



Debates

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Tuesday, 18 March 2014

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

Ministerial delegation to the USA and Singapore—November 2013

Statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Community Services), by leave: I take the opportunity this morning to report to the Assembly on the ministerial and business delegation that I led to the United States and Singapore in November of last year.

I have previously told this place about a long-term vision for Canberra in two decades time, and certainly encouraged members to envisage the city as an exemplar of urban design and amenity. On the basis of the delegation to the US and Singapore, I believe now, more than ever, that the vision I have outlined is very much within Canberra's grasp.

During the three days that the team and I spent in Portland, we met with representatives of the metro regional government, officials from the Portland Development Commission, the architect of Portland's light rail system, officials from the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and, importantly, members of the local development industry.

What was clearly evident during all of these meetings was the shared vision that each of these agencies and agents have subscribed to on behalf of their city. The citizens, businesspeople, public servants and elected officials were united in their desire to change the nature of their city and remain united in delivering upon that vision. By any indicator, the Portland of today is a measure of their success. It reminded me a great deal of Canberra—a beautiful city with lovely tree-lined streets, outstanding public art and well-maintained public parks and generous open spaces.

It has a broad range of developments and redevelopments that have been seamlessly integrated with some of the oldest buildings in the city at densities and scale that are appropriate to their location, but that have supported the investment in public infrastructure. It is a city connected by an integrated public transport network where people move seamlessly between buses and light rail, where ticketing is cheap and easily accessible, and where real-time information is the norm rather than the exception.

There is no doubt that Portland is now the poster child for the benefits of integrated city planning and transit-oriented development. Since the 1970s Portland has had an ever-increasing focus on land use planning and a strong regional approach to infrastructure and service planning and delivery that focuses on employment areas, town and regional centres and key transport corridors.

Portland made the decision to invest early in light rail within their city centre and this investment then provided certainty for the private sector to redevelop some of the most underutilised and run-down areas of the city. Further afield, the light rail lines were extended out of the city, providing commuter access to the headquarters for internationally renowned companies like Nike and Intel that have set up in the area. I was able to witness firsthand as workers from these areas were brought to light rail stations by shuttle bus to then make their way home after work.

It is very clear to me that this joined up, long-term approach to strategic planning and investment has a profound impact on the city centre and the broader regional economy. More people are now choosing to live in central Portland and the character of the city centre has changed immeasurably. What was once unsafe and run down is now thriving. Mixed use developments have brought new employment opportunities to the heart of the city and the presence of new residents ensures a sense of community and the night-time economy of the city centre has increased dramatically.

Although the focus of the next stage of the visit, to San Francisco, was to promote Canberra's burgeoning high-tech industries, shortly after arriving I again saw firsthand the benefits of investment in light rail and the opportunities presented by transit-oriented development.

We met with Pat Tangen, a principal with Populous, which is one of the world's leading design firms with an impressive portfolio of stadium developments across the globe. Mr Tangen gave our group a guided tour of San Francisco's AT&T Park, which is the home to the San Francisco Giants Major League Baseball team. Whilst there were many impressive aspects to this particular development, three stood out: the light rail line running past the front entrance to the stadium; the impressive view from the stadium to San Francisco Bay; and the level of development that has occurred around the stadium since its construction. It is quite easy to draw parallels between this development and what we are hoping to achieve through city to the lake.

I was also fortunate to be able to spend a day in Silicon Valley, where I met with a number of senior executives at Cisco's head offices to discuss the latest technological advances and the potential for increased Cisco investment in the ACT region. The work that Cisco are doing is undoubtedly world leading and very exciting. It is easy to draw a line to many opportunities that enhanced digitisation of government services will bring, in terms of both an improved service offering for our citizens and through improved productivity within our public service. Cisco's "Internet of Everything" promises to change the way we interact at every level and there are many lessons to take forward in how we plan and develop our city.

I also met with the Director of the Office of Technology Licensing at Stanford University, and with a number of influential members of the technology and tech-based venture capital sectors.

I have to admit that it was both daunting and a little heartening to sit in the same offices where the founders of Facebook first pitched their idea, and then hear of the \$87 million that Stanford received last year in gross royalties from the 622 different technologies they had licensed.

That said, we should never forget that it was Canberra where wi-fi technology was first created and it will be Canberra where many more fantastic opportunities and ideas come to life. We must continue to look for opportunities to support the many smart individuals and businesses in our city and determine how best to translate the success of Silicon Valley in fostering technology development given our city's undoubted competitive advantage in knowledge-based industries.

Building on discussions in Silicon Valley, we then held a series of meetings with representatives of a number of firms in San Francisco's high-tech sector. This included: Alastair Mitchell, the CEO and co-founder of Huddle, a leader in cloud collaboration and content management; Allan Young, the founder of Runway, one of the largest incubators in San Francisco; Viki Forrest, the CEO of the ANZA Technology Network, a business accelerator that works with Australian, New Zealand, American and Asian entrepreneurs; and Mark Sherman, the Managing Director of Telstra Ventures, which invests in breakthrough companies that are strategically important to Telstra.

As was the case with my time in Silicon Valley, each of these meetings reinforced the importance of positioning Canberra as the pre-eminent digital city in Australia and to highlight the range of opportunities before us—the opportunity to attract these international firms to Canberra, the opportunity to assist Canberra firms in breaking into national and overseas markets and the opportunity for improving our service delivery to our community.

Turning now to Singapore, I was joined by the Chair of the Canberra Business Council, Michelle Melbourne, and the Managing Director of Canberra Airport, Stephen Byron. Our activities in Singapore were targeted and aimed at building on the strong foundations laid during our visit earlier last year, in April.

I would like to put on record the tremendous support that we received from the Australian High Commissioner, Philip Green, in the development of a comprehensive two-day program of high-level meetings. The Canberra Business Council and the Canberra Airport have been strong supporters of strengthening our bilateral relationships with the Singapore government and major private sector investors.

Following the presentation of a business case to Singapore Airlines by officials and Stephen Byron in August, we took the opportunity to meet again with Mr Chin Yau Seng, the Senior Vice President Sales and Marketing for Singapore Airlines. Mr Byron and I received a first-hand update from Mr Chin that our proposal to establish direct services between Canberra and Singapore remains under the airline's active consideration.

If and when a favourable decision is made to commence direct flights between Singapore and Canberra—be that a decision taken by Singapore Airlines or, indeed, by another airline—make no mistake, Madam Speaker: it will transform this city. It will be the end of Canberrans, as well as the 450,000 people who reside within close proximity to our airport, having to endure the terrible transfer through Sydney Airport or, indeed, having to go via Melbourne or Brisbane to travel internationally. It will

also bring economic opportunities through trade, investment and tourism, not to mention a much higher level of international recognition that our city has previously only dreamed about.

To further advance the case for direct flights, Mr Byron and I met with Senior Minister of State Mrs Josephine Teo, who has responsibility not only for the Ministry of Finance but also for the Ministry of Transport, with ministerial oversight of Singapore's Changi Airport. The minister and her senior officials are responsible for aviation services and were delighted to receive details of the territory government's active support, in partnership with Canberra Airport, for establishing direct services between our two cities.

I also met with the Chairman and Managing Director of Comfort Delgro, one of the world's major ground transport organisations, with interests across the globe, including Australia and the Canberra region—Deane's Buslines, for example. The opportunity to establish a meaningful dialogue with senior representatives and decision makers to highlight the transformation of our city is a particularly timely opportunity.

Michelle Melbourne and I were also given top-level briefings by senior executives of both the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre and the magnificent and soon-to-be opened Singapore Sports Hub, where the ACT Brumbies will be participating in a Rugby 10s competition in June.

With our city to the lake project coming to life and having the opportunity to inspect similar facilities being delivered firsthand, to receive details and a better understanding of the funding and management models behind these first-class initiatives further enhances the government's knowledge base as we prepare to make a number of similar major infrastructure decisions concerning the future of our city.

In conclusion, the groundwork to build greater business-to-business and intergovernmental relationships has been laid. The challenge before us now is to convert these strong foundations into mutually beneficial partnerships. I look forward to advising the Assembly of these new initiatives as they progress.

ACT women's economic and financial progress 2014

Statement by minister

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming) (10.14), by leave: Over the past three years, as the Minister for Women, I have provided a statement on ACT women's economic and financial progress to this Assembly.

Economic security and financial independence are critical to a person's ability to participate in and contribute to our community. We know that in the ACT women's workforce participation levels are higher than the national average, with 69 per cent of ACT women participating in the labour force compared to the national average of

59 per cent. While this is a strong indicator of ACT women's economic security and financial independence, we know that this is not true for all ACT women, particularly marginalised groups and those who have experienced violence. Indeed, the majority of Canberrans who experience financial hardship are women. ABS data shows that in 2011, 15 per cent of all ACT families with children under 15 years were lone-parent families, and 85 per cent of these families were lone-mother families.

The gender pay gap is another strong indicator of how women continue to be disadvantaged financially in our society. In the ACT, we continue to have a relatively low gender pay gap, with men on average earning 15 per cent more than women, compared to the national average of 18 per cent.

I am pleased to again update the Assembly on the progress that this government is making to support women's economic security and financial independence. We have invested in resources that assist women to live full lives, such as universal access to preschool and improved child care. These are important in supporting mothers to return to work. We provide grants, training, mentoring and support for women who want to embark on a career but lack the means to do so.

We also provide funding for projects that support specific groups of marginalised women to develop financial literacy skills. The ACT women's return to work grants program is one of several initiatives that continue to assist women on their path to financial empowerment. The program, now in its sixth year, has helped hundreds of women achieve their goal of re-entering the workforce. This grant of \$1,000, which was originally only open to mothers, can be accessed by any Canberran woman on a low income who has had caring responsibilities which have impacted on her ability to gain or maintain employment. After years of caring, it can be difficult to re-enter the workforce. Even in the early years of being a carer for her own children or for others, a woman who wants to work may find it impossible to afford child care or juggle work with picking up children from school and everything else that being a carer entails.

Another initiative which supports women on their path to economic security is the ACT women's microcredit program, "Brilliant ideas". Since its establishment in 2010, brilliant ideas has supported over 120 women on low incomes to establish or further develop an existing business through no-interest loans, mentorships, peer support and other educational programs. I am pleased to report that, as an increasing number of women pay back their loans, the initial investment made by the ACT government is now self-sustaining.

In 2013, funding was provided to the Women's Centre for Health Matters for a project focusing on supporting women who are experiencing disadvantage to access targeted basic financial information to improve their financial security. One target group for this project is women experiencing violence. We know that domestic violence is a pervasive social issue in Australia, and the ACT is no exception. An estimated 15 to 17 per cent of women are affected over the course of their lifetime.

For women experiencing domestic violence, financial security goes to the heart of not only their freedom from abuse but also their recovery and capacity to regain control

over their lives. The Women's Centre for Health Matters has worked with local women from marginalised groups, including women experiencing domestic violence, to ensure that those resources developed through this project meet their targeted needs. These resources will soon be user-tested with the women from the AMC, with a group of women at the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, in a forum in conjunction with the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum and with an older women's group.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that the new leave provisions of 20 days of paid leave for the ACT government employees who experience domestic violence are due to come into effect this year. I anticipate that the introduction of the scheme will help empower victims to take control of their lives and reduce stigma. It is important to take violence and abuse out from behind closed doors.

The government's prevention of violence against women and children strategy builds on our commitment to nurture a culture that respects the rights of women and children to live free from the fear and experience of violence. In December of last year, I presented the inaugural partners in prevention awards. This new award program is just one of the many ideas which grew out of the partners in prevention luncheon which was held in 2012. These awards provided us with an opportunity to acknowledge the individuals, groups and organisations that are contributing to creating a community that respects the rights of women to live free from the fear and experience of violence.

All of the initiatives and policies I have outlined go to the heart of the government's vision and agenda for gender equity that is contained in the 2010-15 ACT women's plan. A progress report on the women's plan was released last year. This report provides evidence against the indicators of progress across economic, social and environmental areas outlined in the women's plan. The report details the activities that are undertaken across government directorates that support safety, participation and equality for women and girls.

Last year I released *A picture of women in the ACT 2013*. This publication provides decision-makers in government, business and the community with important information on women in the ACT and informs the debate about gender disparities in the ACT. The availability of sex-disaggregated data is an important tool for building an understanding of the different needs of men and women. The data in this publication provides an enhanced picture of the ACT's progress towards equality and participation for women and girls.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to speak about the importance of International Women's Day and how we continue to celebrate its significance here in the ACT. International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March each year around the world. It is a day to recognise and celebrate women's economic, political and social achievements.

On 6 March, I presented the inaugural ACT Women's Awards. These awards recognise ACT women who have demonstrated courage and/or made an outstanding contribution to the lives of women and girls in the ACT. I had the honour to present awards to the ACT Woman of the Year, Ms Katrina Fanning, a proud Wiradjuri woman with many years experience in both the government and non-government

arenas. Katrina volunteers her time to support the local community through a range of activities, including as a member of the NAIDOC committee and the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council, and is the ACT representative on the National Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee. Katrina has a passion for sport, having represented Australia for over 13 years in male-dominated sports—women’s rugby league, including two world cups; rugby union; and indoor soccer.

The ACT Young Woman of the Year was Dr Kate Eisenberg, who has strived to research and inform the lives of girls and women through her academic, professional and personal pursuits. She has a strong focus on women’s health and fertility issues. She has recently completed her postgraduate medical degree and is undertaking her internship at Calvary Hospital. Whilst completing her studies, Kate received a 2013 ACT quality in healthcare award, in the student category.

The Senior ACT Woman of the Year award went to Ms Sue Salthouse, whose contribution to the lives of women and girls spans many decades. She is a strong advocate for women and girls in the ACT, working to address discrimination for marginalised women, particularly those with a disability, in many areas, including employment, education, health, transport and housing.

I hosted the International Women’s Day luncheon for ACT schoolgirls who are interested in pursuing a career in the construction industry. Guest speakers included an electrician and teacher at the CIT trades centre, Ms Kathy Druce, who gave a fabulously honest account of her time being the first female on many construction sites; Ms Lisa Dart, who manages the ACT National Association of Women in Construction mentoring program; and the delightful Emma Stockbridge, who last year completed her advanced diploma of interior design at CIT and also won the 2013 renovation of the year with *Home Beautiful* magazine. This is a national competition, and Emma was very proud to bring along to the launch the most recent copy of *Home Beautiful*, which features a three-page spread showcasing her winning entry.

In partnership with the ANU, I hosted a morning tea at the John Curtin School of Medical Research to encourage girls to consider a career in medical research.

This government continues to deliver practical initiatives that support women’s economic and financial independence and target the needs of women on low incomes in the ACT. As a community, we must continue to work together to ensure that women are equal partners with men in all aspects of economic, political and social life; that women are able to work and have a family life; and that women are free to live their lives without discrimination, harassment or violence.

I present the following paper:

ACT Women’s Economic and Financial Progress 2014—Copy of statement by the Minister for Women.

Ms Jones: I ask that the minister move that the statement be noted.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister.

MS BURCH: I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by **Mrs Jones**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Enhanced service offer grants

Ministerial statement

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming) (10.25): I present the following paper:

Enhanced Service Offer—Ministerial statement, 18 March 2014.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

I seek leave to make a ministerial statement on the paper.

Leave granted.

MS BURCH: I would like to thank the Assembly for the opportunity to provide an update on the enhanced service offer grants. These grants are made available to eligible ACT residents as we prepare for the gradual introduction of the national disability insurance scheme in the ACT from July of this year.

The government has allocated \$7.7 million for the two enhanced service offer grant rounds. As a first step towards the introduction of the NDIS, the enhanced service offer was designed to give people a taste of how to manage self-directed funding. People were encouraged to think from an individual, rather than a service, point of view and to plan for creating a better life for themselves.

Madam Speaker, I last updated members on these grants in November when some 800 people with a disability had been offered first round grants. The second round had just closed and a further 1,500 applications were being assessed.

Of the second round, 749 people had applied for a grant for an aid, equipment or minor modification; 1,016 people applied for a quality of life grant; and 779 have applied for grants to purchase additional flexible supports and services. Unfortunately, not everyone who applied for a grant could be offered a grant. However, I am delighted that in addition to the first 800 recipients, a further 556 people have been offered a grant in the second round.

Before I talk more about the applicants to the second round, Madam Speaker, I would like to give you a little example of the unique ways in which grants have already

made a difference to many Canberrans. In December of last year the team that takes care of the grant payments was given a note from a mother who had received funding to purchase waterproof hearing aids for her nine-year-old son. The mother wrote that as her son tried them out in the bath he emerged with a beaming smile as he told her, "I can hear bubbles. It's so cool I can hear underwater."

The thought of this young child hearing bubbles is really quite magical but the provision of waterproof hearing aids also means that this young boy can more safely join his classmates in swimming and other sporting activities in which regular hearing aids cannot be used in case they get wet.

As was the case in the first round, we achieved our aim in the second round of reaching the broadest population of eligible Canberrans. Between the two rounds 184 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people applied. Of those applicants, 72 per cent were offered a grant; 84 humanitarian or refugee entrants to Australia applied, and of those 86 per cent were offered a grant; 593 people who identified a psychosocial disability as their primary disability applied for a grant, and of those people 41 per cent received a grant. Applications were also received from younger people living in residential care. Each of those individuals who applied was offered a grant.

The enhanced service offer grants were intended to achieve a few important aims. Firstly, they were about providing vital additional assistance to people with a disability in the ACT for whom we know there remains great unmet need. The impact of the deficits within the current service system results in tremendous personal pressure on many citizens with a disability and by virtue of the reduced financial, social and educational participation people with disability experience there is lost opportunity to the individual, their families and to our community as a whole.

So the grants were also about providing much-needed assistance to the families and other unpaid carers who share this journey and the financial, physical and emotional strains that accompany it. Through these grants we have provided some additional assistance to a significant proportion of eligible Canberrans and some relief to their families. Secondly, these grants are about supporting the ACT to prepare for the introduction of the NDIS. The first part of that preparation was getting the message out to people that the NDIS was coming and it might relate to them. The challenge was getting that message out to the broadest possible group, to people who may not see that they have a disability or be eligible for supports, to people who, for a wide variety of reasons, are not connected to any of the formal support services which are currently available to them.

I understand that through the assessment process applicants were identified who were in urgent need and were not well connected to sometimes essential services. These people were able to be immediately contacted and assisted. Indeed, between the two rounds of the enhanced service offer grants, 526 applicants told us that they had not received any formal service.

