



Debates

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Tuesday, 16 September 2014

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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.

Petitions

The following petitions were lodged for presentation:

Planning—residential apartments—petition No 12-14

By Mr Corbell, from 140 residents:

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

The following residents of the ACT draws to the attention of the Assembly the social and community problems associated with allowing short-term accommodation in residential apartment complexes. These include behavioural impact of short-term guests on residents, compromised security and inability of residents to enjoy their own home due to crowd sourced noise and antisocial behaviour.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to review legislation to allow residential apartments to remain as people's homes not hotels, motels and other short-term accommodation models.

Energy—wind—petition No 15-14

By Ms Lawder from two residents:

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory, is submitted on behalf of certain residents of Collector, NSW whose signatures are below to draw to the attention of the Assembly that: *As local residents of Collector, NSW living within a 10 km radius of the proposed Collector Windfarm, we declare that we DO NOT support the development of an Industrial Wind Turbine Installation as proposed by Ratchiburi.*

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to: *Please ensure that the ACT government does not sign an agreement with Ratch to supply energy to the ACT, noting the lack of support for it by the Collector and surrounding community who will be directly impacted.*

Energy—wind—petition No 16-14

By Ms Lawder from 86 residents:

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory.

This Petition of citizens of New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory brings to the attention of the House that:

1. We as residents of NSW and the Southern Tablelands are not in favour of industrial wind turbines in non-industrial zoned areas.
2. Industrial wind farms will impact on the health, visual amenity of our community, our land values and lifestyle.
3. If the Australian Capital Territory government wants wind power it should build the facilities in the Australian Capital Territory.
4. Industrial wind turbines not be built within 5 kilometres of any dwelling.

The undersigned petitioners therefore ask the Legislative Assembly to

- Stop approving/sponsoring industrial wind turbines being built in non-industrial areas.
- Require that industrial wind turbines not be built within 5 kilometres of any dwelling.
- Require that if the Australian Capital Territory government wants wind power, then the wind turbines should be built in the Australian Capital Territory.

The Clerk having announced that the terms of the petitions would be recorded in Hansard and copies referred to the appropriate minister for response pursuant to standing order 100, the petitions were received.

Ministerial response

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

By **Mr Rattenbury**, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, dated 20 August 2014, in response to a petition lodged by Mrs Jones on 15 May 2014 concerning the postbox at Waramanga shops.

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

Waramanga shops—postbox—petition No 8-14

The response read as follows:

The government notes that the petitioners have concerns about the relocation of the post box to a position further away from the private letter boxes in the wall of the newsagent. Many elements change during the upgrade of a shopping centre; however, each of these changes is well considered before being implemented.

While the Waramanga shop upgrade was completed in September 2013, the investigation and planning for the upgrade commenced in December 2008. This consultation and planning phase included surveys of the shop tenants and owners, followed by a cultural planning study and the subsequent forward design study, both prepared by professional consultants. Design consultants were then engaged to prepare final designs and prepare tender documents for construction.

Extensive consultation was undertaken in 2009-10 during the cultural planning and forward design study phase of the upgrade; firstly to identify the needs, wants and priorities of the local community and then to ask for feedback on the new design proposal. The consultation involved local residents, community groups, shop tenants and lease holders. The information gathered from the local community through this consultation shaped the final design of the upgrade.

The highest priorities identified by the community during the consultation period were safer pedestrian access within the shopping centre as well as to and from the medical centre, particularly for less mobile members of the community; safer entry and exit conditions for vehicles; improvements to parking and lighting; and measures to improve security in and around the shops. Places to gather and sit outdoors, as well as improving the appearance and amenity of the shops, were the next highest priorities.

The accessibility report prepared by the access consultant identified the post box's original location as non compliant with new Australian accessibility standards. Options to provide a compliant grade ramp from the shop terrace to the post box were investigated. However, it was not possible to achieve a compliant grade without significantly compromising other areas. This access issue was identified in the preliminary sketch plans which were displayed for community comment.

