION buses for the financial year 2012-2013 by month is as follows:

July 2012	99.50%
August 2012	99.40%
September 2012	99.10%

October 2012	99.40%
November 2012	99.40%
December 2012	99.70%
January 2013	99.60%
February 2013	99.50%
March 2013	99.50%
April 2013	99.63%
May 2013	99.40%
June 2013	99.05%

The service reliability for ACTION buses for the financial year 2013-2014 by month to the end of November 2013 is as follows:

July 2013	99.60%
August 2013	99.50%
September 2013	99.40%
October 2013	99.50%
November 2013	99.40%

In relation to the request for service reliability broken down by bus route, I am unable to provide the figures at this time due to the time and resources required to collate the information.

Service reliability is currently assessed based on delivery of services as a whole, rather than by individual routes. However, I can advise that the service reliability of individual bus routes will be built into the regular reporting framework in the future.

Planning—development applications (Question No 210)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

How many development applications have been submitted in the (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14 to-date financial years, broken down by (i) month and (ii) location.

Mr Corbell: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Attachment A shows the number of development applications lodged by month by suburb and district for the period July 2012 to November 2013.

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Housing—stamp duty (Question No 211)

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

- (1) How many residential properties have been sold and how much has been collected in stamp duty in the (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14 to-date financial years, broken down by (i) month and (ii) suburb.
- (2) What is the average unimproved value of residential land in the (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14 to-date financial years, broken down by (i) suburb and (ii) dwelling type (eg single dwelling, multi-dwelling properties).

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) (a) (i) (ii) The number of residential transactions assessed and revenue collected broken down by month and suburb in 2012-13 are provided in the **Attachment A**.

(b) (i) (ii) The number of residential transactions assessed and revenue collected broken down by month and suburb YTD Oct 13 are provided in the **Attachment B**.

Note: data provided for question 1 excludes some adjustments (e.g. provision for refund, provision for doubtful debts, refund and cancellation). The suburb information is not a validated field so the data is a general representation and has been filtered for some errors.

- (2) (a) (i) (ii) The average of the Unimproved Value (UV) in 2012-13, broken down into suburb and dwelling type (residential or multi-dwelling) are shown in **Attachment C**.

(b) (i) (ii) The average of the Unimproved Value (UV) in 2013-14, broken down into suburb and dwelling type (residential or multi-dwelling) are shown in **Attachment D**.

Note: The overall average includes other minor dwelling categories, such as religious residential, flats, home for aged, patio housing, diplomatic residential and broadacre development.

(Copies of the attachments are available at the Chamber Support Office).

Roads—repairs and motor vehicle accidents (Question No 212)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

In the (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14 to-date financial years, broken down by (i) month and (ii) location, how many (A) streets have been resealed, (B) community paths have been repaired, (C) street lights have been repaired, and (D) motor vehicle accidents have occurred.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

In response to your request, TAMS is able to provide data for the period 2012-13 and 2013-14 to end of November 2013 for the following:

(A) Streets resealed in 2012-13

Month	Suburb	Number resealed
October 2012	Duffy	11
	Gowrie	8
	Kambah	30
November 2012	Ainslie	2
	Aranda	2
	Campbell	8
	Charnwood	3
	Flynn	1
	Hackett	4
	Higgins	10
	Hume	1
	Kambah	2
	McKellar	1
	Macgregor	1
	Nichols	2
	Torrens	1
	Rural	2
	Arterial Roads in Belconnen	3
December 2012	Braddon	1
	Macgregor	3
	Arterial Roads in Belconnen 8	8
	National Highways 2	2
January 2013	Arterial Roads in Belconnen	6
	Arterial Roads in North Canberra	3
	Arterial Roads in Woden	3
February 2013	Macgregor	6
	Weston	2
	Arterial Roads in South Canberra	4
	Arterial Roads in Tuggeranong	6
	Arterial Roads in Woden	4
	Arterial Roads in Weston Creek	3
March 2013	Amaroo	1
	Chisholm	2
	Latham	10
	Macgregor	4
	Melba	3
	Nichols	1
	Page	3
	Scullin	12
	Watson	4
	Arterial Roads in Belconnen	3
	Arterial Roads in North Canberra	1
April 2013	Bonython	1
	Chifley	1
	Cook	1
	Fadden	1
	Griffith	1
	Oakes Estate	1
	Pearce	1
	Phillip	11
	Scullin	1
	Arterial Roads in North Canberra	1
	Arterial Roads in South Canberra	1

Streets resealed in 2013-14 (to 30 November 2013)

Month	Streets resealed	Number resealed
September 2013	Fyshwick	4
	Griffith	4
	Kingston	2
	Narrabundah	10
October 2013	Barton	5
	Deakin	7
	Curtin	1
	Lyons	6
	Garran	2
	Mawson	3
	Yarralumla	10
	Rural Roads	4
	Arterial Roads in South Canberra	1
	Arterial Roads in Woden	2
November 2013	Fisher	8
	Fyshwick	1
	Mawson	1
	Pearce	5
	Arterial Roads in South Canberra	1
	Arterial Roads in Tuggeranong	1
	Arterial Roads in Weston Creek	1
	Arterial Roads in Woden	3

Note that street resealing is not conducted during winter months (May – September) due to weather conditions.

B) Community paths repaired in 2012-13 and 2013-14 to 30 November

Please see **Attachment A**.

C) Streetlight defects repaired in 2012-13 and 2013-14 to 30 November

Please see **Attachment B**.