Through the results of the 2012-13 disability client satisfaction survey, which measured client satisfaction with all disability services funded by Disability ACT,

including government-provided services, we know that 93 per cent of respondents—that is, people who are currently assisted by a funded service—have heard about the NDIS. So we are succeeding in getting the message out to the people who need to hear it.

More than 2,500 Canberrans with disability and their families have given thought to their aspirations, their current supports provided both by formal services and those supports provided by the friends, family and community networks around them. They have thought about what would make the most difference to their life now. They have considered and collated their stories.

They are at least one step closer to being prepared for the opportunity to have more choice and more control over their supports and services that the NDIS can provide them. It is clear that people see their most important needs as being met in very different ways.

What people have sought through grants, in the main, looks very different from the services governments have traditionally funded and organisations have provided. The NDIS focuses on individual needs and outcomes. Its commitment to allow people with a disability to reach their potential and to really engage with our community will require a change in philosophy from some providers.

In the ACT, as with other trial sites, we lead Australia into the NDIS as we move from a service-led model to one in which people with a disability have hold of the reins. There will continue to be a vital role for formal services, of course. But those services, whether government or community provided, will need to adapt to succeed in this new environment. The diversity of grant offers in this second round of the enhanced service offer matched those in the first round.

Funds have been offered for equipment needed in day-to-day life, like wheelchairs, scooters, hoists, and adjustable beds; for equipment to enable people to take part in recreational activities like adaptive bicycles and those wonderful waterproof hearing aids; for software programs and IT equipment to assist children and younger people with autism; for safety devices like smoke alarms and door and phone alerts for those who are deaf or have hearing impairments; and to people who take part in community activities like swimming, dancing, music, jewellery making, CIT courses and horse riding.

Unfortunately, not every applicant could be successful. While 556 people have received grants, a further 1,000 have missed out. We understand that many people were disappointed and that some people may be quite distressed or concerned at that outcome. But the enhanced service offer was never intended or able to respond to all unmet needs in the ACT. The NDIS is being trialled because the current disability support system is inadequate across the country. Applicants who have not been offered a grant should be assured that this does not mean they are not eligible for the NDIS.

Indeed, I would encourage people to check the “my access checker” on the NDIS website to find out if they will be eligible for the NDIS. All eligible participants will

receive funding for reasonable and necessary supports under the NDIS. To further ensure equitable access to the NDIS, I can say that in January this year we appointed a gender adviser to the NDIS task force whose role it is to address any institutional or systemic bias which might inadvertently lead to inequitable outcomes.

Using a gender lens, we can explore issues for women, men and transgender-intersex people, and identify ways in which improvements can be made to promote gender equity and to ensure equality of access to the NDIS. The effort and time that people put into their enhanced service offer application was also important preparation for the NDIS. This is information that the National Disability Insurance Agency will need when it meets with the people to develop their NDIS plans.

It is reassuring that we have received much positive feedback from the people who were not actually offered a grant. One woman rang to say that through the application process she had met some people in her neighbourhood who had similar interests to herself and that they have formed an informal art network. Through her new network she has been able to obtain the items she requested funding for.

The enhanced service offer is not the only investment we are making to prepare the community for the NDIS. When I last spoke in this place about the NDIS, I gave some other examples of our investment in initiatives which assist people with disabilities and their families. These initiatives will continue, like the supported decision-making workshops; the self and peer advocacy training, and networks and facilitated community conversations.

We continue to support our community service providers to provide for the launch of the NDIS in other ways as well. We have negotiated with the commonwealth a new \$2.1 million package of strategic investment into our local providers and \$1.9 million to assist government providers prepare for the NDIS. We have purchased 60 places for community providers to use the NDIS self-assessment toolkit developed by the National Disability Service, the NDS, which is the disability services peak body. This toolkit will assist providers to understand the extent to which they are prepared for the NDIS reform.

An amount of \$800,000 is being invested in 40 packages valued at \$20,000 each for community providers who need financial and business expertise to build their viability, their governance and their service model to be better positioned for the NDIS. A further \$500,000 will be invested in 10 providers that would benefit from complex business advice and mentoring to implement major strategic or structural reform related to the NDIS transition.

Madam Speaker, we are investing an initial \$600,000 to ensure that we engage every worker who has direct contact with people with disability, or their families, in a conversation with the NDIS. This includes teachers, community nurses, therapists, people with information and referral roles as well as those who are direct support workers.

This is the start of our work to support the cultural change and capability development that is needed across the sector to position the ACT well for the NDIS. In addition to

this we will work with the National Disability Insurance Agency and engage with people who will use services and the community to inform investment from the sector development fund in workforce development, targeting roles and workforce required to see the ACT through transition into full scheme.

Madam Speaker, there is still much work to be done to ensure that people in the ACT make the smoothest transition possible from July this year. I am pleased that through initiatives like the enhanced service offer grants we are supporting Canberrans to imagine different ways to have their disability-related needs met and to take a step closer to being able and resourced to achieve the lives they want for themselves.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (10.38): We are 106 days away from when the transition begins, this year on July 1. Yet we are still no closer on when any of the detail of the ACT's transition to the NDIS is actually going to be released, what form it is going to take when it is implemented, who is going to be included and over what time frame.

Madam Speaker, I stood up in this place in November of last year and I said that the sector is still no clearer about what services would continue to be provided by the ACT. Here we are less than four months away from the beginning of the transition date and still no more clarity has been provided on what role the biggest provider of disability services in the ACT will play come July 1.

This is continuing to build angst, uncertainty and concern within the disability sector, not just with individuals that rely on these services, but also those individuals that work for service providers and who are at the front line providing services to these vulnerable people in our community.

The minister and her directorate have failed. We took an additional year to transition in the ACT and they have failed to be ready and failed to use the time effectively to make sure that the sector, the community and everyone are prepared effectively. We are still no closer to fulfilling the detail on this issue.

Large issues still arise in workforce preparedness and workforce readiness. It is going to be the single biggest shift in the way disability services are provided in this country. With 106 days to go, many service providers are still unsure how their funding is going to be allocated come July 1—if it will be even continued at all. There is still some concern among providers as to whether this is going to be the case.

With Disability ACT being the largest provider of services in the ACT the government needs to state its place—whether it is going to continue to be a government-funded operator in this space or whether they are going to continue to disband and break up services. Will we see more closures, minister? We saw closures of the respite services already this financial year. What else is to come? We have got 106 days. I would imagine that there is more to come but you are going to keep it to the last minute and bury it in the budget. You will leave more uncertainty for families that rely on these services, yet hide under a cover of darkness.

I want to put on the record here that I smell partisan politics creeping into the NDIS. It was a bipartisan policy federally. There was also bipartisan support in this place to

see the NDIS implemented but I can see the blame being shifted very quickly from this minister's incompetence in managing a transition within the ACT to her federal counterpart. I think it is only prudent that we put on the record here that that is going to be the move that this minister will make next: "It is not my fault. I did my best. Blame the feds." With the additional year that we have taken, and with Liberal involvement at the federal level for the last six months, it has been the Labor government that this jurisdiction has been dealing with for the large portion of its transition preparedness.

Ms Burch: He is getting ready for his mates to ditch it.

MR WALL: I do not think so.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members! Mr Wall, if you could comply with standing order 42 and address the chair, that would be handy.

MR WALL: Certainly, Madam Speaker. I want it clear on the record as to what I can see happening over the coming 106 days as we move towards the commencement of the transition in the ACT. I think it is prudent that the minister, as soon as possible, comes back to this place with a statement outlining clearly how the transition is going to occur. What individuals are going to be transitioned into the new funding model at what stage? We have got just over 28 months until a full transition needs to occur. It is not a large time frame to transition all services in the ACT, yet we are still no clearer on that detail. I wait for more information.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Totalisator Bill 2013

Debate resumed from 28 November 2013, on motion by **Ms Burch:**

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (10.43): This bill sets up a framework to establish the totalisator conduct and regulation for betting in the ACT and is, of course, the prelude to the sale of ACTTAB. I thank the minister for the briefing and for her officials informing me of the intent of the bill.

This bill will repeal the Betting (ACTTAB Limited) Act 1964 and will also amend the Gambling and Racing Control Act 1999, Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002 and the Race and Sports Bookmaking Act 2001.

The bill, to put it simply, aims to put in place the necessary groundwork for the planned sale of ACTTAB. It is potentially the case that the government has taken too long in considering ACTTAB's future, but it is good to see that things are finally happening now. I note there have not been any amendments since 1990 regarding totalisator-like operations in the ACT. Suffice it to say in a rapidly changing market this update to the act is long overdue.

I understand the bill was developed in consultation with the ACT Racing and Gambling Commission; however, it is disappointing to note there was no consultation with the industry. It seems odd that a bill that seeks to provide the framework for the industry and to provide certainty to the industry did not seek the industry's advice. In fact, it was my initial consultation with the racing industry that alerted them to the minister's bill. Fancy that—the opposition doing the government's job again!

There are issues with this bill and I note the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety in its scrutiny report of 18 February reported approximately 44 amendments they thought would be required around issues of a conferral of administrative powers, reasonable grounds for exercising powers, and trespass on personal rights and liberties. Of the 44 recommended amendments, the government agreed to approximately 10 and partially to two, amendments which have been circulated by the minister.

We have, yet again, another bill Ms Burch has brought forward to this place that has needed rapid and necessary amendment. It does not give one a great deal of confidence that the carriage of any bill by this minister will get through without amendment. I suspect we will be back again when the approximately 30 issues that were not addressed are addressed. When we raised these issues with officials they were confident the bill did not need amendment and that it was right to be debated in February. Of course, it was not debated in February because it needed amendment.

This is an important issue for the industry and the treatment of the industry by this government is nothing short of capricious. Again, I refer to the debate in November last year where we raised a number of issues. Some of these perhaps will not be addressed in this bill, but there are still outstanding issues. As the sale of ACTTAB edges inextricably closer, we are still yet to hear from the government on what it is they will do to address the issues raised by the thoroughbred industry.

The industry's preferred outcome is as follows: the sale of ACTTAB's business with a condition that ensures appropriate funding for the ACT racing industry's products; the sale of ACTTAB to a major wagering operator with the highest level of integrity and racing industry understanding; funding arrangements broadly consistent with other jurisdictions to ensure the ACT's racing industry's viability and maintenance of parity with prize money with interstate clubs; funding arrangements that allow the racing industry to be self-reliant and sustainable long term; and appropriate transition and/or support arrangements for ACTTAB staff.

When you have got a minister who is not even consulting with the industry on the bill that will dictate their future, it is very hard to have any confidence that we will get it right. Let's face it, the government has been aware since coming into office that the value of ACTTAB has been declining and was probably not viable as a government-owned entity. The Treasurer is on the record as saying back on 27 September last year:

Look at what's happened in this market around the country and the world. There are significant technological changes, use of smartphones and tablets and other devices. The sorts of investments that are required are significant.

The truth is the government knew it had to divest itself of ACTTAB even before such devices and changes to the betting industry came into being. So again we are seeing a government that has been sitting on its hands for a very long time until they had no option. We had the PricewaterhouseCoopers report which set out a number of options, and we finally got the government to say, “Well, yes, we need to move on.”

What is lacking in this bill or as part of a package is certainty for the industry. Many out there did not know this bill was even to be debated in February, let alone today, until I brought it to their attention. Again, this lack of consultation is certainly not giving the industry a lot of confidence that this minister is across the bill and that this minister will be able to deliver anything for them.

In the light of these shortcomings, the government is to sell ACTTAB. We will not be opposing the bill. It is a machinery bill and in that regard we will have to wait and see how it actually operates. The minister has shown disdain for the scrutiny of bills report. I know she wrote back to the committee, but it will be interesting for the minister to explain why the government has only chosen to address less than a third of what was raised by the committee and how the minister intends in future to make it work. I suspect we will be back again, as is the case with so many of Ms Burch’s bills, to amend it.

That said, I will closely follow the implementation of the bill when it becomes the act. We certainly look forward to the government addressing the concerns the industry has made quite public, concerns that I do not believe have been addressed as yet. We certainly will be keeping an eye on the government as they move forward to the sale of ACTTAB.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (10.49): This bill is designed to facilitate the sale of ACTTAB to an appropriate commercial entity for their operation. I signalled my support for the privatisation of ACTTAB during the debate of the government’s motion in late November last year. As members may recall, at that time I amended the motion to call on the government to pursue a number of outcomes from the sale of ACTTAB, one of which was to ensure that the successful applicant has appropriate experience, capacity and integrity to operate a wagering business.

This bill is designed in part to deliver those kinds of outcomes. It sets up structures and parameters and defines powers whereby a regulated industry can be established in the ACT and operate in good order free from criminal influence.

At the time of the motion last year I also outlined the views of the ACT Greens membership on the privatisation of ACTTAB, and I will take a moment to reiterate them today. The views I have received from our members are that the territory government should not be in the gambling business at all and that it is inappropriate for the government to be using its limited resources to sustain a gambling enterprise. Given the capital investment that would be required by government to keep ACTTAB competitive in the betting market, it is a fine time to divest the territory of this asset. This Totalisator Bill is one of a series of legislative steps to facilitate that divestment.

Scrutiny report 14 handed down by the justice and community safety committee on 14 February raised multiple concerns regarding clauses within the bill. The report points out that clauses in the bill:

... confer a wide range of administrative powers on the Minister and on the commission, and in almost every instance there is no stated limit concerning the matters that would be relevant or irrelevant to the exercise of the power. On their face, these powers are not sufficiently defined.

The report goes on to say:

It is important that so far as feasible administrative power should be subject to stated limits. Such statements afford guidance to those responsible for the administration of the legislative scheme and in this way promote good administration.

The report also says:

From the public's viewpoint, they afford guidance to those who have been or may be affected by the exercise of power. Should there be an appeal to ACAT or judicial challenge, to an exercise of power, the statements enhance the capacity of these bodies to correct an error.

Minister Burch has responded to the comments of the scrutiny committee in a letter to the chair of the committee, Mr Doszpot. She has also indicated amendments to the bill and has provided a revised explanatory statement. Minister Burch seeks to respond to the scrutiny concerns in a number of ways that I consider satisfactory. Minister Burch points out that participation in a regulated industry is voluntary and that people can choose not to participate should they feel the regulatory requirements become too onerous.

Ms Burch also refers to a statement made by the High Court Chief Justice Robert French, who states that there is no such thing as unfettered discretion. Official discretions conferred by statute must be exercised consistently with the scope, object and subject matter of the statute. I believe the existing structures of the ACT government, the ACT public service and our legal and civil society are currently sufficiently robust to prevent undue application of the powers conferred on the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission with regard to the administration of wagering regulation.

The scrutiny report also raised concerns over the right to privacy in so far as participating in this regulatory regime requires extensive documentation detailing the applicant's personal and business life in some detail. While it would be unsettling to see such powers conferred on another government agency, the fact is that the individuals and companies who will be required to provide this information to the commission will have done so many times before to many other gambling regulators.

The global corporate gaming and wagering world is dominated by a short list of companies who operate in many jurisdictions. The only individuals and companies who are realistically viable to apply to run ACTTAB are those who already run

gaming and wagering elsewhere. They are individuals who have already provided the private information to other gambling regulators many times. They are companies with compliance sections whose sole business is to provide the reams of information that gambling commissions require. I believe this is appropriate to ensure integrity in the sector.

With those few remarks, I indicate that I will be supporting the bill today and I will also be supporting the government amendments that have been circulated and will, therefore, not need to speak in the detail stage.

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming) (10.54), in reply: The Totalisator Bill 2013 establishes a robust framework for the conduct of totalisators and the regulation of totalisator betting in the territory.

Totalisators in Australia are operated by the Totalisator Agency Board, which was introduced in the 1950s, and they allow for the pooling of bets and the declaration of winning dividends only after betting is closed, which contrasts with the fixed-odds betting where the consumer knows the dividend prior to making a bet.

In the ACT totalisator operations are currently operated by ACTTAB Ltd and are regulated by the Betting (ACTTAB Limited) Act 1964 and the Gambling and Racing Control Act 1999. The current regulatory framework as it applies to totalisator operations in the territory is in need of modernisation to maintain relevance in the current industry and provide consumer protection for gamblers.

Regulated gambling also provides for greater protection for problem gamblers and allows the government to implement policies to ensure that profits from gambling activities contribute to the cost of problem gambling.

The bill modernises current arrangements ensuring that regulatory processes are transparent and that the integrity of totalisator operations and the gambling industry as a whole in the territory is effective and transparent. Both ACTTAB and the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission have been consulted in the bill's development.

Specifically, the bill will repeal the Betting (ACTTAB Limited) Act 1964 and introduces consequential amendments to the Gambling and Racing Control Act 1999, the Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002 and the Race and Sports Bookmaking Act 2001.

The bill establishes the following key elements: clear licensing with strong probity and integrity requirements for operators and key personnel involved in totalisator operations; provisions that enable the commission to regulate the behaviour and conduct of a licensee; clearer licensing terms and inclusive arrangements; enforcement mechanisms, including a disciplinary scheme and offence provisions; harm minimisation measures, including adherence to a code of practice and reporting requirements; financial provisions that enable a commission payable to the operator on totalisator betting; taxation on totalisator operations; monthly reporting requirements and the treatment of unclaimed moneys; a framework for consumer

protection initiatives, including the treatment of moneys held in client betting accounts; administrative processes for the approval of totalisator rules on how betting accounts are managed and regulation-making powers; totalisator equipment approvals and standards similar to the Gaming Machine Act 2004 and relevant instruments; and provisions to ensure that the existing totalisator, ACTTAB, has a smooth transition to the new framework which provides that the existing licence approvals and finance provisions will continue.

The bill is in step with frameworks in other jurisdictions, particularly New South Wales and Victoria. It aims to maintain the integrity of gambling activities for the protection of users of gambling services, minimise harm to problem gamblers and other vulnerable people, and reduce the potential for criminal influence in the provision of gambling services.

To ensure consistency of the regulatory approach in the territory and in line with the general powers of the commission, the bill mirrors similar ACT regulatory functions within existing legislation to provide certainty to industry and the commission. The bill is part of the territory's suite of racing and gaming regulation and will be applied in the context of the overarching Gambling and Racing Control Act 1999.

I want to thank the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety in their legislative scrutiny role for their review of the Totalisator Bill. When we get to the detail stage I will make some comments on the amendments. I now table the revised explanatory statement to the Totalisator Bill 2013.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming) (10.59): Pursuant to standing order 182A(c), I seek leave to move the amendments to the bill, that are in response to the comments made by the scrutiny committee, together.