Australia Post was also consulted about the relocation of the post box at the final sketch plan stage and confirmed they had no issues with the proposal.

As a result of this process, the post box was moved to its current location. This has made it more directly accessible from the car park, as well as centred to the two main businesses at the shops.

In this new location the post box is clearly visible from the shop terrace and can be accessed from a number of parking places, it also allows the Australia Post van and bike to work more easily and safely around the flow of traffic and parking.

In the location proposed for the post box by the petition, a person in a wheelchair driving to the centre to post a letter would have to travel a lot further from either of the designated parking spaces and the ramps. Moving the post box back to this original position would result in the box being inaccessible by anyone in a wheelchair (from the top terrace), a car driver in a wheelchair would not be able to exit their car, traverse a kerb crossing and reach the post box. Each of these access issues was considered in the selection of the current location.

Visitor

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call on Ms Lawder, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr Angus Taylor MP, the Member for Hume. Welcome to the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Petitions

Energy—wind—petitions Nos 15-14 and 16-14

MS LAWDER (Brindabella), by leave: I have sponsored these petitions today to give the opportunity to those who do not reside in the ACT to have a voice on the decisions our government is making which are affecting them. Officially we have heard that these petitions have a small number of signatories, but between them almost 800 people have signed these documents, and many reside in neighbouring New South Wales towns.

It is not general practice in this place to talk on behalf of citizens that this Assembly does not represent, but I do this today, Madam Speaker, because these people are being affected by the decisions of this government. We are implementing policy in the ACT for the Labor government to get bragging rights without any of the adverse consequences which may come with it.

These people may not live here, they may not be ACT ratepayers or ACT voters, but here we have residents of the greater capital region who are being affected by our government's obsessions with being the greenest jurisdiction in the country. When the Select Committee on Regional Development was set up in February 2013, the Chief Minister said about the region, "Generally people do not consciously recognise the jurisdictional boundary."

The Chief Minister also talked about the importance of working closely with people in the greater capital region. However, this government's renewable energy policies, far greater targets than anywhere else in the country, create unrealistic environmental targets that are imposing higher electricity prices on our residents and are forcing industrial wind turbines and solar farms upon communities in our region.

Further, if the ACT grabs all the available approved sites then less wind power sites will be available for the RET, and this will have the perverse consequence of driving down the RET by a quantity equal to the ACT scheme. There may be negligible net gain to the ACT's renewable energy scheme due to the ACT scheme.

The Friends of Collector group yesterday put out a media release which, when referring to the wind farm which is planned next to their village, states:

Collector residents oppose the proposed industrial estate due to it destroying:

their visual amenity—the proposed 150 metre high turbines will be on the escarpment (75 metres high) overlooking the town from a distance of 3-4 kilometres, thereby dominating all visual aspects of the town;

the heritage and renowned beauty of its environment—recorded in iconic Australian literature and history—and shown in buildings, vegetation and unique landscape formations—with associated attractions for tourists and residents—will lead to it being an outpost in an industrial estate;

community harmony, since the proponent company, Ratchaburi Australia, rewards those with property hosting turbines, while not adequately compensating others, and has also been demonstrably dishonest in its dealings with the community.

In April 2013 Yass Landscape Guardians carried out a telephone survey of adult residents and landowners within eight kilometres of the Yass Valley wind farm. One hundred and eighty-three telephone numbers were collated, and these numbers were called over three nights. Key results from that survey included: most respondents do not support the wind farm development, with 70 per cent opposed, 14 per cent unsure, and only 16 per cent supportive; most respondents, 78 per cent, had not been contacted by Epuron or Origin Energy, with only 20 per cent having been contacted and two per cent unsure; and most respondents, 63 per cent, had not received a newsletter from Epuron.