D) Motor vehicle accidents in 2012-13 and 2013-14

Month	2012-13	2013-14
January	484	468
February	789	712
March	750	631
April	591	614
May	843	757
June	717	731
July	725	682
August	814	673
September	632	648
October	658	639
November	747	672
December	563	528
Annual total	8313	7755

Data on motor vehicle accidents by 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years by location is extensive and not easily provided in a hard copy. An oral briefing can be provided on the location of reported motor vehicle accidents if required.

(Copies of the attachments are available at the Chamber Support Office).

Roads—school zones (Question No 213)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, upon notice, on 28 November 2013:

What is the breakdown of the number of infringements in school zones for the (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14 to-date financial years, by (i) month, (ii) offence category of (A) 10 to less than 15 km/h, (B) 15 to less than 30 km/h, (C) 30 to less than 45 km/h and (D) 45 km/h or more, over the speed limit and (iii) location.

Mr Corbell: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

(A copy of the answer is available at the Chamber Support Office).

ACT public service—overseas travel (Question Nos 214 to 237)

Mr Coe asked the Chief Minister, the Minister for Women, the Minister for the Arts, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the Minister for Community Services, the Minister for Corrections, the Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, the Minister for Economic Development, the Minister for Education and Training, the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Higher Education, the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Minister for Racing and Gaming, the Minister for Regional Development, the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, the Minister for Tourism and Events, the Treasurer, the Minister for Ageing and the Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, upon notice, on 28 November 2013 *(redirected to the Chief Minister)*:

- (1) How many public servants in the Minister's Directorate attended overseas conferences in the (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14 to-date financial years.
- (2) What was the cost of attendance at these conferences broken down by individual conference and Directorate.

Ms Gallagher: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Expenditure for travel is one component of Directorate and Agency budgets and is expected to remain within the allocated funding.

It is not possible to provide an answer to the questions posed by Mr Coe without a physical recall, inspection and consideration of records held by each ACT Public Sector Agency and in some cases, individual members of the ACT public service.

For this reason it is not possible to answer the member's question without an unreasonable diversion of the Service's time and resources and as Chief Minister, I decline to do so.

Questions without notice taken on notice

Bushfires—preparation

Mr Corbell (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Smyth on Thursday, 28 November 2013*): As at 2 December 2013 the Rural Fire Service has 14 paid positions, 12 of which are filled and two (2) are currently vacant.

ACT Emergency Services Agency—management

Mr Barr (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Smyth on Thursday, 28 November 2013*): This matter was brought to my attention on 22 November 2012.

Canberra—centenary

Ms Gallagher (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Smyth on Thursday, 28 November 2013*): Information on how the outcomes of the centenary year will be measured and who will undertake the data collection is provided in the attached schedule.

The budget allocated for evaluation of the centenary year is \$150,000.

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Bushfires—preparedness

Mr Corbell (*in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Mr Doszpot on Tuesday, 17 September 2013*): Whilst a capability target may not have been specified under Recommendation 20 of the Auditor-General's audit report on the ACT's bushfire preparedness, the ESA's capability development framework will identify minimum levels of Incident Management Team requirements.

The ESA, in line with Recommendation 20 of the Auditor General's audit report, is also undertaking an independent review of the capability of these officers. Under the project, the ESA will review its capability against the new Australasian Inter Service Incident Management System version IV 2003 (AIIMS).

Bushfires—preparedness

Mr Corbell (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Smyth on Tuesday, 17 September 2013*): I was made aware by briefing provided to me on the Auditor-General's audit report on the ACT's bushfire preparedness prior to its release on 25 July 2013.

Environment—climate change

Mr Corbell (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Coe on Wednesday, 27 November 2013*): The cost of delivering the survey was \$39,120. This was delivered as part of a package of work of research and analysis designed to inform the government on the information needs of the community and to support the development of a new community engagement strategy. Other aspects of the work included focus groups and literature review which helped inform the survey design.

ACT Ambulance Service—cardiac monitors

Mr Corbell (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Wall on Wednesday, 23 October 2013*): Since July 2013:

- 1) There have been sixteen incidents reported that involve difficulties being experienced with transmission procedures.
- 2) Ten of the reported incidents involve blue tooth pairing not being achieved between the cardiac monitor / defibrillator, and a mobile phone, which transmits the ECG. Reported incidents include simulated environments, bench testing, shift commencement equipment checks and during patient monitoring.

The ACT Ambulance Service has, since 2009, maintained a procedure to guide officers' actions in situations where Bluetooth pairing or ECG transmission failure occurs. This is necessary due to the ECG transmission system having a number of potential fail points i.e. no telephone network coverage – flat phone battery etc.

At no time has patient safety been compromised.

ACT Ambulance Service—cardiac monitors

Mr Corbell (*in reply to a question by Ms Lawder on Wednesday, 23 October 2013*): Since July 2013:

- 1) There has been one reported incident of a battery not charging.
- 2) There have been eighteen incidents reported where inaccurate Non Invasive Blood Pressure Readings have been observed. Reported incidents include simulated environments, bench testing, shift commencement equipment checks and during patient monitoring. The last reported inaccurate Non Invasive Blood Pressure reading occurred on 31 October 2013.

At no time has patient safety been compromised.

All front line vehicles carry equipment to measure blood pressure if there is concern with the Non Invasive Blood Pressure Reading recorded by the cardiac monitor.

The ACT Ambulance Service is working with the supplier to apply updated software configuration to all fifty six cardiac monitor / defibrillators.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—lockdowns

Mr Rattenbury (*in reply to a question by Mr Wall on Thursday, 28 November 2013*): In the 2013-14 financial year to date, the longest lockdown was on 31 August 2013 and was 8.58 hours. This was in cottage accommodation. It is important to note that in the cottage accommodation, while a unit is locked down individual cells are not and detainees are able to access the common areas within the unit.

In addition, should a detainee have a visitor, medical requirement or program scheduled, these are facilitated.