Leave granted.

MS BURCH: I move amendments Nos 1 to 6 circulated in my name together [*see schedule 1 at page 464*]. I table a supplementary explanatory statement to the government amendments.

Clearly, I have carefully considered the comments made by the committee and in response I have tabled a number of government amendments to the bill, which I will address in turn.

The key objective of the regulation of totalisators is the protection of the community from any issue that may arise if the integrity of the totalisator is compromised, such as by the entry of criminal elements. An equally important aim is minimising harm from problem gambling. The bill has been developed with appropriate and proportionate powers to achieve these objectives.

I note here that there are parallels between the totalisator licensee and the casino licensee. The Totalisator Bill 2013 ensures that there are similar regulatory safeguards to those that apply under the Casino Control Act 2006. These licensees are entities, not individuals, and they generally have considerable financial means available. As such, human rights considerations need to be understood in that context.

The powers established by the bill have been drafted with due regard for administrative law, and any power conferred on me as the minister or the commission are limited to matters reasonably relating to the operation of a totalisator business. The totalisator industry is diverse and is becoming more globalised.

Over recent years the gambling industry has seen a number of significant changes, in particular with evolving technologies and the increased use of the internet. This has resulted in a broadening of gambling activities to a wider range of events, including both national and international sporting activities and an expansion of international gambling operations in the Australian market.

The bill must provide the capacity to be responsive to these emerging market developments and provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that the regulatory framework remains robust. The committee has commented that the bill's powers should include the limitation that it may only be exercised where there are reasonable grounds for doing so.

I note that there are already limitations on certain powers listed by the committee, particularly those in relation to disciplinary action. The grounds for disciplinary action are set out in clause 45 of the bill. In other instances, there is a need to ensure that the regulatory function of the commission is not unduly hampered, and that the alignment with the existing gaming and racing suite of legislation is preserved.

However, noting the committee's concerns, where appropriate, I have, in tabling the amendments today, clarified that decisions must be made on reasonable grounds. Government amendments 1 and 2 revise clause 24(1)(d) and clause 25(1) to address this issue, along with some changes also to the sequencing of the latter clause.

A decision to grant a totalisator licence must be based on a thorough assessment of the licensee's eligibility. For this assessment to occur, we need to check the identity of the people involved with the operation of the totalisator, and this means obtaining personal information from certain people, including their fingerprints. Should a person decide not to provide such information, it is a necessary consequence that they cannot be involved in totalisator activities. However, in line with the human rights considerations, this power is limited to an assessment of those at the upper levels of the organisation; that is, those who might influence the conduct of the totalisator.

Notwithstanding the above comments, amendment 3 that I have tabled today inserts a new clause 26A that explicitly provides clarification of the limits of the commission's powers when determining a person's eligibility to be involved in totalisator activity. The provisions of clause 41 have been reviewed and government amendment 4 deletes clause 41(3), as this provision is not required.

I now turn to clauses 42 and 43 of the bill, which are important measures that allow for an appropriately strong response in the rare and unlikely circumstance that the integrity of the totalisator is seriously compromised. I thank the committee for their consideration of the operation of these provisions. Amendment 5 modifies clause 42 so that it is clear that a direction to a licensee may only be given where the minister is satisfied that the integrity of the totalisator may be seriously compromised.

Further, amendment 6 introduces new clauses 42(3), (4) and (5), and provides a procedural fairness mechanism for licensees so that they must be informed of the grounds for the direction and provided with an opportunity to respond. After considering the response, the minister may revoke the decision if they are satisfied that it is not required. The government amendments are supported by a supplementary explanatory statement which I have also tabled today.

Finally, in response to the comments raised by the committee, I am pleased to advise that today I have also tabled a revised explanatory statement. The statement now explains further that, due to the nature and the diversity of the industry, the range of powers provided for in the bill are appropriate and proportionate to the risks involved, and that they are the only available means to provide the necessary safeguards. The revised statement also includes reference to specific defences available under the Criminal Code, as requested by the committee.

I believe I have taken a fair and balanced view of the committee's remarks, and have brought forward considered government amendments. I make no apologies, however, for the strong regulatory approach that has been taken as the integrity of the industry must be upheld. A robust regulatory framework for totalisator activities in the ACT will provide consumer protections, minimise harm from problem gambling and limit the opportunity for criminal aspects of society to infiltrate the industry—aims that I am sure we all support.

In closing, I want to thank all of the officials who worked very hard on the original bill and on these amendments, and for the commentary from the JACS committee, as they have provided some further work on enhancing this bill.

Amendments agreed to.

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

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Gaming Machine (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2013

Debate resumed from 24 October 2013, on motion by **Ms Burch**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (11.07): According to the explanatory statement that accompanied this bill, the bill aims to simplify the process around the approval of financial arrangements for the acquisition of gaming machines or the encumbrance of existing machines, as well as the arrangements for undisbursed jackpot amounts. The key features include, in clause 5, removing sections 101 and 102 of the Gaming Machine Act to make it a one-step process for the application, approval and decision with regard to acquiring a gaming machine, and removing the requirement to approve encumbrances of existing machines. Clauses 6 to 8 relate to changes made to section 144 to ensure that the policy objective of returning unallocated jackpot funds to players is achieved, rather than these funds being payable to the territory if the current four-week deadline has not been met.

I have to say that when you look at the minister's statements when she went on ABC radio on 24 October, you could be forgiven for thinking she was speaking about a different bill. She said: "The ACT government plans to make it easier for ACT clubs to purchase poker machines ... The changes will make it faster to buy machines and the clubs no longer need government approval if they want to finance new machines." When given the opportunity to clarify this legislation later on that day during question time, she was incapable of doing so, and merely responded to questions by referring the opposition to her amendments. The question that arises from this is: did she actually know what she tabled last October? Based on the minister's record, probably not.

Then there is another curious matter here. We were offered a briefing. I took up that opportunity, but it was cancelled when apparently there was a new policy that unless the opposition member attended the briefing, there was to be no briefing. That is a significant departure from what has happened in the past. No notice was given of this change to the minister's policy. Members try to get to briefings, but sometimes it is not possible. Suddenly the government, in the new era of openness and accountability that the Chief Minister espouses, was shutting down briefings. If that is true, perhaps the reverse is that the new opposition policy will be that all ministers must be present in government briefings to the opposition. Ludicrous, isn't it? Yes; I see the smirks on those opposite. Perhaps a little bit more courtesy should come back into the whole process rather than it being the arbitrary nature of the minister's office. I note the changes in the senior staffing arrangements in Ms Burch's office and hope that this sets a more collaborative approach to how we get on with our business.

The Canberra Liberals have consulted the key stakeholders on this bill and have received no objections. Many did not even know the bill existed. Yet again, there was a failure of this government to communicate with stakeholders about what they are doing to their industry.

In short, the bill does not change what clubs do. It does not make it easier for clubs to get new machines. It is a technical bill. It is a piece of machinery-of-government legislation. We have no problems supporting it, but I think it is a bit picky to suggest that it is a red tape reduction effort. With the under-delivery of this government in reducing its own red tape, to call this bill a red tape reduction bill is simply misleading. If this is the best effort the government makes in the reduction of red tape, it is

particularly pithy. It is a drop in the ocean in terms of red tape that can be done away with, particularly when most of it has been put in place by this government.

We will support the bill. We are not sure that the government are doing enough for our club sector. We know that the community has invested enormous sums of money into their own industry, and they enjoy that industry, but we have a government that do make it harder. They are clearly still applying Ted Quinlan's dictum of "Squeeze them till they bleed but not until they die". We know that even though many of the clubs are now diversifying away from poker machines, which is welcome, many of them are doing it tough. This bill will not do anything to relieve the pressure that exists on our club sector. One can only wait with interest to see what will happen to the sector in the coming budget. Rumours already abound about increased efforts to raise revenue. It will be interesting to see whether, yet again, the squeeze is put on our club sector.

That said, we will support the bill.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.12): This bill aims to reduce the regulation relating to the approvals of financial arrangements for the acquisition of gaming machines or the encumbrance of existing gaming machines.

To the extent that it may make the administrative process simpler without having an impact on the number of poker machines and the level of harm that they cause in the community, I have no opposition to the bill. Given the social impact that poker machines, and through them problem gambling, can have, I think that it is entirely appropriate that this is a regulated industry. This goes a little to the discussion we were having in the previous debate. There is a clear place for regulation, but the administrative changes that are made here are worth while.

Right across the whole gambling sector, there is work that needs to be done to improve support for those that have a problem with gambling. There is work that needs to be done to put in place clearer measures, such as the sorts of measures my federal colleagues have been talking about, with mandatory pre-commitment or limits on poker machine bets. I am more than happy to discuss those sorts of options with any of my colleagues in the Assembly at any time. I have the impression that if I was to hold a meeting on this, I would have a lonely old time of it in this place in terms of looking at further reforms, but, nonetheless, I am an optimist, and I hope that one day we will take further steps in the ACT to provide the appropriate protections for those that do, unfortunately, have gambling problems.

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming) (11.14), in reply: This government is committed to reducing red tape, and the amendments introduced in the Gaming Machine (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2013 are part of the ongoing efforts to identify and address provisions which impose unnecessary burdens on businesses.

I am pleased to have the support of all of the chamber in this, but just as a comment let me say that it is a pity that Mr Smyth comes in here and supports the bill but then cannot help but be ungracious and make to me quite unnecessary comments. As for the briefings, Mr Smyth, we have brought officials over to the Canberra Liberals and no-one has even turned up. They have turned up to locked doors, Mr Smyth. Perhaps the courtesy needs—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ms Burch! Stop the clock, please. Ms Burch, would you please address your comments to me as chair and not to Mr Smyth. Thank you.

MS BURCH: I think the point was just that when officials turn up to a locked door, the courtesy chain goes both ways, Mr Smyth.

But let me go to the bill at hand. The bill reduces red tape in the club sector through amendments that improve administrative processes without affecting the ability of the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission to properly oversee the regulation of gaming machines.

In particular, the bill amends provisions that currently require the approval of financial arrangements when gaming machines are being acquired or when existing gaming machines are being encumbered. The bill also improves processes in relation to arrangements for undisbursed jackpot amounts.

The bill supplements the work that the ACT government has committed to in signing the memorandum of understanding with ClubsACT in September of 2012. A key commitment in that MOU, which set out the policy and reform agenda for the licensed club sector over four years, was that a broad review of the current regulatory regime faced by the club sector would be conducted.

Specifically, the bill removes sections 101 and 102 of the Gaming Machine Act 2004 and provides that a licensee authorised to acquire a gaming machine under the current approval scheme operated by the commission will no longer need to have the financial arrangements approved. Red tape will be reduced through decreasing the time and effort spent by eligible gaming machine licensees in applying to acquire machines. The changes do not, however, reduce other regulatory requirements for obtaining gaming machines.

Overall, the government remains committed to reducing the number of gaming machines in the territory as one aspect of our harm minimisation approach to problem gambling.

Licensees will also no longer be required to apply to the commission where a financial arrangement is proposed to encumber an existing machine, as this requirement does not fit with current commercial practice and is unnecessary given the other provisions of the Gaming Machine Act.

A common commercial practice is for financial institutions to place fixed and floating charges over all company or licensee assets, including gaming machines. This practice

has made it difficult for both the licensees and the commission to separate gaming machines from the charges in order to clearly identify and regulate ownership and control requirements under the act. There are, however, additional powers under the act that the commission can utilise to investigate and control financial and contractual arrangements if this should be required—such as preventing a third party from receiving a proportion of the gaming machine revenue.

It is the government's policy objective that unallocated gaming machine jackpots are returned to the players wherever possible, such as where an accumulated jackpot amount is no longer available to be won by patrons. The amendments improve the process for the disbursement of unallocated gaming machine jackpots to patrons through an improved scheme. At present, the licensee applies to the commission for approval of an arrangement to distribute the jackpot, and an approval must be granted within four weeks or the amount of the jackpot is paid to the territory. Amendment of section 144 provides that where a licensee has a good reason for not obtaining approval of redistribution arrangements within the four-week period, the commission will be able to extend the period, an arrangement may be approved, and ultimately the jackpot funds can be returned to players rather than the territory.

The bill also includes some minor amendments to correct and clarify language and amends the associated provision of the act.

A range of reforms for the club industry, including further red tape reduction and a scheme that allows trading of gaming machines between venues in line with appropriate social impact statements, are also under consideration. The government is incorporating into this work the feedback received from its discussion paper of last year.

I want to thank the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, in their scrutiny role, for their review of the Gaming Machine (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill. The committee raised no comments on this bill. I also want to thank the officials that have put this work together and note that we continue to work in partnership with the clubs for further red tape reduction. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

Debate resumed from 27 February 2014, on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (11.20): The opposition will be supporting the bill that is before us today. My colleagues and I are satisfied that the changes in the Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 are warranted and go some way to addressing the concerns of the community in this area.

As the minister has stated previously, the bill seeks to clarify a number of anomalies and is technical in some aspects, the main purpose being to make provision to ensure that any sentenced prisoner or parolee must now seek permission from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate's Director-General before applying to change their name. This will ensure that name changes do not occur for the purpose of evading supervision or detection or, more concerning, to continue to torment victims.

It does, however, warrant mentioning that once sentences have ceased being served there is nothing that prevents a released prisoner from going ahead with a name change as desired. I do also note that there is a provision for appeal whilst an individual is subject to a correctional order should they feel that their application to change their name has been rejected unfairly.

There was a case that was mentioned in the *Canberra Times* recently where the ACT Magistrates Court had to deal with one individual who had been charged under two different names, after changing his name in 2002 and then back again to his original name in 2009. This caused great confusion within the court system and added not just a burden of caseload but also additional costs which our court system can well do without.

The technical aspects of the bill relate to changes in definitions under mental health orders. This is again an anomaly that has caused many headaches and unnecessary angst for authorities and individuals involved. I think the changes in this bill go some way to ensuring that there is consistency and common sense applied within the corrections system.

I appreciate the briefing that was provided by the minister's office and directorate staff on the changes in this bill. Again, as I said, the opposition are satisfied that it goes some way to cleaning up some of the anomalies and issues that do exist within the existing legislation.

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) (11.22), in reply: The Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 amends laws to improve the safety and security of the broader community and clarifies issues which will improve justice procedures.

The primary change made by this bill is to provide a scheme for change of name applications that will apply to people sentenced to imprisonment, including parolees. The scheme will apply to people serving a sentence of imprisonment. This includes sentences of imprisonment to be served in full-time detention, periodic detention or release on licence.

Through the Standing Council on Law and Justice, ministers around Australia agreed to consider changes to give effect to best practice change of name process with a specific focus on offenders. The proposed reforms included oversight of name change applications made by people sentenced to imprisonment and parolees and registered child sex offenders. Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales have already introduced similar change of name schemes. The ACT adopted similar restrictions on registered child sex offenders with the passage of the Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Amendment Act 2012.

The proposed scheme supports law enforcement and community safety by preventing convicted offenders from changing their name for unlawful purposes, such as evading supervision or facilitating the commission of offences. The scheme requires that a person serving a sentence of imprisonment or a parolee must seek the approval of the Director-General of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate before being able to change their name.

The bill makes it an offence for a person serving a sentence of imprisonment or a parolee to apply to change their name in the ACT or in another Australian jurisdiction without first obtaining the approval of the director-general. The bill provides the criteria that the director-general must consider in deciding whether or not to approve a person's application to change their name.

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 to a victim of crime or an appreciable sector of the community.

The scheme will not affect the ability of people sentenced to imprisonment and parolees to change their name for legitimate purposes. The scheme balances the right of the community to safety, protection and effective law enforcement with the right of a sentenced prisoner to change his or her name in accordance with Australian laws. If the director-general does not approve such an application for a change of name for any reason, the applicant has the opportunity to appeal the decision through the ACT's Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

This bill will also amend corrections legislation to address the situation where an offender is detained under a mental health order at a particular place and therefore cannot perform periodic detention or community service work. In such circumstances it is appropriate to deem the offender to have performed periodic detention or community service work as it is beyond their control that they cannot meet their obligations under a relevant sentence order.

The amendment will not only prevent an offender from unnecessarily being brought before the court or Sentence Administration Board, but will also ensure that the court or board will not have to spend time considering these alleged breaches of sentence obligations only to determine that the offender had a legitimate reason for non-attendance.

The bill will also progress an amendment to ensure that a court can order a person in charge of a correctional facility to bring a detainee before the court for a civil proceeding. The amendment will not affect any right the detainee may have to not attend. It will simply ensure that where a court deems it necessary or appropriate and a detainee consents to attend a civil proceeding, Corrective Services will have the power to make sure that happens. This amendment may be useful where a detainee is the applicant in a civil proceeding or where a civil order, such as a forensic procedure order, is sought against the detainee and the court determines that it is appropriate for the detainee to attend.

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 only 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 thank members for their support, and I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 11.28 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice Canberra Hospital—infections

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, the MyHospitals website recently reported on the level of hospital-acquired infections, or golden staph, across all Australian hospitals. The Canberra Hospital had one of the worst rates of any hospital, with 41 reported cases. Whilst the general trend of infections is falling across Australia, the rate of infections is increasing at the Canberra Hospital, from 24 cases in 2010-11 to 33 in 2011-12 and 41 last year. The ACT director of public health said that there are issues with handwashing. Minister, why, when the average rates are falling across Australian hospitals, is the rate of hospital-acquired infection increasing at the Canberra Hospital?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I am sure he listened to the response by Professor Collignon on this matter when it was raised publicly last week. I think we do need to put it in the context of the fact that, with small numbers in a small jurisdiction, you will on occasion see jumping around. The hospital-acquired infection—

Opposition members interjecting—

MS GALLAGHER: When small numbers jump around, and they do—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MS GALLAGHER: with respect to the difference between the 30-odd cases—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, you have asked your question.

MS GALLAGHER: and the 40-odd cases, it is against a backdrop of 72,000 cost-weighted separations in the hospital. So let us just understand that—72,000 cost weights across the hospital, and there has been an increase in the order of 10 cases, from 33 to 41. In each one of those the hospital has gone back and examined them to ascertain whether there is a systemic trend occurring, if there is anything that needs to be picked up, and the response back from that is that no, there was not.