The petition from Collector, which has been signed by a large portion, over 90 per cent, of the adult residents of the village, calls on the ACT government not to sign any agreement with Ratch to supply energy to the ACT, noting the lack of support for it by the residents of Collector and the surrounding community.

The petition from Tarago, which is signed by some 600 residents, calls on the government to stop approving and sponsoring industrial wind turbines being built in non-industrial areas, to require that industrial wind turbines not be built within five kilometres of any dwelling, and to require that if the ACT government wants wind power then the wind turbines should be built in the ACT.

Madam Speaker, people choose to reside in these rural communities for the self-evident reason that they want to be in a rural community. They do not want to be surrounded by wind turbines. They are there to enjoy the rural lifestyle, and the ACT government's policies are ruining that for them.

We have a duty to look after, care for and take into consideration the greater capital region, as was discussed by the Select Committee on Regional Development. It is not news to anyone that this government has its priorities way out of alignment, where light rail and renewable energy targets are more important than the emergency department being overcrowded and dangerous, or the schools being run down and lacking maintenance, or the care and protection system failing. Anyone can see that there is something not quite right with the government's priorities.

This government have as one of their main priorities to increase the cost of electricity for ACT residents, and they are proceeding with locking us into 20-year contracts with the companies responsible for these wind farms. This means the ACT will be paying a premium for this power for the next 20 years. This is not just a decision that affects us today; it affects electricity prices in Canberra and surrounding villages in the long term.

And while the argument on the cost of renewable energy is one that we will continue to have, it is with this argument aside that we can still see the simple wrong here. It seems to be a case of out of sight, out of mind: put these wind turbines, these industrial wind turbines, out of the ACT and affect the rural villages; we want all the benefits without any of the bad; we want the bragging rights without losing the votes of ACT residents. The people whom this affects are not ACT residents and they cannot express their dissatisfaction with this government decision on polling day like other ACT residents can.

Each of these communities is concerned about the same things. They are concerned about the visual amenity, the land values and the overall lifestyle. While they support renewable energy, they are usually taking steps themselves for sustainable energy. The general view in these communities is that the ACT government are dumping their rubbish—that is, the consequences of their renewable energy policy—onto our neighbours in the close rural surrounds. I stand here to support their concerns raised today. I seek leave to table two additional documents.

Leave granted.

MS LAWDER: I table the following papers:

Wind turbines for the ACT—Location—Copy of signatories to petition.
Yass Valley Wind Farm—Community Survey, dated April 2013.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro), by leave: I acknowledge the presence in the gallery this morning of many residents of Collector and other parts of the broader region and their local representative, and I thank them for their attendance here today.

The first thing I would say today is that the government will very clearly have regard to all representations that are made by residents and others about a wind farm development in the surrounding Australian capital region. The government does not resile from its commitment to make the transition to a low carbon future for our city. The government does not resile from its commitment to deliver 90 per cent renewable energy for our city. And we know that this commitment is supported by the overwhelming majority of Canberrans. Over 80 per cent of Canberrans surveyed late last year confirmed that making the transition to large-scale renewable energy was one of the most significant steps that the ACT government should take. Over 80 per cent of Canberrans polled also confirmed that they want to see this government continue to make sure that our city is making the transition to be ready for a low-carbon future. So we know that these policies have strong support from Canberrans and that people want to see action being taken.

It is worth highlighting, of course, that the wind farm proposal that residents have made representations about in the petition that Ms Lawder tabled this morning was a wind farm that was approved last year by the New South Wales planning authorities. So if residents are concerned about that approval, with respect, I would suggest that

they should not be protesting on London Circuit; they should be protesting on Macquarie Street because the approval was granted by the New South Wales planning commission and it was granted under the watch of the New South Wales Liberal-National coalition government. Those are the facts.

The government is engaged in a process to get low-cost renewable energy generation for our community. We are inviting proposals from the broader region and, indeed, from other parts of the national electricity market to deliver that low-cost renewable energy for our city. We are seeking proposals from proponents. As part of our assessment we are having close regard to two key important factors which are weighted, in total, approximately 40 per cent of the total evaluation criteria for these proposals.