I am very confident that infection control procedures at Canberra Hospital and Calvary hospital are very focused on ensuring good hygiene across the hospital. Members will have seen, if they have visited the hospital—Mr Hanson does not sound very interested in the answer to this question; he sounds more interested in what Mr Coe is saying to him but—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MS GALLAGHER: And let us have a look at the number of cost weights that have occurred since that time as well—the actual level of activity that is happening in a complex tertiary hospital like Canberra. But if people visit the hospital, they will see the steps that have been taken, particularly around hand hygiene. It is for people who visit the hospital, patients and staff.

If you go to the MyHospitals website, they report against hand hygiene, and the audits performed at Canberra Hospital and Calvary hospital have been improving. In fact Calvary does very well, and I think Canberra's performance is improving, for a much larger hospital. One of the most significant areas we have to work on is doctors' hand hygiene. So the focus has to be on getting the doctors to wash their hands before they go and visit individual patients.

There is nothing, from my point of view, and I have looked at this closely. I am not overly concerned. I am very confident about the staff. We are very lucky to have Professor Collignon working in the ACT—one of Australia's leading experts in this area. We also do a very high and thorough report analysis and testing of each case. I think that certainly contributes to the numbers at Canberra Hospital. The advice to me is that there is no failure of the system in relation to the small number of cases where

we have seen an increase, but it is something that we need to remain vigilant on. The hospital certainly does that, and the fact that the data is available on the MyHospitals website and other reports will continue to improve performance.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, do you not consider that these issues with poor handwashing are failures in the system?

MS GALLAGHER: The system is actually to provide all of the supports to encourage hand hygiene, but you cannot force everyone to do that—every visitor to the hospital, every staff member every time they visit a different patient. The system response is to have the infrastructure in place, the training in place, to support staff and the education in place to encourage visitors to the hospital to wash their hands as well. Whenever I visit the hospital, when I walk in there is a hand hygiene area just at the entrance to the hospital. Whilst I stop to do that, I see many people walk by.

The system infrastructure is there. Actually getting individuals to follow that is a little bit harder. But yes; we are doing everything we can. When the Canberra Hospital has not performed strongly in hand hygiene audits, which are also reported on the MyHospitals website, we have focused on and put more investment into educating staff, in particular, about the importance of hand hygiene. I do not think that is failure of the system. That is actually the system supporting individuals to take part in the hand hygiene that is required in a busy public hospital.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, why has the Canberra Hospital only met handwashing targets in two out of the last seven audits conducted since 2011?

MS GALLAGHER: I understand there have been issues with the data collection around hand hygiene but we have used these audits as a way of driving improved compliance with handwashing procedures. One of the most important things to get right in a hospital is to make sure that you are encouraging good hygiene and good infection control. In a busy hospital, in a place where, in most hospitals, it has only been in recent years that the efforts have been put in—

Mr Hanson: Is there a staff culture problem there with washing hands?

MS GALLAGHER: No, I do not think there is a staff culture problem but I think, in a busy hospital, to remind staff throughout the day that they need to continually wash their hands is important. And that is the response that we have used. Where there have been failures or lack of compliance noted in audits, we have gone back to those areas and informed them of the results and put in new effort around improving hand hygiene. That is exactly what the health performance agency was after in terms of reporting statistics like this, to drive continued performance, and that is what you will see and that is what you will continue to see.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, why does the Canberra Hospital continue to get worse in this area while other hospitals improve?

MS GALLAGHER: It does not get worse. You are the first mob—the minute you can beat up Canberra Hospital you are in here salivating at the chance of doing so. It is beyond me why you take this approach. If you look at the national average, if you look at the benchmark that is set, Canberra Hospital remains below the benchmark. That is the important measure. When you look at the target for that, Canberra Hospital remains below that target but compared to peer hospitals, it has increased.

That is the issue that has been reported on the MyHospitals website. There has been a small increase against a backdrop of 72,000 cost-weighted separations at a hospital. We have seen an increase from, I think, 33 cases to 41 cases. Each one of those has been examined as to the cause, as to whether there was a systemic failure around that.

I would also say that, under Professor Collignon’s leadership, we also have one of the best testing and tracing regimes in the country. If that makes us look like we are worse than other hospitals, I will wear that in terms of actually driving performance and keeping people focused on the need to have a hospital that is continually looking at ways to improve.

Professor Collignon, as members of the opposition would know, is absolutely unrelenting in his pursuit of this matter. When he tells me that there is not a systemic problem occurring at our hospital, I believe him.

Education—teacher recruitment

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. On 24 February, the *Canberra Times* reported:

Ms Burch ... was conscious of the need to raise the professional status of teachers as well as giving parents confidence that their “sons and daughters are in good hands”.

Minister, what did you mean by those comments?

MS BURCH: I think that what Mr Doszpot has done is taken an extract. I am not quite sure whether it was the announcement of the teachers being in the top 30 per cent of literacy and numeracy, Mr Doszpot. Was it in response to My School? Either way, I am certainly on record as saying that I will do all I can at a policy level in encouraging best practice and the best teachers in front of our students in the classroom to make sure that the families in Canberra have confidence in our system—continue to have confidence in our system—and that we, for whatever measure and however we can, continue to provide the best teachers that we can in front of the sons and daughters of Canberra families.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what evidence led you to be concerned that parents might not believe that their sons and daughters are currently in good hands in ACT public schools?

MS BURCH: I would say that Canberra families have absolute confidence in the education here in the ACT. Just recently My School showed that we continue to outperform most other states. The 2013 NAPLAN showed ACT schools leading or equal leading in 20 out of 20 elements tested.

There is nothing in front of me to say that Canberra families do not have confidence in our education system. But if Mr Doszpot wants to misquote or semi-quote some language from me, I will always strive to raise the bar and do the best. Whilst we have a fabulous system here in the ACT, with great teachers in front of our kids each and every day, there is no reason for us to stop continuing to raise the bar and say “How do we continue to improve; how do we do better?” because standing still is just not an option, Mr Doszpot.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, what are the results of the government’s efforts to increase teachers’ professionalism and support student outcomes across the territory?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Gentleman for his question. There are two key elements that I can provide in response to that. One is the work that is done through the Teacher Quality Institute here. It is a relatively new organisation that is about maintaining professional standards and supporting the teaching profession in those new standards and in their registration. They do fabulous work. They do very strong work in a cross-sectoral environment. Public school teachers, teachers from the Catholic education unit, teachers from independent schools come together in their work and are supported through professional development and through the ongoing professional requirements for registration.

The other element of that is making sure that we have the best of the best teachers. I recently made an announcement that from 2015 we will apply a test for all recruits coming into ACT public schools. That is the lever I have as an employer to make sure that we continue to get the best of the best. I have asked the directorate to give me some advice about what would be a test for those teachers coming into our employment to make sure that they sit in the top 30 per cent of the national average of literacy and numeracy.

I think that is in the backdrop of a national debate that is looking at ATAR or the entry points going into university undergraduate studies. I do not have a direct lever on that. I do as an employer and I will not step back from doing all I can to continue to raise the bar on the quality of our teachers.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why is additional testing only for new teacher recruits, who make up less than 10 per cent of the teacher workforce, if you are serious about raising professional standards?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Lawder for her question. It is about getting the new teachers that are coming into our system. With respect to the current professional standards and the registration process for ACT schools, they put our current teachers in good stead, and they are certainly supported through the TQI in their professional development. But this is a significant change. We are the only state or territory, as I understand it, that is applying this test. And I will not be shy about saying why I am doing that. It is to make sure that we can make the statement to Canberra families that are coming into the public education system here in Canberra that we will accept the best and the brightest. If that means testing so that they sit in the top 30 per cent then that is what we will do.

Economy—stimulus

MS PORTER: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you advise the Assembly of the reasons for the economic stimulus package that you released earlier this month?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Ms Porter for the question. It is great to have had the opportunity to talk with the business community over the past few months about ways we can work together to support local jobs, particularly in areas where we can provide some certainty and leadership to the business community.

Last week, during the Business Council's state of the territory address, I spoke of the strength of the ACT economy but said that we were certainly exposed to the effects of the commonwealth, in particular to any proposed further reduction in commonwealth spending across the territory. We know that the commonwealth public sector's contribution to the ACT economy in terms of overall employment is approximately 31 per cent. Commonwealth estimates suggest that approximately 14,500 jobs will be cut across the Australian public service, with speculation that 6,000 of those may come from Canberra in the next few years.

The ACT budget is a small but significant player in our economy, at just nine per cent. We cannot step in to cover or compensate for a rapid or large-scale contraction from the commonwealth. That is why we have taken a very careful and strategic approach to our discussions with the business community. In particular, we have recognised the importance that the construction industry plays in the ACT economy. It contributed \$3.3 billion to gross state product in terms of total factor income in 2012-13 and 6½ per cent of ACT employment as at November 2013, with a 10-year growth of 46.6 per cent overall.

The package that we announced the week before last was developed in consultation with the Master Builders Association, the Canberra Business Council, the Property Council, the Housing Industry Association and the ACT chamber of commerce and industry, with the very strong objective behind it to support local employment,

particularly in the building and construction industry. We responded in a timely way to the local industry feedback and the need to support local jobs, to provide certainty to business with a program of upcoming works and to provide short-term stimulus for continued development across the city. The government has been pleased to be able to respond to these pressures through this approach with local businesses.

The response from the business community has been very positive. I saw a number of media releases out supporting the package that we had worked carefully on. This package did not give everything that the business community wanted, of course, as we know. And, as we know, the Liberal Party would have supported everything they asked for, because that is what they do. But we have the public interest test which we apply to these things.

Members interjecting—

MS GALLAGHER: We have the public interest test: is the community getting something back—not just freebies for the business community? Whilst it was not everything they wanted, it was certainly supported by their industry groups. It was targeted and it looks to support jobs in a particular industry where we know that the ACT can perform strongly. As much as it pains the opposition—I know; it is hard sitting on the sidelines and not actually being able to deliver anything other than criticism, which you do very well, and may you long continue with that talent—we will get on and do things, work with the industry and actually deliver. At the same time we are delivering for those industry groups, we are actually delivering for the community as well.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Chief Minister, what are the benefits of bringing forward civil work contracts and how will the release of land contribute to the government's affordable housing targets and complement the government's other land releases?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Ms Porter for the supplementary. A major driver of the ACT economy is the housing construction sector and, in order to support the market through some of the challenging times ahead, the government has asked the Land Development Agency to fast-track the development of the new suburb of Moncrieff in Gungahlin following the necessary approval.

As a first step, the LDA will shortly call for tenders for the first stage of capital works and civil construction of the infrastructure which will commence midyear. Initial feedback again from the construction industry on the approach has been very positive. The release of civil works contracts in Moncrieff will provide direct work to the civil works industry and secondary benefits among those ACT businesses that service that industry as well as providing flow-on employment benefits to ACT businesses more generally. Tender packages of between 200 and 300 dwelling sites will provide substantial work for each of the contractors, valued at between \$15 million and \$20 million each, with total direct investment in infrastructure for Moncrieff in the vicinity of \$150 million.

Moncrieff will contribute towards the government's target of 20 per cent affordable dwellings in greenfield development sites, and this will include dwelling sites located around the estate, and a requirement that multi-unit developments provide affordable housing to the market. Land rent options are also being included. Land will be released in accordance with the ACT government's indicative residential land release program which has identified 1,800 dwelling sites for Moncrieff being released over a four-year period. Construction packages have generally been packaged to allow for works to be completed within a 12 to 18-month period from when the tender is awarded, with the first block scheduled to be ready in mid to late 2015.

Once again, this element of the government's package has received strong industry support, with John Miller of the master builders saying, importantly—(*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Gentleman, a supplementary question.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, what has been the reaction to your announcement from industry, and how do the peak body groups see this assisting the ACT economy over the next two years?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Mr Gentleman for the supplementary. I have probably covered the answer to this in my previous answer. The key industry groups who have made public statements in support of the package include the master builders, the Canberra Business Council, our friends in the Property Council, as far as that goes, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Housing Industry Association.

As I said, for each of them, different components of the package affected their particular membership in different ways. But, overall, they have been very supportive of the approach, the communication and the dialogue that we have created in the lead-up to the development of this package and the announcement of it, and including a very collegiate approach across government, as it did cover a number of different directorates and a number of different portfolios. Minister Corbell, the Deputy Chief Minister and I worked closely over a number of weeks to get the balance of this package right. So it has been a good process in government, it is a good process in terms of relationships across industry, and it is one that we will continue over the next couple of years.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, what has changed since your immortal words in 2009 that we were too small to stimulate the economy? How is this stimulus package going to achieve what you say and in what time frame?

MS GALLAGHER: I do use the word "stimulus" cautiously. It is always difficult—

Mr Smyth interjecting—

MS GALLAGHER: Well, I do. I am just being honest in answering your question. We can spin it as much as you like. What we are trying to do is provide some

confidence and support to areas that are under pressure. We hope that it does stimulate some activity. But we are not standing on the roof tops saying that it is going to solve everybody's problems or protect the economy from the decisions the commonwealth might take.

We are being realistic about our role. That is why in the context of everything I say I call us a small but significant player. We hope that it does stimulate the building and construction industry. That is what it is targeted to do but I am not sitting here saying how many jobs it will create, how much it will deliver, because I think that is very, very hard to do.

So I am not over-promising, Mr Smyth. I know you would like me to just so you can stand there and whinge and hope that I fail at it, that it does not do what we want it to do. But we have set out to support employment in the territory to hopefully give some of those developments that are in that consideration stage, but which maybe have not crossed the line, the confidence that the government is listening to them, that the government is working with them. Where it adds up—that is, with the public interest test firmly at the front of our mind, the fairness test firmly at the front of our mind—we will work and we will intervene to help. That is what this package is about.

Energy—solar

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development. Minister, when did the first discussions around large-scale solar in the ACT first take place?

MR CORBELL: It would depend on which discussions Mr Wall is referring to.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: When did the concept of developing large-scale solar in the ACT first become government policy?

Ms Gallagher interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Chief Minister.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe and Chief Minister, Mr Corbell has the floor.

MR CORBELL: I will take the question on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: Questions without notice. Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, when were potential proponents of solar power facilities first identified?

Dr Bourke: Point of order, Madam Speaker. This is a new question, is it not, or is this—

MADAM SPEAKER: No, Ms Lawder did not rise. I thought there was no supplementary question. It is obviously a supplementary question to Mr Wall's question.

MR CORBELL: Could you repeat the question?

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question. Thank you, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: On what date did the government invite proponents to provide proposals for solar power facilities?

MR CORBELL: I assume that Ms Lawder is asking the question in relation to on what date did the first request for proposal go forward under the solar auction process. If that is the question that is being asked, I am very happy to provide that date to Ms Lawder. I do not have it immediately to hand. So I will take the question on notice. But that is how I will answer that question.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what will be the benefit to the ACT of large-scale solar projects?

MR CORBELL: There will be significant benefit to residents of the ACT, and not just in terms of the environment benefit, which of course is one of the key reasons why the government is pursuing the renewable energy projects that I have been outlining over the last few weeks, and indeed over the last few years. We know, for example, that the three large-scale solar projects that have been approved by the government, in terms of allocation of a feed-in tariff support mechanism, will deliver abatement equivalent to around 40,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each and every year that they operate. We know that those projects are bringing over \$100 million worth of investment into the ACT community. And we know right now that those projects are generating local jobs in our community as well. The Royalla project is engaging local contractors, it is using local suppliers and it is delivering and supporting local jobs in our community. That is a good thing for our city.

In the future, as the government continues to roll out its program of support for large-scale renewables, we will see more jobs in our city. We will see more investment in our city and in our region. The government is determined to build on that by, for the first time, endorsing what I characterise as a local content provision in our feed-in tariff mechanism, requiring bidders in the auction process to deliver local content in terms of investment in our research institutions, investment in our local economy with the use of local contractors or establishment of some of their functions here in the territory. That is good for our economy as well, and it is another part of why these projects are so important. *(Time expired.)*

Planning—section 63

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development. Minister, in your advice in 2012 regarding section 63 and late fees, it noted:

Block 19 section 63 in City applied for an extension of time on 16 March 2012. They received a notice of decision on 2 April 2012 and confirmation that no fees were payable to extend the completion of the crown lease until after 13 March 2014.

Can you provide an update on what is currently happening at the site of section 63 and what has been the hold up?

MR CORBELL: That site has obviously been sold by the territory to a prominent national development company, and my understanding is that that company has not been able to procure the tenancy needed to ensure that finance can be committed for development of the site. I am aware that that company has taken a range of steps to seek to secure tenancies and to allow that site to proceed to development.

The government continues to monitor closely the circumstances surrounding the proposed development of that site, but clearly the proponents find themselves in a situation where, without a tenancy, they are unable to secure finance to proceed to construction. The government will continue to engage with that company to ensure that they are able to proceed to construction on that site as soon as is feasibly possible.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, as per your advice provided on 9 July 2012, are the leaseholders of section 63 now liable to pay late fees or has another extension been provided?

MR CORBELL: I would need to seek the advice of the directorate in relation to the current status of any liabilities that may have been accrued by that developer, so I will take the question on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, I imagine you will have to take this question on notice, but will you please provide how much they are now paying in late fees, if they are, indeed, doing so and under what legislation or regulation a waiver would be made if not?

MR CORBELL: In relation to a waiver, I am in no position as the minister to grant a waiver. The only minister who can grant a waiver over any territory liability is the Treasurer. So I would refer you to him in relation to those matters. But in relation to a liability, I am happy to take the question on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, what guarantees have you been given regarding the development of the block?

MR CORBELL: The proponent continues to remain in contact with the government and does provide the government with updates in relation to what steps it is taking to achieve a strong commercial tenancy for the site, which is an obvious precondition for finance to be secured for development.

Economy—investment

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Minister for Economic Development. Minister, what initiatives has the government announced recently to facilitate private sector investment in the ACT?

MR BARR: I thank Dr Bourke for the question and for his ongoing interest in this matter. The government is committed to facilitating private sector investment in the territory economy. For the territory's economy to continue growing and to continue creating jobs, there is no doubt that our private sector must grow. It must continue to attract investment from interstate and overseas to help fund the services and infrastructure that our community needs. To help encourage this national and international level investment, last month I issued two new sets of policy guidelines. These guidelines will provide companies and investors with a clear pathway about doing business and investing in Canberra.

First, the guidelines for unsolicited proposals cover the delivery of public infrastructure. Last month the government issued the partnerships framework, a new policy to support both unsolicited proposals and public-private partnerships in the territory. The framework provides clear guidance to industry and seeks to create a business-friendly environment that will support economic activity. Historically, it is fair to say that the territory government has relied on more traditional procurement methods to deliver its capital projects. But we acknowledge the innovation and service delivery outcomes that can arise from involving the expertise and capital of the private sector. As such, we are actively seeking and are open to receiving interest from the private sector, including through the delivery of PPPs.