Of that 40 per cent, 20 per cent is for community engagement and a further 20 per cent is for economic development either in the city or in the region, because if there are economic development opportunities in the region, our city benefits. If there is economic development in the city, our region benefits. That is very much the view of the government and it is underpinned by the very clear criteria we have put in place.

I thank residents for their representations. I will ensure that they are drawn to the attention of the bodies that are advising the government as we go through the option evaluation process. I also note, of course, that the particular wind farm that is of concern to residents, the Collector wind farm, was approved by the Planning Assessment Commission late last year under the watch of the Liberal-National government in Macquarie Street in Sydney.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 22

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

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 22, dated 9 September 2014, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MR DOSZPOT: Scrutiny report 22 contains the committee's comments on three bills, eight pieces of subordinate legislation and three government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Statement by chair

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo): Pursuant to standing order 246A I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety. On 19 August 2014 the committee met and resolved, due to changes in membership, to

amend the committee's resolution for its inquiry into sentencing by removing the words "in the first sitting week after 1 November 2014" and replacing them with the words "by the last sitting day of April 2015".

Trade mission—Singapore and Hong Kong Ministerial statement

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events), by leave: I would like to report to the Assembly on the ministerial delegation that I led to Singapore and Hong Kong from 18 to 25 June this year.

This delegation was perhaps the largest and most diverse group led by the ACT government on a trade mission, with a wide range of organisations pursuing multiple business development objectives. In total 35 people took part in the delegation across 28 separate organisations.

Before I report on the mission itself, it is worth recalling that we were honoured with a visit to Canberra by the President of Singapore and several ministers just a few days before we departed on this mission. The Chief Minister had a private meeting with the President of Singapore during his time in Canberra and I met with the Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transport, Associate Professor Ibrahim.

These meetings were an opportunity to enrich the relationship between Canberra and Singapore by talking about the things we have in common—our business links, our shared histories, our community bonds. It was an opportunity to forecast the great future opportunities and to discuss the agenda of the trade mission that we were about to embark on. The President of Singapore went on to mark his visit and the relationship between our cities by planting a tree at the National Arboretum.

For the trade mission itself, the key objectives of the delegation were to: encourage investment in Canberra by Singaporean and Hong Kong organisations and financial institutions and in particular highlighting opportunities that will arise around the city to the lake and capital metro projects; support Canberra businesses in their push into the Singapore market with a focus on IT sector businesses specifically, facilitated by their presence at CommunicAsia 2014, one of the world's largest IT trade shows and conferences; advance the case for direct flights between Canberra and Singapore or Hong Kong; support the tourism industry through developing relationships between Canberra and Singapore; release the Canberra branding internationally; and study relevant Singaporean infrastructure projects such as their recently completed sports hub precinct and international stadium and the Singapore mass rapid transit system.

Significant progress was made on all of these objectives. In my view, and indeed the view of those who attended the trade mission, it was a resounding success. I would like to take the time now to briefly review some of the highlights.

To progress direct international flights between Singapore and Canberra, Stephen Byron and I met with the vice president of Singapore Airlines, Ms Lee Wen Fen. I also took the opportunity when in Hong Kong to meet with James Barrington,

Director of Corporate Development for Cathay Pacific Airlines. We took the opportunity to reiterate the strong business case for direct flights in to Canberra, including, of course, the capability of our international airport, its curfew-free status, the demonstrated market of 7,800 passengers per week travelling between the Canberra Airport catchment area and Europe and Asia, with 50 per cent of them—that is, nearly 4,000 passengers a week—currently using Singapore as a gateway, and the inevitability of direct international flights between Canberra and Asia and the advantage for airlines of being a “first mover”.

While any decision on direct flights will be a commercial one for the airlines, we are certainly working closely with the airport to leave no stone unturned to present the ACT’s credentials. We will continue to advocate for international direct flights and the estimated 1,100 jobs and \$139 million in economic activity that will flow from them.