The guidelines for unsolicited proposals cover the delivery of public infrastructure under the partnerships framework. Typically, these will be larger projects, in the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars. The guidelines set out the process for the government to consider PPPs and other private sector investment in public infrastructure models. These guidelines are particularly relevant given the government's intentions to look at new ways of delivering key projects, such as the new Supreme Court, capital metro and the new convention and stadium facilities.

The second set of guidelines are the investment proposal guidelines, which cover non-public infrastructure and business opportunities. Again, the government acknowledges that there are investment and business opportunities for which the ideas, capital and know-how reside solely within the private sector. For the long-term growth of our economy, it is vital that we encourage the private sector to bring forward proposals to

government. The investment proposal guidelines cover proposals made to Invest Canberra to undertake business activities where some form of government support or engagement may be needed. The guidelines cover non-public infrastructure and business opportunities and they may relate to, for example, land sales, financial support, taxation arrangements or regulatory arrangements which are not covered by existing programs.

The guidelines contain a three-phase process which aims to provide timely decisions on the government's intent to proceed with an investment proposal. This will ensure the government's priorities and decision-making processes are respected, but that unique and innovative ideas from the private sector are encouraged, acknowledged and, where appropriate, progressed.

These two sets of guidelines send a very clear signal that the government is encouraging private sector investment in the territory.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, why is it important to encourage private sector investment in the territory economy?

MR BARR: We are a small economy. We are two per cent of the Australian economy, and Australia is only around two per cent of the world economy. There is not sufficient capital in this city or in this country to promote our longer-term economic development. Therefore, if we want our economy and our community to grow and develop, we simply have to be outwardly focused.

We cannot rely on our domestic market for our future growth. It is as straightforward as that. Further, while the commonwealth will always be a vital part of the territory economy, it is clear that we cannot rely on the commonwealth, particularly if that government is Liberal, for our economic fortunes. This is particularly the case when the commonwealth is looking at sharply reducing its spending and jobs in our economy in coming years.

Mr Smyth: And federal Labor wasn't?

MR BARR: Federal Labor grew the public sector in the territory by nearly 10,000 positions. They inherited—

Mr Smyth: They weren't planning any cuts?

MR BARR: You just look at the public sector numbers in this city. You just look at the public sector numbers in this city, Madam Speaker. They grew under the Rudd and Gillard governments. They also grew under the Howard government and one would anticipate that in time they will grow under the Abbott government.

Unfortunately, it appears that we have to go on a merry ideological crusade for the next couple of years. The Liberal Party will be determined to mug this economy and

to send this economy into recession for the ideological sake of it. That is what it is about. That is all it is about. Then I am fairly certain that in the longer term the—
(*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, what industries and sectors is the government focusing on?

MR BARR: The government is committed to the growth of the territory economy. The territory has strengths in a number of areas. Of course, before those opposite get too excited, let me say that we welcome investment in all areas of our economy. We have in place a policy framework that welcomes investment in all areas. However, we would anticipate that investment will focus on six key areas: the digital economy and e-government; health and sports science; innovation and higher education; space, satellite and spatial science; defence and security; and tourism infrastructure.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR BARR: These are sectors in which Canberra is a national, and indeed an international, leader. I will certainly share with all of the researchers at the ANU, with scientist Brian Schmidt, the opposition leader's view on the space, satellite and spatial science industries. That is some great joke that Mr Hanson makes, some great joke from the leader of the opposition.

These are sectors where our city is a national and international leader. We have had considerable success to date—particularly in the growth of our ICT sector, strong growth in services export and having leading multinationals setting up their offices in the territory—but we cannot take this for granted. That is why we seek to source new investment in our economy, particularly from national and international markets. Our economy is too small to drive our longer term economic growth. There is not enough capital in the ACT, within our borders. We need to grow. That is what we are seeking to do. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Treasurer, does the government support industry policy?

MR BARR: The government supports the right policy settings to encourage growth in the territory economy.

Education—teacher recruitment

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Minister, you recently announced that literacy and numeracy testing will be introduced for ACT public school teachers entering the system. What was the basis for taking this initiative?

MS BURCH: I thank Mrs Jones for her question. I think I made a comment on this in an earlier answer. As an employer of teachers within the public school system, I have

a direct lever that I can apply around the standards of employment. There is a national discussion going on about the entry points into undergraduate training, what are the expectations of undergraduate training. When I looked to that, one of the very clear policy levers I had was employment.

So I will not step away from saying that if I apply a test that makes a clear, explicit statement and expectation that recruits into the public system will now be in the top 30 per cent of literacy and numeracy, that statement will be made. I think it is a very positive statement. The AEU is supportive of the statement. Indeed, most of the mums and dads that I have spoken to are also very clear that this is the right step forward, to make sure that the public education system has the best teachers we can provide.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, on what empirical data did you draw to make this decision and what is the expected outcome for the policy?

MS BURCH: Again, as part of that discussion and from a number of research papers, there is an expectation in the community that teachers sit in the top 30 per cent of literacy and numeracy. It goes to the attitude that that is the expectation. If you want to be able to teach the best, you need to have that best benchmark. As part of the implementation of this, certainly the directorate is working with groups. AITSL and ACER are looking at that. They are working through a test. It is far easier to look to an existing one. We will pilot that in the next month or so. There will be a pilot run of that. If all goes to plan and that test stands up to the market, and it is able to produce for us a very clear test that has rigour about it for the top 30 per cent, we will apply that for 2015.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, I understand that you are considering requiring current teachers to undertake these tests. Would you take these tests yourself as well?

MS BURCH: Should I be a teacher and should I be looking for employment with the ACT public education system I would have no hesitation in sitting the test.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, what feedback have you received from the community since the announcement?

MS BURCH: I have had very clear, positive feedback from a number in the community and an interest about how we can bring this on as quickly as we can. I believe that when Glen Fowler, who was the secretary of the AEU here in the ACT, was talking to Philip Clarke on 666, his comment was: "Where we support the ACT government here in moving in this direction is that we don't have a deficit here in the ACT in terms of teacher quality. This is about enhancing the professional status. Now the ACT public school teachers, when this goes ahead, will be the best qualified in the country. They will be the best teachers in the country. That is the ambition." So there

is high support for us as a leader in the country to say, “Our students in the public education system rightly deserve the best of the best.” This test will make sure that we recruit them.

Energy—wind

MS BERRY: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development. Minister, you made an announcement last week about an auction for wind generation. Could you tell the Assembly more about this auction?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Berry for the question. Yes, last week I confirmed that the government would be proceeding with the development of its first large-scale reverse auction using the feed-in tariff mechanism established under the large-scale renewable energy act to support the development of wind energy for the ACT to help us achieve our greenhouse gas abatement mechanism.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR CORBELL: I welcome the endorsement of Mr Coe of this policy announcement today because what this policy announcement does is to facilitate significant investment in renewable energy generation in our region. The government proposes to proceed with an auction for 200 megawatts of renewable energy generation contingent on the passage of the amendments to the bill that are currently before the Assembly this week.

That amendment and that auction will see the development of at least two wind generation projects either in the Australian capital region or elsewhere capable of delivering 200 megawatts of renewable energy generation, saving half a million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each and every year that they operate and delivering investment into the renewable energy sector in our region of over \$100 million. So these are really important projects for the city.

Last week I attended a conference convened by the regional development boards of the ACT and the surrounding region. I was joined by the NSW Liberal governments’ Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy. I welcomed his endorsement on behalf of the O’Farrell government of the bold and innovative policy being implemented by this government. Parliamentary Secretary Stokes said that this is all about jobs and investment in the region. It is a welcome endorsement from senior levels within the NSW government of the government’s policy.

The auction will free up development opportunity for renewable energy generation that is currently stalled due to lack of certainty associated with the renewable energy target. This policy will see the deployment of a number of significant wind farm projects in our region. We know that there are close to 1,000 megawatts of wind farm generation projects in the Australian capital region that are in various stages of planning and approval but not able to proceed to construction because of a lack of certainty associated with finance.

The auction process we are setting out will facilitate some of those projects to proceed to development. We will achieve the abatement we need to achieve. We will see jobs and investment in our city and in our region, and we will help to make our city and our region a centre for renewable energy excellence.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, does this increase in wind-generated capacity mean that the government is switching its renewable focus away from solar?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Berry for her supplementary. Wind and solar will continue to perform and play important roles in the overall renewable energy mix. The facts are that wind, of course, is currently the lowest cost form of renewable energy generation available in the commercially deployed market, and we are keen to take advantage of a moment in time when, because of the significant lack of certainty caused by federal government reviews of the renewable energy target, we are in a position to potentially get extremely competitive bids through the auction process for large-scale wind. But we will also continue with our support for large-scale solar projects.

As I mentioned in some of my earlier answers today, obviously we see the Royalla project very much under full construction now. The Uriarra and Mugga Lane projects are subject to development assessment processes currently. Further, the government announced in the last couple of weeks support for up to 50 megawatts of next generation solar as we explore opportunities to leverage investment in our research institutions like the ANU and the CSIRO who are undertaking world-leading research in areas such as solar thermal and solar storage technologies. We see investment in a demonstration of next generation solar facility and partnerships with our research institutions.

The government also will be supporting a community solar ownership model through up to one megawatt of support for that project that will give those people who live in apartments or who are renters the opportunity to invest in renewable energy generation through a community-owned solar scheme.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, what are the other initiatives in the pipeline regarding the ACT's renewable energy targets?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Gentleman for his supplementary. The other important element of our 90 per cent renewables objective which I have been outlining over the last couple of weeks is our support for the waste to energy sector. Obviously the ACT currently has one of the best recycling rates of any state or territory in the country, but we want to lift that higher still. Resource recovery, through waste to energy generation, is one way that will help us with that goal. That is why the government has announced up to 23 megawatts of feed-in tariff support for a waste to energy facility which will convert wastes that are currently simply being buried in landfill

into energy generation, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with landfill emission and at the same time improving our resource recovery rate.

Waste to energy technologies are commonplace in Europe and in the United States, but not particularly common in Australia. The technology is proven and demonstrated in other places around the world, and the government is keen to facilitate that type of investment in these types of technologies here in the ACT. The government will proceed with an expression of interest process to the market in 2015 which will help inform our final decision-making on how we will structure an auction to support waste to energy projects. It is just another part of the government's comprehensive program to make the shift to a more renewable future, to reduce the amount of waste that is going to landfill, to reduce the carbon intensity of the city's electricity emissions, to generate investment and excellence in the renewable energy industry in our city, and create jobs and a more sustainable Canberra for the future.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why, given the economic benefits of wind farms you touted, is the ACT government pursuing more solar farms?

MR CORBELL: Each has economic benefits. It is not an exclusive either-or proposition. Both technologies have the capacity to make significant contributions to our abatement. As I said in my earlier answer, and I reiterate it, the fact is—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MR CORBELL: That is not what I was asked.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MR CORBELL: That is not what I was asked, Mr Coe. You should remind Ms Lawder about how she needs to structure her questions.

There are economic opportunities associated with both technologies. Let us look at the ANU. The ANU is a world leader in solar thermal and solar storage—and certain aspects of PV development. It is a world leader. We want to see companies investing in these technologies at scale—commercially deployed at scale here in the ACT. As part of our local employment investment framework, which will be a criterion used for future auctions for solar and for wind, we will expect to see how proponents demonstrate that they will either support investment in research in our institutions—partly with our institutions like the ANU or the CSIRO—or invest in the local economy in a sustained way in other ways.

Let me give you an example. Right now, one of our proponents for one of the approved feed-in tariff allocations at Mugga Lane, the Chinese company Zhenfa, is making financial commitments to support research in the ANU right now. That is a direct result of their coming to Canberra because of the government's reverse auction process. It is a great example of how new investment can come into our city, support our research institutions—*(Time expired.)*

University of Canberra—student accommodation

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Higher Education. Minister, it was recently reported that the University of Canberra's release of approximately 900 new beds has allegedly resulted in the University of Canberra Student Association no longer being able to run Arscott House, which caters for over 200 UC residents. Minister, what role did the government have in UC's development of the new 900-bed housing facility, and were you aware of the potential impact on the management of Arscott House?

MS GALLAGHER: The government has worked closely with the University of Canberra over a number of years to support an expansion in the amount of student accommodation available on the University of Canberra site and also in areas adjoining the University of Canberra site, and that is something we are very proud of. We think it is a really good thing for the university to be able to accommodate more of their students in affordable accommodation close to the place where they learn and, for many of them, where they work. I have certainly heard from some students about the pressure that this has placed around the management of Arscott House, but the government has no direct role there. We have certainly supported the expansion, and we will continue to work with the university through the development of the university precinct and the plans they have going forward a number of years, including any need for further student accommodation.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, will student accommodation costs increase as a result of the changes at Arscott House? If so, by how much?

MS GALLAGHER: That is probably a question that I would have to take advice from the University of Canberra on. I have not had any advice from the University of Canberra that that would be the case, but I would need to check with them and come back to the Assembly.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, could you please define "affordability" in relation to accommodation for students?

MS GALLAGHER: It is difficult. The Assembly has touched on this before under the national rental affordability scheme—NRAS. That has been very successful partnership between governments and other housing providers, including universities—

Mr Coe: That was rolled out well, wasn't it—NRAS?

MS GALLAGHER: It has actually been rolled out here incredibly well. We have got much more than our per capita allocation here because it has gone so well in the ACT. I think that shows what can be achieved when governments do work with housing providers to get a good outcome.

I understand that what is affordable for one student is not affordable for another. That is why we have to make sure that there are a range of housing responses available right along the spectrum. I think that increasing the numbers of accommodation options that are directly provided by the university no doubt assists.

In fact, some of the recent rental data indicators I have seen have been showing that our targeted response to housing affordability in the territory is working and we are seeing downward pressure on the price of rents across the territory. That, I am sure, Mr Smyth, is something that you support.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, what is the current vacancy rate for on-campus accommodation at UC?

MS GALLAGHER: I would have to take that on notice from the university. I do not have that information, other than that I know there was a lot of demand for accommodation at the university, and they are promoting it to their students. In fact they are providing an accommodation guarantee for entry students coming into the university. That would indicate to me that there is a level of supply there for particular accommodation types, and I think it depends on the different types of accommodation available. Obviously, the new accommodation that was recently opened was in very high demand, but that has meant that some of their older accommodation is not as attractive for some students as it has been in the past. I will certainly see if the university can provide me with that information, but you could also pick up the phone and ask the university. They are very happy—

Mr Smyth: I just wanted to know if you knew.

MS GALLAGHER: I talk to the University of Canberra all the time, and I am sure Professor Stephen Parker, even though you are in the opposition, will be very happy to give you some of that information. But if you would like me to be the go-between, the middle person, the middle woman, I am very happy to do that.

Mr Smyth: But if you don't know, it's okay.

MS GALLAGHER: Mr Smyth, I can hear your little, nasty jibes. I do not have the vacancy rate for University of Canberra accommodation in my head, but I am very happy to be the conduit and provide that information to you.

Community sector—former Urambi school site

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for TAMS. Minister, what is the government's intended use of the former Urambi school site in Kambah?

Mr Barr: It is mine.

Mr Rattenbury: Do you want to take it?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Barr.

MR BARR: The land has transferred to within the Economic Development Directorate. The government is going to clear the site and dispose of it for aged care.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Treasurer, is the government aware of any community groups that are interested in occupying all or part of the site?

MR BARR: The site is not available for occupation by community groups. It will be cleared and made available for aged care. There is alternative community accommodation available in various locations around the city.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, once the redevelopment has been undertaken, will there be a retention of any part of that site, such as the former preschool area, for use by community groups?

MR BARR: I do not believe so. I understand that the buildings are not of a quality to be retained. There will be, of course, as part of a redevelopment, a range of opportunities for community facilities. But I would remind the member that there is a \$55 million world-class facility with significant community space available about 200 metres down the road from the existing site.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what is the government's time line for redevelopment of the site?

MR BARR: As soon as possible. I understand demolition is aimed for in this calendar year.

Education—gifted and talented policy

MR GENTLEMAN: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Minister, I refer you to the recent release of the new gifted and talented policy for ACT public schools. Can you inform the Assembly of the key points of this policy and how it will lift the bar for the quality of gifted and talented education in the ACT?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Gentleman for his interest. The new gifted and talented policy does strengthen the government's commitment to meet the needs of these students in public schools and forms part of our commitment to the national education reform agenda. The policy aims to help the identification and development of these students to ensure that they reach their full potential and that high-performing students will have an education tailored to their individual needs.

According to current research, gifted and talented students may be as much as 10 per cent of our student population. In supporting these children, it is crucial that we recognise the role that schools have in determining and identifying how the needs of gifted and talented students are met in their school.

The new policy provides consistent and practical advice on the roles and responsibilities of school principals and teachers in identification and appropriate educational provisions and strategies to meet the needs of all gifted and talented students. The gifted and talented student policy 2014 reflects the government's continued interest in pursuing the very best provisions to ensure the very best for our gifted and talented students and placing parents and children at the centre of our schools and education system.

Engaging families in a genuine partnership with their schools is paramount so that families see their schools as the hub of their local community. Every public school will have a designated first point of contact for gifted and talented students and their families. Teachers will have ongoing access to teacher scholarships, revised classroom practice, online resources and external expert partnerships.

As a means of maintaining best practice, the ACT government will engage an independent expert to provide ongoing advice to schools on professional learning and best practices in meeting the needs of gifted and talented education. In conjunction with the new policy, the Education and Training Directorate is also in the process of developing clear and consistent transparent advice to parents and carers through a series of fact sheets. They are working very closely with the gifted and talented parent groups and P&Cs in the development of those fact sheets.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, what consultation did you carry out with the community and what expert views did you seek in developing this policy?

MS BURCH: The review commenced in August of last year and is part of the commitment to the national education reform agenda in improving outcomes for all students. Dr Catherine Wormald from the University of Wollongong was engaged as an expert consultant in developing the draft policy. Dr Wormald has extensive qualifications in the field, including a PhD in gifted education, a master's of education and a postgraduate certificate in gifted education. She has worked with the selective schools unit in New South Wales, done gifted education consultancies for the New South Wales department of education and assisted with the development of New South Wales department of education gifted and talented policy and supporting resources. Dr Wormald was a member of the preconsultation working group, which also comprised representatives from parent organisations such as the Gifted and Talented Support Group, the council of ACT P&C associations and a range of schools.

Community consultation through the ACT government time to talk website was open for six weeks from October to November and a total of 74 submissions providing feedback were received by the directorate. The draft policy was provided to all school

staff for feedback through the weekly schools bulletin. Three public forums where parents and community members were able to come and discuss the policy were held. These forums included after-hours sessions to maximise participation. Several focus groups were conducted in schools to consult with students and gather and incorporate their views about gifted and talented education issues within the policy development process.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, why is it important that schools tailor programs to meet individual needs of students?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Porter for her interest. It is important that gifted and talented students are recognised as having different learning needs from those of their age peers. Therefore they need special education planning to support them in developing their potential. There are three fundamental differences which stand out in the characteristics of gifted students—their capacity to learn at faster rates, their capacity to find, solve and act on problems more readily, and their capacity to manipulate abstract ideas and to make connections.

The main purpose of identifying gifted and talented students is that schools can use appropriate educational provisions and strategies to move them along in their learning. While gifted students can have an extraordinary level of potential and ability, their high aptitude for learning can easily be wasted if they are not fostered properly. Gifted students have learning needs that require a special education program. Characteristics such as curiosity and the ability to manipulate abstract ideas all point to the need for a responsive school environment. Extensive research has found that between 18 and 25 per cent of gifted and talented students often drop out of school, and that gifted students need teachers who will challenge them. The curriculum for gifted students needs to be fast paced and it needs to allow time for in-depth exploration, manipulation of ideas and questions requiring higher order thinking. Subject or whole-grade acceleration should also be considered.

The new policy allows for each school community to determine how the needs of gifted and talented students will be addressed within their schools. It does not advocate a single approach; rather, it provides flexibility to ensure that schools reach decisions that meet the needs of their students in a way that incorporates parents and students in those decision-making processes.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, how will the network of gifted and talented policy officers and the expanded professional development deliver the key points of this policy?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Berry for her question. A centrepiece of the initiative is the delivery of high-quality professional learning for gifted and talented liaison officers identified in each school. The liaison officer is a designated, school-based position that provides liaison between the Education and Training Directorate and the schools. The role of the liaison officer is to inform schools on up-to-date gifted and talented

trends and practices to assist schools in making decisions about how best to provide gifted and talented programs. Additionally, school leaders and teachers working in the early childhood primary and secondary college setting will be provided with targeted professional learning to address the differing needs of students at different stages of schooling.

Policy implementation by teachers and liaison officers will be assisted through adjustments to classroom practice to individualised learning for gifted and talented students, ongoing access to teacher scholarships for postgraduate studies, access for every teacher in every school to online professional learning resources endorsed by the University of New South Wales and the creation of critical partnerships with external experts. An independent expert will be engaged to provide ongoing advice to schools on professional learning and the best practices in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. The gifted and talented education professional development package for teachers also provides guidance for teachers and liaison officers on implementing the key areas of this policy.

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

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Legislative Assembly Commissioner for Standards, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 31 October 2013—Appointment 2014, dated 6 March 2014

Standing order 191—Amendments to:

Animal Welfare (Factory Farming) Amendment Bill 2013, dated 5 March 2014.

Construction and Energy Efficiency Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 (No. 2), dated 5 March 2014.

Courts Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, dated 5 March 2014.

Supplementary answer to question without notice Health Directorate—annual report

MS GALLAGHER: On 27 February 2014 Mr Coe asked me a question around presentations to the walk-in centre. The question was:

... it seems that one in 10 were not treated or referred on. Is that the right figure?

I took that question on notice. The answer is that referrals from the walk-in centre go to a number of different places, including GPs, the Canberra Hospital emergency department, medical imaging and CALMS. There are also a number of other services that the WIC refers to that make up only a very small portion of the presentations subsequently redirected. A further 1,789 presentations were assessed and provided with an interim care plan by the WIC nursing staff on how to manage the illness and provided with a referral to their GP if symptoms did not improve over a few days.

At the end of the day, 339 presentations did not wait to be seen by a nurse in 2012-13, equating to 1.8 per 100 presentations that were not treated or referred on and not the one in 10 figure Mr Coe claimed.

Papers

Ms Burch presented the following papers:

Education Act—

Pursuant to section 66A—Government Schools Education Council—Budget Submission 2014-2015.

Pursuant to section 118A—Non-government Schools Education Council—Budget Submission 2014-2015.

Mr Corbell presented the following papers:

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission Act—Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (Price Direction for the Supply of Electricity to Certain Small Customers) Terms of Reference Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-10 (LR, 17 February 2014).

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission Act 1997 and the Legislation Act—Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (Price Direction for the Supply of Electricity to Franchise Customers) Terms of Reference Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-11 (LR, 17 February 2014).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act 2009 and Financial Management Act—

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-12 (LR, 18 February 2014).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-13 (LR, 18 February 2014).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-14 (LR, 18 February 2014).

Magistrates Court Act—Magistrates Court (Animal Welfare Infringement Notices) Regulation 2014—Subordinate Law SL2014-3 (LR, 6 March 2014).

Public Place Names Act—

Public Place Names (Canberra Central and Majura Districts) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-19 (LR, 27 February 2014).

Public Place Names (Chisholm) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-8 (LR, 20 February 2014).

Public Place Names (Molonglo Valley District) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-20 (LR, 6 March 2014).

Public Place Names (Weetangera) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-9 (LR, 20 February 2014).

Public Trustee Act—Public Trustee (Investment Board) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-16 (LR, 20 February 2014).

Race and Sports Bookmaking Act—Race and Sports Bookmaking (Sports Bookmaking Venues) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-15 (LR, 20 February 2014).

Road Transport (General) Act—Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-18 (LR, 24 February 2014).

Taxation Administration Act—Taxation Administration (Amounts payable—Utilities (Network Facilities Tax)) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-17 (LR, 27 February 2014).

Economy—employment

Discussion of matter of public importance

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Lawder): Madam Speaker has received letters from Ms Berry, Dr Bourke, Mr Coe, Mr Dospot, Mr Gentleman, Ms Lawder, Ms Porter, Mr Smyth, and Mr Wall 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 Dr Bourke be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of building momentum in the ACT economy and supporting local jobs.

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (3.47): I welcome the opportunity to update the Assembly on the work the government has been doing in supporting local jobs at a time of economic uncertainty. Defending jobs is a matter of economic and social importance. Being in work is one of the best ways for a person or household to participate fully in our society. This government is proactive in its application of policies and responsible in its budgeting to support jobs. The ACT government's long-term commitments to economic reform and job creation remain a key priority. This government will steer the territory to see the emergence of a stronger, more diverse economy.

The ACT government facilitates employment as a driver of economic growth. This government's fiscal and policy responsiveness and effectiveness in growing the economy and jobs is witnessed by the economic performance of the territory over its term in office, a period that includes the global financial crisis and its impact.

Since the March quarter 2002 to the December quarter 2013 the ACT economy has grown by 65.5 per cent as measured by state final demand in seasonally adjusted terms. This is an annual average growth rate of 4.15 per cent. Over the same period, employment has grown by 23.8 per cent.

The ACT's economic fundamentals remain sound and we continue to perform relatively well compared to most other non-mining states. These economic conditions are, however, challenged due to the federal government's ongoing fiscal restraint measures. The federal government is reducing the number of Australian public servants. The review of commonwealth government spending by the National Commission of Audit places further uncertainty on the territory's economic future. Whether it is through tight commonwealth departmental budgets, hiring freezes or natural attrition, these actions have the potential to limit employment growth in the ACT. A decline in the APS will have a direct impact on overall economic activity in the ACT.

While the outlook has weakened slightly, there are some positive signs. The latest ABS data indicated that annual state final demand increased by 0.8 per cent over the 2013 calendar year. This compares to an increase of 0.9 per cent in domestic final demand, which is the national equivalent. Household spending and household demand have been supported by strong population growth and record low interest rates, which will support our economy in the short term. In the long term, our strong economic fundamentals and diversifying private sector will help ensure our economy continues to grow.

The ACT government is committed to supporting sustained growth and development of the ACT economy. We will work with the region, businesses, institutions and the wider community to increase economic opportunity and activity. Our business development strategy—growth diversification and jobs—is helping the private sector to create jobs by providing targeted support, programs and funding to local businesses.

The 2012-13 budget included \$20 million for innovative programs to further boost our private sector. Initiatives include supporting early-stage business innovation, building new funding for clean technology and sustainability oriented companies, and creating a program to act as a single portal for trade development activities. In addition, we are making it easier for businesses to move through the processes to set up or expand their operations here.

Prudent financial management and a commitment to reform as well as investment in our people and technology will create the right conditions to support business and consumer confidence in the local economy and therefore create jobs.

The ACT government is facilitating jobs growth in the territory by: supporting a connected, technology-savvy city that takes advantage of our strong ICT skills; strengthening links with the surrounding region to drive better services, economic growth and opportunity; building on the ground-breaking tax reforms and achieving a sustainable financial future for the ACT; and supporting the development of emerging enterprises, entrepreneurs and sectors.

Such initiatives have allowed the ACT labour market to compare favourably to most other jurisdictions, with the ACT recording the lowest trend unemployment rate of 3.4 per cent and the second highest trend participation rate of 71.4 per cent in February 2014. The ACT's unemployment rate remained well below the national average of six per cent in February 2014.

This government has undertaken a reform of the ACT tax system, making it fairer, simpler and more efficient. This government has the most ambitious and far-sighted reform agenda in Australia. A nine per cent improvement in the efficiency of our tax base is expected by 2016-17—in other words, a yield of \$57 million for our economy which is no longer absorbed by administration and compliance.

Sales activity in the commercial sector has increased following our decision to drop commercial conveyance duty to 5.5 per cent for properties valued at \$1.65 million or greater, now among the lowest rates in the country. The reduction of payroll tax is also delivering important support for small business, both to individual businesses and to the government's drive for diversification.

In addition to the considerable investment in major projects under the new city plan that was announced by the Chief Minister last week along with other projects such as the north Canberra public hospital, the government remains committed to job creation through support for front-line services. As part of this, major capital works are underway in the upgrade and building of new emergency services facilities across the ACT in order to meet the needs and expectations of the ACT community for at least the next 20 years. It will ensure that our emergency services will continue to have the capacity to protect life, property and the environment as the city grows.

Additionally, the government has provided funding of approximately \$17 million over two years for the construction of a new fire and rescue station at south Tuggeranong. As part of improving access to justice to the ACT community, the government is delivering new court facilities through a public-private partnership announced in December 2013. It will involve the protection and refurbishment of the existing Supreme Court building and the construction of a link building to the existing Magistrates Court building. The project will span three to four years and will engage with local industry providing jobs during the construction phase. The completed facility will also provide ongoing jobs in the management and maintenance

This government is listening to the needs of businesses that support jobs in our community. The red tape reduction panel is identifying regulations that impose unnecessary burdens, costs or disadvantages on business activity in the ACT. The panel comprises representatives of the Canberra Business Council, the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Council of Small Business of Australia and ClubsACT.

A number of red tape reduction reforms are currently in place and are providing a direct benefit to both business and the community. Changes to the length of licence terms with amendments to various licences and registrations in the Attorney-General's portfolio are being progressed under the justice and community safety

legislation. More recently, the first bill on red tape reduction to benefit motor vehicle repairers, employment agents, second-hand dealers, travel agents and car market operators was passed and is already saving those industries time and effort through not having to apply for annual licence or registration renewals.

A clear demonstration of this government's ongoing commitment to supporting local jobs and listening to business needs was the Chief Minister's recent announcement of an economic stimulus package to support the building and construction sector. This package is a direct response to the advocacy of our local industry groups for change around the lease variation charge and extension-of-time fees. We anticipate that the stimulus measures will see up to \$500 million in flow-through effects across the territory's economy.

The package also offers a boost for housing affordability through the accelerated development in Moncrieff. We want to see industry continuing to innovate in the construction of quality affordable homes. The government's land release program now includes a pipeline of more than \$500 million in landscape and civil works across greenfield and infill estates in the ACT.

The government are committed to supporting local jobs. We are committed to supporting businesses so that they can be successful, and wherever we can we will make it as easy as possible to interact with government. We are committed to measures that will stimulate activity, build momentum in the ACT economy and provide considerable economic and employment benefits throughout the ACT.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Health and Minister for Higher Education) (4.00): Dr Bourke's MPI goes to the highest priorities of the government, particularly as we move towards the federal and ACT budgets. As I said in concluding my state of the territory address last Thursday, if our centenary year was a test of community spirit and culture, this year will be a test of economic mettle.

If we are to meet this challenge, maintaining confidence and momentum in our economy are critical. It would be very easy to join the voices of doom and gloom and the associated speculation that comes with that. But instead I think we should all focus on our strengths and the opportunities that come within the next couple of years.

The facts show that while we need to move ahead with caution, the fundamentals of our economy remain strong and the long-term vision and reform program of the government will continue to drive new opportunities over the next few years. We know that our economy has been holding up very well despite two years since the federal spending contraction began in earnest.

We know that our unemployment rate has fallen to 3.4 per cent. This occurred on the day of my address to the Business Council. It is by far the lowest in the country and it is helping other economic vitals stay strong as well. You only have to pick up the *Canberra Times* on a daily basis to read stories about job cuts and doom and gloom coming around the corner. But I think it is important to acknowledge that the economy has held up stronger than most would have expected and that the job for the

ACT government, and probably the ACT Assembly more broadly, is to maintain levels of confidence and cohesiveness across the community, particularly when the times get more challenging as we expect they will throughout the course of this year.

We have been looking at ways to be strategic with our own investment and the reform process and packages we have underway. If you look at some of our big project items, you will see that some city building projects like capital metro are much more than just smart transport or a public transport system for Canberra. We know of the experience in other areas where the right integrated public transport has been put in place.

When you are putting in high quality public infrastructure, it drives other areas of the economy and investment. It can create huge opportunities for cities where it is done well. We acknowledged at the beginning of this project the importance of getting good leadership in early, putting the investment in early to make sure that we are resourcing it appropriately, to make sure we can return to the community the uplift and the potential that can come from such a transformational project.

It is not just about 12 kilometres of track from Gungahlin into the city; it is changing the way our public transport system operates. It is changing the way the city moves and it is providing a spine and a framework for a transformation of the corridors along which that light rail operates. There is a huge amount of work underway now by Capital Metro Agency, led by Minister Corbell, to make sure that this project delivers what we expect it will and that it will be very, very positive for the ACT community.

In similar vein, we have some of the other projects we are working on. We are really pushing forward with the digital Canberra program. It is often hard for the community to see changes to IT systems because a lot of the first changes that are put in place across government and businesses are the back-end support systems that make doing our jobs easier but that are less obvious to the community.

That is why I was very keen to talk about the digital Canberra action plan, which I have worked carefully with the local technology and innovation sector to prioritise. There are always a lot of projects that are out there to be supported but we have found a small amount of money—\$4.4 million—which will help to really kick start not just our own processes in the public sector but to look at how we provide a very visual demonstration to the community that we are changing as a city.

We are really moving into our second century and a part of that is becoming a truly digital city. There is absolutely no reason why it cannot work in Canberra. We have the highest levels of connectivity anywhere in the country. People are connected. People go to the internet to get their information. I think that young people are much more able to navigate through technology than perhaps people of my generation, and they are demanding that.

They are demanding it in schools; they are demanding it in their private lives in the way they socialise. That is where things like the free wi-fi that will start in Canberra in Civic from the second half of this year are such important projects. We know that they are great for people on low incomes in terms of sharing the benefits that come

from the technology economy—being able to actually access things without an expensive download plan. This will create much fairer access to technology than currently exists in the ACT. We have pockets—if you go to the library you can connect into the free internet there. But this is looking at a much bigger picture than that.

In the same way, we are trying to change the Civic heart, the city plan that we released last week. Again, we are making some very firm statements around what land in the city should be designated for what particular purpose, being clear about that, ending some of those discussions that have happened over a number of years and also making a very firm commitment that we want to build up the city's heart, that people look to Civic as the centre of Canberra.

Our diverse town centre arrangements mean that a lot of activity happens in other parts of the ACT, but we know Civic and the lake are our strengths. We should be focusing on how that develops and changes over time. That is where projects like city to the lake come in and the importance of them. You saw some announcements yesterday from the Treasurer about some continued early investment in the design work that is to support the city to the lake project.

But then I look more broadly at the University of Canberra public hospital where we look to leverage off the fact that we have to make these investments and how can we do it in a way that supports the growth of other organisations that are important to our economy. Certainly, the higher education sector is. This is where that project can support the continued diversification and growth of the University of Canberra. I know from when I went to China and visited universities that had university hospitals how attractive they are for students to go and study there. So we are looking at those key projects and how we can support them.

These are investments we were going to make, but we are making them with a view to who we can partner with, how we can attract external investment, what changes it will drive in terms of economic growth across the territory and how it will improve community and public benefit to those projects? On every one of them there is a very clear public benefit test.

I am much more optimistic perhaps than some in the city about what the next two years are going to be like. I think they will be tough. There is no doubt about that. But people will look to the ACT government and the ACT Assembly to show leadership at a time when the commonwealth, the big player in town, is reducing its effort. They will look to us for leadership, but I believe that with some of those really big city building projects, with our push to be digital by default, with our partnerships with areas like the university, with some of the work we are doing around Invest Canberra—all of that—we have done the hard work in the lead-up to this.

We have not been sitting around waiting. Now the timing is right to roll out those projects, to speak with confidence and optimism about the city's future and continue to work with important stakeholders across Canberra—industry groups, unions, communities organisations—to be able to respond where we need to and, if we can, to support the city whilst the commonwealth reduces its effort.

Canberra is a very different place from what it was in 1996. I feel very optimistic about the next couple of years, but it is going to take hard work. It is going to take a lot of compromise, discussion and consultation to get the plans that we have in place supported by the Canberra community. I feel very confident that we will be able to do that.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (4.09): It is an important subject. The subject—the importance of building momentum in the ACT economy and supporting local jobs—is a curious thing, because you only have to build momentum after you have allowed it to slow or it has stalled, and that is the problem. This government, through their policies, have stalled the economy. They have done it through taxation, they have done it through red tape, they have done it through their inability to deliver on capital works projects and they have done it through their inability to deliver on their plans. This is a government of failure in regard to the business community of the ACT.

If you think of us as the city-state, we are simply a city. For a government to be effective, they must be city builders. They must build the economy; they must build the city as our home. And this government have failed.