Of course, all sectors in our economy will benefit from direct international connectivity, but tourism is most immediately well placed. Singapore is consistently ranked amongst the top 10 countries of origin for Canberra’s international visitors. The broader South-East Asian region—including Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong—now consistently features as one of the ACT’s top three inbound markets.

Deepening the connections between tourism providers in Canberra and Singaporean travel agents is a major pillar of this strategy to increase the ACT’s overnight visitor expenditure to \$2.5 billion by 2020, and this was a major focus of the tourism aspects of the delegation.

An important event during the week was the Singapore travel agents workshop, which attracted 78 product managers and travel agents from Singapore and Malaysia. At a higher level the VIP travel trade and media lunch was attended by 60 heads of agencies and travel media representatives and generated a number of very positive articles promoting Canberra in South-East Asian travel publications.

The ACT was well represented at these functions, with Accor Hotels Canberra, the Canberra Rex Hotel, Pialligo Estate, the National Museum of Australia, the National Capital Attractions Association, the National Zoo and Aquarium, the Australian Institute of Sport, the Canberra Airport, the Australian Hotels Association, the National Convention Centre and the Intercontinental Hotel Group all participating.

The Singapore-Hong Kong delegation also included the first coordinated release of the CBR branding in an important offshore market. The logo was used extensively throughout the delegation, providing fresh, new imaging for Canberra that we found resonated well with both the Canberra delegates and the people we came in contact with during the course of the week. It was also pleasing to see the delegation achieving widespread publicity back here in Canberra, and the role that the brand was able to play in that messaging.

We were also fortunate in being able to leverage publicity from the Singaporean President’s visit to Canberra in the week prior, and also the University of Canberra

Brumbies' participation in a rugby 10s tournament which was used to celebrate the opening of Singapore's new national stadium. I will speak more about that shortly.

Visiting a hub of world trade like Singapore brings home the possibilities that are open for Canberra companies with the innovation and the belief to take their products to the world. I refer to companies like Intelledox, who invited me to their announcement of a major partnership with global corporate entity Fuji-Xerox. To be able to assist Intelledox to make this announcement at the CommunicAsia conference in front of the Canberra booth was certainly a highlight for the mission. Companies like SchoolPro are positively positioning themselves to sell administration software to Singapore schools by setting up an office in Singapore.

Companies like Link Digital found that the data aggregation solution they are currently providing to the Australian government is what the Singaporean government is also looking for. Companies like On-the-Go announced in Singapore a major deal to sell custom-made sports apparel uniforms to Anytime Fitness Asia, the world's largest health club chain. On-the-Go also won the "entrepreneurial spirit award" for the mission for opportunistically securing a supply deal with the hotel they were staying in just in the four days that they were there. Companies like E-way, the electronic payments company, have several Singaporean customers and recently announced a partnership with a Singaporean bank which developed from a lead investigated during the trade mission.

The ACT's tertiary education sector was also well represented on the mission, with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canberra, Professor Stephen Parker, attending. The ANU also had a strong presence, and took the opportunity to organise a regional alumni event which attracted over 150 people.

I would also quickly like to make mention of other mission participants, as I am sure we will be hearing more about them in the future. Quintessence Labs and the Centre for Internet Safety are two companies that have spun out of Canberra's world-renowned research institutions. They not only show great commercial promise but also they are consistently lifting Canberra's knowledge-based reputation by their international activities.

Finally, I make mention of Wild Bear, one of Canberra's most successful exporters. This high-quality production company is making great inroads into the Asian market and was targeting Singaporean production companies and cultural institutions on this mission.