You only have to hear Ms Gallagher say, “Of course, we’ve got the city plan.” Yes, you do have the city plan, and it has come a decade after the last city plan: *City Hill—a concept for the future*. Members, I am sure, will remember Mr Corbell’s attempt in 2005 to have the City Hill concept for the future, and his successful delivery of that plan! In the plan there are about 16 key features, and it would be interesting to run through them and see how much Mr Corbell was able to deliver.

It is better if we go back a little bit to the introduction, and see what the purpose of this plan was. The purpose of this plan was to make City Hill the feature. The context section of the document states:

Both the ACT and Australian Governments have made considerable planning investment in the central area. Canberra Central will turn this investment into action, prioritising and managing the efforts of all the key government, industry and community stakeholders. Canberra Central will develop the theme identified in *The Canberra Plan*—to create City as ‘a dynamic heart’. The conceptual framework presented here has the potential for City Hill to be the perfect venue for celebrating the Centenary of the naming of Canberra.

There you go—the perfect venue! It did not participate a whole lot in the centenary year. Only last week we had the first event for it in the centenary year, and that was to close it on City Hill.

So what has happened? Can we have any faith in this government and their ability to deliver? Let us look at what Mr Corbell promised. A new city gateway? I do not think that happened. Northbourne Avenue realignment? I do not think that has happened. A city heritage precinct? I do not think that a great deal has happened there. Hotel development with public car parking at the intersection of London Circuit and Northbourne Avenue? That has not happened.

With respect to the law precinct, of course, that was always there; it has not changed a great deal. The east-west city pathway? I do not think that exists. ACT Supreme Court? I assume he means a new Supreme Court, because the existing Supreme Court was there when the plan was released—but, of course, we do not have a new Supreme Court. Edinburgh Avenue connection? It has not happened. Commercial and residential developments with car parking underneath, inside London Circuit? It has not happened. City to West Basin connection? It has not happened. City exposition? It has not happened. Meeting place? It did not happen. City Hill as city symbol? It always was and it is, and it is still there. ACT government offices? It did not happen. Constitution Avenue connection? It did not happen. Public forum with public car park under? It did not happen. ACT Legislative Assembly? I am assuming it is a new building because it is shown in a different location. It has not happened. City lake pathway? It has not particularly happened. Commercial and residential developments in the area marked? It has not happened.

That is the problem; it does not happen under this government. This is a government of gloss, not of delivery. We have seen damning reports from the Auditor-General, particularly on Mr Corbell's delivery of capital works. I do not even have to run through the litany. I think we all know about the faux opening of the prison and, of course, of the "before time and under budget" opening of the Gungahlin Drive extension, long after it was due. I do not think anybody was fooled. But that is the government that we deal with.

The problem is that the economy is slowing. The best solution would have been not to let the economy slow. Even though the government has now released its stimulus package, I note that the Chief Minister was vacillating a bit in question time. "Would it stimulate?" "No, I'm being cautious." "Have you set any targets?" "No, we don't want to do that because we don't want to be disappointed when nothing happens." We all remember her statement—I think it was in 2009—when she said we were too small to stimulate. Today she said that she hopes it does stimulate, "But I can't tell you how many jobs it will create."

Surely, you did some work before you released this document to know what its impact would be. Surely, there could be at least a broad exposition of what the effects will be and what effect it will have and, indeed, in what time frame. If the economy has started to slow—and I think we all acknowledge that it has, certainly under the fear of the Gillard-Rudd cuts, which we know the head of the finance department put at 14,000, courtesy of the former federal Labor government, despite the protestations of those opposite—the work needed to have started before now.

That is why, for instance, in the lead-up to the 2012 election we said we would review the lease variation charge. What is the government doing? It is going to wind back the lease variation charge. You have to ask the question: why would they wind back what Mr Barr said was the perfect tax? It had no drag. It had no deadweight drag. It was not going to affect the price of a block you might want to sell or the value of the house that you might want to purchase, and it was going to reap this huge dividend for the government; yet in every quarter except for the first, where you had the follow-through from the previous change of use charge, this tax has not delivered.

This package that the government has dropped clearly says that Mr Barr got it wrong. The then Treasurer, Katy Gallagher, got it wrong, and Mr Barr has got it wrong. This is not the perfect tax. It does have an effect. It has hindered development. It has slowed the economy. It has hurt the building industry. It has stopped job creation. And it has stopped the building of infrastructure, or slowed down the building of infrastructure and other projects, that would have helped the economy.

Of course, we hear, “We’re building the Majura parkway.” When I had the last briefing on the Majura parkway as minister, it was going to cost \$145 million and it was to follow on from our successful roads program, which this government took a lot longer to deliver and which cost a lot more money. Here we are, more than a decade after that, and it is costing more than double that amount. And that is the problem with this government. They promise, and they cannot deliver. Now we know that, instead of stimulating the economy, there is no certainty with this stimulus package, according to the Chief Minister—she “hopes” that it does stimulate. What is the point of that?

The other thing is that, having taken away the lease variation charge and watered down the extension of time on commence and complete fees, it will actually take the business community time to crank up those projects. They have been asking for these charges to be removed for years. And it is only at a minute to midnight, when things are getting particularly scary for the government, because they know they have got it wrong, because they have got a history of not helping business, that they suddenly leap into the fray, clearly unprepared, with absolutely no analysis of whether it will work or not.

This builds on some of the other monumental decisions taken against business in this territory when, in 2006, all of the business programs were cut out of the budget, and the tourism budget was cut by a quarter. It has taken almost eight years for tourism to get those numbers back up. Last year, the centenary year, it took a mammoth injection, \$32 million, to get it back up to the 2003 levels.

The question is: will it hold? I do not see anything in the documentation or any of the preparation from the government that shows they have actually prepared for the year after. They have simply done the job and said, “We had a great centenary year, everything will be hunky-dory afterwards.” Well, we will see. But the problem is that, with respect to this government, through cutting programs and funding and sending out the message that they really did not care about business in 2006, it has taken a long time to build that back up. They are slowly replacing the programs and they are gradually upping the budgets, but it takes time to get an economy to work properly again, and it takes time to get confidence. It takes time to get those people who have left the territory and taken their business elsewhere to come back and to trust this government. All of this comes at a time when the government is now its own land developer of choice, squeezing the private sector out even further from the ability to develop greenfield sites.

It is a timely motion. Thank you, Dr Bourke; you have finally got something right—a motion of relevance. The importance of building momentum in the ACT and

supporting local jobs is important. It is a shame that the Labor Party have not had that approach for all of their time in office. It is a shame that ACT Labor did not stand up to federal Labor when the job cuts started under federal Labor, and it is a shame that this government do not deliver anything more than gloss. (*Time expired.*)

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.19): Thank you to Dr Bourke for bringing this matter of public importance to the Assembly: “The importance of building momentum in the ACT economy and supporting local jobs.” While I do not deny that this is a matter of public importance, I do have to note that it is virtually the same as the recent MPI from Ms Berry, which was: “The benefits to the ACT economy, business and our community of maintaining employment and creating jobs.” Last sitting we discussed another motion from Ms Berry about the importance of creating new economic and employment opportunities. And Dr Bourke’s motion tomorrow is almost the same as Ms Berry’s from last week: the importance of creating jobs and improving the economy with infrastructure. I am happy to talk again about the same topic, but perhaps we should use the MPI and private members’ business time to talk about a variety of issues of public importance, rather than the same one over and over.

But given that we are discussing it, I would like to reiterate some positions from the Greens. We believe that a strong economy for our future will mean a low carbon, green economy. Central to this is the very important notion of decoupling our economic growth from reliance on high polluting fossil fuels and other unsustainable practices. At its simplest, decoupling means reducing the amount of resources, like fossil fuels, that we use to produce economic growth and ensuring that our economic prosperity is not dependent on destruction of the environment. This is one of the paradoxes of our modern society and certainly of our modern political discourse. Climate change, the depletion of resources and the degradation of the environment are all recognised as serious threats. But at the same time there is a seemingly unstoppable drive for economic prosperity that is wedded to these concepts.

I am not saying it is easy. We all want a level of growth and prosperity. But the reality is that at every turn we need to think about the type of sacrifices we are making in order to achieve that growth and prosperity—as well as, of course, whether that is growth and prosperity that will last in the long term.

Decoupling should no longer be an alien concept. Even the United Nations—a fairly mainstream and representative body—is strongly emphasising the need for economies to urgently decouple economic growth from an increasing use of resources. The executive director of the United Nations environment program, Achim Steiner, said in 2011:

Decoupling makes sense on all the economic, social and environmental dials ... People believe environmental “bads” are the price we must pay for economic “goods.” However, we cannot, and need not, continue to act as if this trade-off is inevitable. ... Decoupling is part of a transition to a low carbon, resource efficient Green Economy needed in order to stimulate growth, generate decent kinds of employment and eradicate poverty in a way that keeps humanity’s footprint within planetary boundaries.

To give a local example of this kind of thinking, one that I have been speaking about publicly just today, take the Canberra airport and its plan to grow into a 24-hour freight hub. I understand perfectly the desire for economic growth and the contribution that could be made to this by operating a freight hub at the Canberra Airport. But this needs to be weighed against social and environmental factors, which are also crucial to the decisions we take in the long-term interests of the ACT. That is triple bottom line decision making.

As I have said, we cannot just blindly bow to the mantra of economic growth in every circumstance. In this circumstance there are some serious considerations that we need to think through before we allow Canberra Airport to become a 24-hour freight hub. With the pressing problems of climate change and oil insecurity, it is more important than ever to look at how the ACT can decouple its economic prosperity from a reliance on high polluting activities like air freight. We know that aviation is a potent contributor to greenhouse gases.

Canberra Airport does not have a night-time curfew, unlike other Australian airports, including Sydney. This makes it attractive to the night-time freight that cannot land at Sydney during curfew hours. While Sydneysiders can sleep soundly, Canberra wants to sacrifice its night-time peace and quiet in exchange for Sydney's left-over freight traffic. There is something rather distasteful in that. We are willing to forgo a curfew which other airports have put in place so that we can attract the air freight that cannot go to Sydney and that Sydney does not want. It is a bit like how some countries attract big businesses because of poor labour and environmental standards. People and the environment lose out to an economic imperative.

Once the freight business begins at Canberra Airport, we can expect it to grow over time, with night-time noise particularly impacting residents of north Canberra, Gungahlin and developing areas in Kingston and the potential East Lake development into the future. It is important to implement a curfew now while it is still possible, and to give business certainty into the future. I think it would be unfair, and there will be very strong arguments against it, in 10 to 15 years time, when there are a large number of planes coming at night, to say to the airport, "We now want to impose a curfew," them having made significant investment in infrastructure. That is why we need to take this decision now.

Quality of life is one of the key attractions of Canberra, and that will be diminished by night-time airfreight traffic flying over the suburbs. Like the rest of Australia, the ACT should be looking at more sustainable freight and transport options such as opportunities for rail freight.

I am not saying this is easy. It will require cross-jurisdictional cooperation. It might require incentives and it might require some new infrastructure. But there is definitely more that we can do. We have recently seen considerable efforts made at the national level—and the ACT participated in this—to improve heavy vehicle regulation and to cut red tape and make heavy road transport more efficient. Similarly, one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the ACT at the moment is the Majura parkway. Locally, we often talk about how this might assist Canberrans to travel around and

commute to and from work. But really this is a project that is focused on facilitating road freight well into the future.

Meanwhile, rail has received very minimal attention. Interestingly, the United Nations environment program's report on decoupling recommends a shift to rail freight as an opportunity for green growth. A report by ARRB consultants found that rail freight produces up to 90 per cent fewer emissions per tonne of freight carried than road freight. Any government committed to emission reductions should be looking at how to facilitate a switch to rail freight. Road freight also causes significant dangers on the roads. Members will recall the significant community concern when, about two years ago, we saw a decision taken to ship petrol into the ACT by road on trucks rather than on rail, as it traditionally had been. Members will know of the very considerable community disquiet that was expressed about that from a safety point of view.

An intermodal freight terminal would allow the easy transfer of freight from rail to truck. A terminal in Canberra would facilitate the shipping of freight into the ACT by rail rather than continuing our growing reliance on long-distance road freight or, for that matter, airfreight. There is a possibility for work to be done at Hume, for example, where the area is flat and suitably located near the existing railway line and the Monaro Highway. I understand the land is currently unused and is located in a designated industrial precinct. It could possibly be used for an intermodal freight hub where rail freight could transfer to trucks. Potentially this could involve the ACT government leasing the land for use as a freight hub as well as discussing repairs to the rail line with New South Wales.

This has been looked at before. The government released a rail master plan in 2009 which said that there are opportunities for the growth of rail freight in the ACT. It said that an intermodal freight terminal was an option for Canberra. It identified viable sites and recommended looking at the feasibility of developing an intermodal facility. This, unfortunately, dropped off the agenda. We are now waiting for an ACT freight strategy to be released this year. I am hopeful that rail freight options form a solid part of this new freight strategy.

I simply draw out that example to illustrate the choices that we face when it comes to building momentum in the ACT economy and supporting local jobs, and the difference when it comes to a triple bottom line assessment of some of these possibilities. A rail freight hub would be excellent for the ACT. It would provide environmental benefits. It would provide jobs and local economic growth.

Compare that to the proposed airfreight hub that is being discussed and is proposed to expand in the Canberra airport master plan. It will also provide jobs and economic growth, but it will come at a cost to the quality of life in this city in recognition of the fact that airfreight is considerably more greenhouse unfriendly than rail freight. Canberra should be positioning itself for future considerations when there will be pressures on oil, whether it is through political disruption or issues of supply.

These are the sorts of things we should be taking into account now in our decision making. The ACT government should be working closely with its interstate

counterparts to promote rail. I express a very personal view, and a view that the Greens hold: we do not believe that, for example, an airfreight hub is the answer.

Discussion concluded.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 15

MR DOSZPOT: I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Standing Committee—Scrutiny Report 15, dated 11 March 2014, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

MR DOSZPOT: I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MR DOSZPOT: Scrutiny report 15 contains the committee's comments on five bills, 75 pieces of subordinate legislation, one government response and one regulatory impact statement. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Report 2

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (4.30): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 2—*Annual and Financial Reports 2012-2013*, dated March 2014, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

Today I table the report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety on annual and financial reports 2012-2013. As you will appreciate, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is part of the important arrangements for scrutiny and accountability that we have in this place. Each year government agencies and statutory offices appear before the Assembly at annual reports and estimates hearings. This gives the Assembly scope and continuity in the scrutiny of public sector administration, which is important.

As in previous years, officers from the Justice and Safety Directorate, its sub-agencies and statutory offices associated with the directorate appeared before the committee together with officers from ACT Policing. The hearings were a high value exercise which brought a number of important matters to the attention of the committee, including matters of interest from previous annual reports and estimates hearings.

At this point I would like to highlight some of the recommendations made by the committee in this report. They include recommendations for the ACT government to investigate the creation of a sentencing council or its equivalent for the ACT and that the ACT government change its arrangements over time so that separate statutory positions are no longer performed by officers who, in another aspect of their responsibilities, are officers of the executive.

There are three recommendations to the ACT government regarding sham contracting, a recommendation that the ACT government conduct a review of periodic detention in the ACT, a recommendation that the ACT government investigate provision of sufficient resources to the ACT Human Rights Commission so that it can undertake a full human rights audit of the Alexander Maconochie Centre, and that the ACT government initiate a review of the Human Rights ACT 2004 with a view to making the complaints process more accessible than it is at present.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank my fellow committee members—Mr Gentleman, Mrs Jones and Ms Berry—for their input and contribution to this report. In particular and on behalf of all committee members, I express our sincere thanks to the committee secretary, Dr Brian Lloyd, for his much appreciated support and valuable contribution to the drafting of this report. I also express the committee's thanks to Mr Ghirardello for his support of Dr Lloyd in the production of this report. I commend the report to the Assembly.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella) (4.34): I take this opportunity to congratulate all members of the committee on their hard work and collaboration on this important report. It was a robust deliberation process, but I believe this report is a good example of how committee members can work together to ensure the ACT government is scrutinised properly. I, too, would like to thank the committee secretary, Brian Lloyd, Mr Ghirardello, ministers, their staff and directorate officials for their efforts during the hearings and in taking questions.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

Motion by **Mr Corbell** proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Canberra Burns Club

MR WALL (Brindabella) (4.35): I rise this evening to place on the record the significant milestone reached this year by the Canberra's first and longest serving club, the Canberra Burns Club. This year marks the 90th anniversary since operation commenced of the club in a town that has just recently celebrated its 100th birthday. This is a significant achievement and testament to the many hundreds of members, the staff and the broader Canberra community who have played a part in the club's long life.

The Canberra Burns Club was formed in 1924 by Canberrans of Scottish heritage who, at the time, made up almost half of Canberra's population. Like most of the ethnically oriented clubs in Canberra, the intent of the Burns Club was to provide an organisation that would provide a place to socialise, maintain Scottish cultural interests and ties, and provide moral support for Scots in their new home country.

In the early days the club would host Burns evenings where works of the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns were read to members. The club continues to provide and promote its Scottish heritage in the ACT through the highland dancing community and the club's pipe band, which is amongst the country's finest.

The club is also a major sponsor of the annual Highland Gathering as well as an annual piping and drumming workshop. The club hosts events to celebrate Hogmanay, St Andrew's and supports many supporting teams ranging from darts through to football.

I pay tribute to the men and women who pioneered the Canberra Burns Club along with the current management, staff and board of directors and wish them many successes as they continue to ensure that the club is around for another 90 years.

Menslink

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.37): Last Saturday, 15 March, I helped the team at Menslink fundraise at the Brumbies and Waratahs match. I want to reflect on what an important organisation Menslink is and report to the Assembly the excellent work that they are doing. Menslink is a Canberra charity that supports young men to overcome the challenges of life and develop their positive potential.

Since 2002 they have assisted over 1,000 young men through their mentoring program and counselling service, which are free to young men and their families. Menslink is primarily funded by the ACT government—they are not really funded by the ACT government—and receive support and sponsorship from a range of organisations across the region. Their major sponsors are ACTEW Water, ACT Policing, ACT Veterans Rugby, bankmecu and Capital Chemist.

On Saturday night the volunteer team raised over \$4,000 from Brumbies fans or probably some Waratahs fans as well, and plenty of awareness about the work of Menslink. To a small organisation this makes a real difference. Funds raised will be used for activities that support young guys who are doing it tough, such as training volunteers to be a mentor to a young man for two years or running group activities where socially isolated young men can make new friends and learn how men interact in a positive way, or even provide free counselling sessions for young guys who need help and want to talk to a male counsellor.

The big community campaign that Menslink are involved in this year is the silence is deadly campaign in partnership with the Brumbies. The message they are getting out to young guys is that it is okay to fail and if you are experiencing any difficulties, then

it is important to talk with someone. You do not have to bottle it up and keep everything inside.

What is great is that they do this in a way that young guys can relate to. Having footballers talk about their problems when they are seen as role models for what it means to be a successful man is a really powerful way of showing young men that it is okay to speak up, talk to someone and to get the help they need. I certainly commend those players particularly involved in the project.

Silence is deadly has reached over 9,000 young men around the region so far in groups ranging from as few as four students to over 400. One school that participated gave the following feedback. They said:

A big number of boys have come forward since your session to report mental health concerns about themselves or others. It has created great opportunities for us to put some good strategies and interventions in place to assist their recovery. At least five issues have come out that I think would not have come out if it was not for your visit. So, in short, thank you. Menslink has become an integral and welcome support for the young men at our school and the community. We are most grateful for their generous involvement in working with us and our parents to build fine boys into fine men and citizens. Menslink's work is invaluable to our communities.

That is a fine testament from one of the schools that has had the opportunity to have Menslink be involved with them. We know that young men suffer from depression and anxiety at around the same rate as young women—around one in four of them. But unlike girls, only one in 10 guys who are having hassles will speak up, talk to someone and get help. What we also know is that unfortunately amongst this age group of young men aged 12 to 25, suicide is still the single largest cause of death. So the work of Menslink is particularly important in that context.

Menslink is about showing young men how they can get the support that they need. I would like to congratulate CEO, Martin Fisk, mentoring and community outreach coordinator, Rob Regent, and the rest of the team for the work they are doing and thank them for their contribution to the Canberra community.

Mariam “Maz” Hakim

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella) (4.40): It is with some bittersweetness that I rise today to speak of the contribution and future endeavours of one of our city's most prominent residents, who just last week officially announced she will be leaving Canberra. I speak, of course, of the very talented and highly respected radio announcer Mariam “Maz” Hakim. In her time at local radio station FM 104.7 Maz has built a loyal following amongst listeners. However, it is her work off-air as a refugee advocate and passionate supporter for refugee rights that has brought much recognition to this dynamic young woman.

In 2013 Maz was a Refugee Week ambassador, as well as a welcome to Australia ambassador. She performed both roles with much pride and, indeed, a deep sense of understanding, because Maz, as many of you would be aware, was herself a refugee.

Her family escaped Afghanistan during the Russian invasion in the 1980s, after the situation escalated. Maz's father, a practising architect, dreamt of a better life for his children, which would not have been possible if they had remained in Afghanistan.

In secret one night, the family packed up their worldly goods and escaped the troubled nation on horseback. They had paid a smuggler to lead them to a new life, but the circumstances were horrendous. Conscription was in force at the time and getting caught equated to death on the spot.

With helicopters hovering above them and the sound of bombs and rockets and very little food or water, Maz's family somehow managed to make their way across the border to Pakistan. But on the way there, their toenails fell off because of the walking, they could not sleep because they could hear sounds of wild animals howling, and they were stopped and searched by bandits as they passed through villages. Then, a little over halfway to Pakistan, the smuggler deserted them. Through perseverance and luck, the family somehow managed to cross the border, arriving in Pakistan in a refugee camp, where Maz was later born into poverty, as a refugee baby in a harsh land.

It took some time, but after settling into life in their new country, Maz's father began working as an architect again and her mother practising as a midwife. But her father dreamed of a more stable, brighter future for his family. That dream was to come to Australia. In Pakistan he had met some influential people through his work as an architect—and one, in particular, who changed the course of their family's destiny, helping them to migrate to Australia.

Now, 26 years on, Maz's father is still practising architecture and her mother is a retired midwife. Her siblings have also enjoyed much success. Her brother is an IT manager, one sister is a recruitment manager and the other is a TV presenter for BBC World News.

The key driving force that Maz's parents instilled in her over the years was that anything in life is possible and to dream big, which is exactly how she has lived her life here in Canberra. And now Maz's big dreams are about to come true. Soon she will return to the Middle East—Dubai, to be precise—in a new, prestigious role as an announcer for Virgin Radio. It is a new position that she is incredibly excited to be taking up and one that she says will allow her to share stories of her beloved homeland, and in particular Canberra, with much passion and enthusiasm.

Maz is keen to keep her connection to the capital, and we are keen to keep her connected to us. We as a community are very proud of her contribution to our city's multicultural way of life. Her support and advocacy for refugees is truly inspiring and has helped many members of one of Canberra's most vulnerable groups see that anything—as Maz's parents showed her—is indeed possible, and that if you dream big, you can soar high.

Heart Foundation walking group

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (4.44): I want to talk tonight about a local walking group that gets together to maintain their health each week and also to socialise and to keep

each other's hearts and minds happy and healthy. The Heart Foundation walking group the Groovy Grannies celebrated eight years together last Thursday, and I was very happy to join them for a coffee and a chat at a celebratory breakfast at Birrigai Cafe, Kangara Waters, in Belconnen.

I want to thank and congratulate the members of the Groovy Grannies walking group. At the breakfast last week were Edna Kauffman, Frances Noble, Jean Richens—and I will come back to Jean in a minute because there is an important connection to this story—Vicki Bray, Ella Hankinson, who is a 94-year-old member of the Groovy Grannies, Margo Irons, Dorothy Luckman, Rosemary Myers, Colleen Perriman, Kath Wilkinson, Graham Wright, and me. Other members of the Groovy Grannies include Margaret Bailey, Marjorie Emery, Ann Gould, Ann Lancaster, Suzanne Lyons, Sam Morgan, and Carmen Prieto.

I would also like to acknowledge, as part of the Heart Foundation walking group, Mr Bill Catty, who is the ACT walking project officer, who tells me that we have 500 walkers across the ACT and region. There are 60 groups, and he encourages people to join up to a local Heart Foundation walking group in their area. I can tell you from my own experience, from talking with these people and finding out the connections within your community, that there is no better way than doing it on an early morning walk around your local suburbs.

Getting back to Jean Richens, we had a lovely breakfast at the Birrigai Cafe, but they could in no way compete with Jean Richens's scones, which are famous across the ACT. I know that anybody—perhaps yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker—who has tried Jean Richens's scones at the UnitingCare monster garage sale would agree that they are the best scones in Canberra. I would encourage everybody to go down and have a go at a bake-off. There is no recipe. She says it is all just magic; it is all about how you knead the dough, and she is not willing to share what that recipe is,

It is really lovely to hear stories about people like Jean Richens and their connection to the community through their walking groups, through their church and through their community groups. We all come together on one morning once a week to chat. Fair dinkum; we sound like a gaggle of geese when we are walking along through the Umbagog park at Latham. It really is a lovely way to start the day, and I encourage everybody to join up to their local Heart Foundation walking group if they can.

International Mother Language Day walk

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (4.47): Tonight I would like to thank Canberra's Bangladeshi community in particular for organising the inaugural International Mother Language Day walk in Canberra on Friday, 21 February. I also congratulate all those from all communities who walked the walk to promote the right of all peoples to speak their mother language.

We met at the international flags on the lake foreshore with an acknowledgement of Canberra's traditional owners and the Bangladeshi martyrs who died in 1952 protesting for their mother language, Bengali, to become their national language. The event was a great success, with 300 people taking part in the early evening walk from

the parliamentary triangle across Kings Avenue Bridge to the celebrations, music and food in Kings Park.

I thank the Bangladesh community for promoting International Mother Language Day and the right of all peoples to speak their own language. It is a right Bangalee martyrs died for. It is a right that, thanks to their example, others have fought for—the right to be recognised internationally. In 1999 the United Nations adopted International Mother Language Day.

I noted in my speech at the walk that where once there were hundreds of Indigenous languages spoken in Australia, now few remain in active daily use—the result of colonisation, dispossession and repression of Indigenous languages. It is only now in our later years that Australia as a nation has come to regret what it has lost. That is why I believe International Mother Language Day is so important in warning us against forced extinguishment of languages and culture.

Now we have started celebrating this day, and this is so magnificently right here in Canberra, I hope that with community support and goodwill it will continue to grow. Canberra is one of the most multicultural cities in Australia and the world. Around 170 languages are spoken in Canberra homes. The recent National Multicultural Festival in Canberra demonstrated our celebration of the cultures of the world that thrive here.

I believe multiculturalism is one of our country's greatest achievements. I am proud that the ACT government is committed to the promotion and learning of languages in Canberra and has cemented this through the ACT languages policy. In addition, the ACT Human Rights Act states that anyone belonging to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority must not be denied the right, with other members of the minority, to use their language. It is a right that has been denied to Indigenous Australians and immigrant Australians in our past. Thankfully, we have learnt from that mistake. Learning language is about developing the intercultural skills and understanding necessary to respect difference and create connections with people. This is critical in our local multicultural setting, where over 40 per cent of Canberrans either have been born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas.

Again, congratulations to all those behind organising this celebration of International Mother Language Day, for their dedication and hard work, reminding us of the human right to speak our mother tongue.

Australian citizenship ceremony Catholic Education Office

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (4.50): I had the pleasure this morning of attending a special Australian citizenship ceremony at Telopea Park School. I received the invitation from the ACT and region office of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and I met a number of senior officials from the department—Mr Adrian Kelso, Mr Nick Evans, Ms Frances Finney. I would like to compliment them and other colleagues of theirs who were involved in the presentation of this

Australian citizenship ceremony for their inspired choice of Telopea Park School, Lycee Franco-Australien de Canberra.

Telopea Park School was a very fitting venue given the diverse range of cultural backgrounds. Students come from 73 countries, and a fifth of them speak a language other than English at home. In addition, the spirit of harmony is further highlighted with the mission of the school to educate students “to be caring global citizens in a changing world where they will have the skills to excel and to look after each other and the environment”.

I also had the pleasure of catching up once again with Mrs Kerrie Blain, Principal of Telopea Park School, as well as her deputy principals, Mrs Kate Sutherland and Mr Tom Kobal. I expressed my congratulations and thanks to them for the wonderful work that they and their school community contribute to education in the ACT.

This event took place during the week of harmony celebrations that promote cultural respect for everyone who calls Australia home and included 130 candidates from 31 countries. As we are all aware, citizenship marks the final step in the migration journey. It is at this ceremony that conferees make their commitment to Australia and all that is great about our country. A wonderful highlight of this morning’s ceremony was that one of our new citizens in this morning’s ceremony was Mr Baba Alhadji, a Telopea Park School teacher of French in the secondary school—a special occasion for a special teacher.

I would also like to pay compliments to the Catholic Education Office for their wonderful ceremony last week at St Christopher’s Cathedral in Manuka. The celebrant was Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the apostolic nuncio. Music and choir from the staff and students of St Mary MacKillop College, Tuggeranong provided a fantastic background to the ceremony. My compliments to Mrs Moira Najdecki, the head of the Catholic Education Office, and all her staff for a very moving ceremony that took place both during the course of the mass that we all attended and, at the conclusion, during the recognition of excellence of teachers.

Individual excellence awards were awarded to Nicola Barkley, Kelly Boyton, Dominic Braybon, Philippa Brearley, Joanne Chilver, John Cole, Brad Cooney, Anne Corcoran, Tessa Daffern, Kay Daniel, Nina De Rosa, Mary Dietz Mullamphy, Julie Doolan, Denise Duck, Clare Fletcher, Gemma Francis, Helen Garrity, Anne Glover, Libby Goodsell, Catherine Guthrie, Sally Hendrie, Kathy Kinnane, Eugene Lehmensich, Anthony Maas, Angela McDonald, Nicky Merriman, Luke Mooney, Nicole Morton, Maria Nangle, Rita O’Connor, Maria O’Donnell, Teressa Patterson, Laura Pearce, Brendon Pye, Angela Ryan, Maureen Scott, Peter Webster and Karen Western.

There were also a number of recognition of excellence group awards and recognition of excellence whole school awards, as well as recognition of an outstanding contribution to Catholic education, by Mary-Jane Carroll-Fajarda; Brad Gaynor; Leonie Kelly; Julie Harton; Clare Addinell; Luke Donnelly; Patrick Ellis; Kathleen Morwitch; Bernadette Scott; Julian Laffan; Phillip Nielsen; Orla Duggan; Monsignor John Woods, the vicar-general; and Sister Bernadette Mary Walsh RSJ.

Early career teachers were commissioned in 2014, and they were recognised. They were Rebekah Brown, Rebecca Morris, Kristy Hogg, Simone Esposito, Kate Manning, Megan Daly, Nicole Knight, Bianca Gomez, Catherine Joy, Samantha Lopez-Crane, Toni Smith, Tim O'Brien, Danielle Logue, Matthew Aquilina, Marcus Amann, Alex Acworth, Peita-Claire Fothergill, Stephen Powell, Christiana Mickelburgh, Michaela O'Keefe, Kim-Ling Richardson, Cameron Beck, Melissa Ishihara, Maria Whiting, Samantha MacDonald, Natalie Bateman, Dominic Lenarduzzi, Sarah Brookes, Elizabeth Hair, Anthony Pitt, Morvern Dyer, Kelly Evans, Leonie Sullivan, Shaun Suridge, Brayden Longo, Sam McCombe, Kate Higgins, Sarah Canon, Stephanie Edlinger, Rachel Byles, Stephanie Koster, Sally Nicholson, Pamela Miller, Felicity Selseja, Desiree Disanayake, Kristy Lee Walker, Nicole Ptycia, Emily O'Rourke, Brittany Wood, Laura Pittard, Corrinne Dell, Chloe Geale, Katie Byrne, Amanda Cam, Amy Hazell, Bradley Brown, Naomi Beatty, Lauren Kelly, Ben Macintyre, Leonie Priest, Brendan Hague, Sheena Knight and Melissa Neitt. (*Time expired.*)

Salvation Army

MR COE (Ginninderra) (4.55): I rise today to speak about the important work of the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal. Members would be aware of the Red Shield Appeal, which is the Salvation Army's primary fundraising activity. The Red Shield Appeal started in Australia in 1965 after the Salvation Army was concerned about the increasing need for funds to meet demands for its social services. The concept of involving community volunteers to help raise funds for the Salvation Army had been very successful in Canada since the late 1940s. Members of the Australian Salvation Army went to Canada during the early 60s to observe the Canadian system and came back to Australia with a vision for a revolutionary fundraising approach.

The new fundraising approach was based on key characteristics from the Canadian appeal, including involving community volunteers and a one-day residential doorknock. Another key characteristic of the new model was the use of citizens advisory boards, which involves the Salvation Army seeking advice and influence from well-connected business and community leaders to support the appeal. The term "red shield" refers to the well-recognised red shield emblem used by the Salvation Army chaplains and support workers.

The Salvation Army has used funds raised in the Red Shield Appeal to fund many highly effective social service programs. These programs include: the bridge program for drug, alcohol and gambling rehabilitation; the Salvo care line, the Salvation Army's 24-hour telephone counselling service; the money care financial counselling service; the oasis drop-in centres for homeless youth; and assistance during national disasters and other major crises.

This year the Red Shield Appeal doorknock will take place on the weekend of 24 and 25 May. The Salvation Army has set a national fundraising target of \$79 million and will need 100,000 volunteers across the country to help collect donations in their local communities.

Volunteers are asked to give two or three hours of their time to collect donations. However, many people choose to keep collecting all day. Most of the collection takes place on the Sunday morning, but volunteers can collect at any time that suits them over the two days. Many people choose to organise a team of friends or workmates to turn the doorknocking into a social event.

At the conclusion of the appeal, volunteers are presented with a small token of appreciation from the Salvation Army. I urge all members to become involved in this year's Red Shield Appeal. For more information, visit the Salvation Army's website at www.salvos.org.au.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.59 pm.

Schedule of amendments

Schedule 1

Totalisator Bill 2013

Amendments moved by the Minister for Racing and Gaming

1

Clause 24 (1) (d)

Page 11, line 1—

omit

in the commission's opinion,

substitute

the commission believes on reasonable grounds that

2

Clause 25 (1)

Page 12, line 8—

omit clause 25 (1), substitute

- (1) For this Act, an individual is an **eligible person** if—
- (a) the individual—
 - (i) is an adult; and
 - (ii) has not been convicted, or found guilty, in the last 5 years, whether in the ACT or elsewhere, of an offence—
 - (A) involving fraud or dishonesty; or
 - (B) against a law about gaming; and
 - (iii) has not been convicted, or found guilty, in Australia in the last 5 years of an offence punishable by imprisonment for at least 1 year; and
 - (iv) has not been convicted, or found guilty, outside Australia in the last 5 years of an offence that, if it had been committed in the ACT, would have been punishable by imprisonment for at least 1 year; and
 - (v) is not, or at any time in the last 5 years has not been, bankrupt or personally insolvent; and

Note **Bankrupt or personally insolvent**—see the Legislation Act, dictionary, pt 1.
 - (vi) at any time in the last 5 years was not involved in the management of a corporation when—
 - (A) the corporation became the subject of a winding up order; or
 - (B) a controller or administrator was appointed; and
 - (vii) has not contravened the totalisator rules or this Act; and
 - (b) the commission believes on reasonable grounds that the individual—

- (i) has a reputation for sound business conduct; and
- (ii) has a reputation for sound character; and
- (iii) has a satisfactory financial position and financial background.

3**Proposed new clause 26A**

Page 15, line 2—

*insert***26A Exercise of powers must be relevant to executive officer's eligibility**

- (1) This section applies to a function of the commission under this part.
- (2) The commission may exercise the function only to assess whether an executive officer of a corporation is an eligible person.

4**Clause 41 (3)**

Page 23, line 13—

*omit***5****Clause 42 (1)**

Page 23, line 20—

after

the Minister

insert

, and the Minister is satisfied,

6**Proposed new clause 42 (3) to (5)**

Page 24, line 7—

insert

- (3) The direction must also state—
 - (a) the grounds on which the Minister is satisfied that the integrity of the totalisator is likely to be seriously compromised; and
 - (b) that the person receiving the direction may give a written response to the Minister about the direction.
- (4) The direction takes effect on the day the Minister gives it.
- (5) The Minister may revoke the direction by written notice if the Minister is satisfied—
 - (a) after considering any written response from the person who received the direction—the direction is not required; or
 - (b) the direction has been complied with.