Whilst in Singapore I took the opportunity to meet with a number of key organisations with experience in delivering major urban infrastructure such as our own city to the lake and capital metro projects. For example, SMRT, or the Singapore Mass Rapid Transit Corporation, enjoy an annual turnover of approximately \$SGD1.1 billion and have billions of dollars worth of public transport assets, including an extensive and popular light rail system. I was very pleased to see the interest that SMRT demonstrated in the capital metro project and that they were represented yesterday at the industry briefing. It can only augur well if companies of this size and experience are involved in ACT public transport infrastructure in the future.

These projects were also the focus of further one-on-one meetings with other large investors—Comfort Delgro, and Temasek, a global portfolio investment company backed by the Singaporean government.

Another infrastructure-related connection was with the Singapore sports hub. This recently completed 25-hectare site in the centre of Singapore includes a new 55,000-seat indoor national stadium, a 6,000-seat aquatic facility, a 3,000-seat indoor arena, a range of community sports facilities and 41,000 square metres of commercial retail space.

Integrated into the mass rapid transit network, this public-private partnership delivered facility provides a great example of what can be achieved for a community with vision and persistence and certainly provides a very good guide to the development of our own city to the lake project. It is important to note that the government will continue to seek investment in the city to the lake project. I will be undertaking further trade missions into South-East Asia in particular, to continue that focus.

The government have announced that we will continue work on city to the lake and the priority in the next five years remains with development of the West Basin waterfront boardwalk, footpaths, cycle paths and recreation spaces, and, indeed, the new city pool. The site for a new stadium is not available until a new pool is built and the timing of this obviously is subject to further budget considerations and private investor interest.

Of course, these large projects represent significant investment opportunities for many overseas organisations. Accordingly, attracting investment is an ever-present focus during missions such as these.

Following on from the delegation to Singapore, I travelled to Hong Kong, where I led an Austrade-supported roundtable investment forum at which we presented a range of investment opportunities, including capital metro and city to the lake, to more than a dozen decision-makers from Hong Kong investment organisations. We also took the opportunity to deliver a comprehensive presentation on the ACT economy to a range of high-level finance industry representatives from across the region, raising awareness of the potential opportunities for international financiers via ACT bonds.

I completed my week with a visit to Huawei's headquarters in Shenzhen. This is a truly amazing place, a facility that has more than 5,000 employees and that has been the driving force in the growth of Shenzhen, a city now of more than 10 million people that as recently as 1979 had a population of just over 300,000.

In conclusion, these delegations are about establishing strong and enduring connections between Canberra and interested and like-minded organisations in Singapore and Hong Kong. Whilst we are a small city, and in some ways we are really at the beginning of an internationalisation journey, there is no doubt that interest in our city is strong and the willingness to engage with us is real.

It is this potential that trade represents for our region that drives the government to do what we can to assist our business community's international activities. Next month we will be back in Singapore and Japan to further promote trade and investment outcomes. Directorate staff are working on a focused program of future market visits designed to deliver on that trade potential well into the future. Of course, we will advise the Assembly of the outcomes of those missions once they are concluded.

Transport—light rail Ministerial statement

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro), by leave: Today I will be making a statement as Minister for Capital Metro. The Capital Metro Agency is planning, designing and delivering one of the most significant urban transformation initiatives ever undertaken by this government, or indeed arguably by any ACT government. Canberra is a growing and vibrant city. It is the government's responsibility to sustainably accommodate and plan for that growth, whilst nurturing the city's identity and creating opportunities for its residents.

We know that, after its first century, Canberra is emerging as a confident and bold city. We are not afraid to do the right thing, even when others work against us. We are a city of big thinkers with big ideas. We are not small minded, nor are we short-sighted. Canberrans have five universities represented here and many leading research institutions. Some of the world's leading academics and experts choose to base themselves in our city. We are proud to be a city where ideas flourish and debate can take place. We look for the right solutions, not just the easy ones. We are a government that listens to scientific evidence. We are a government that consults, plans and identifies the best path ahead. And, importantly, we are a government that is getting on with the job.

We know that we need to change. Populations are increasing. The climate is changing and many of the resources we rely on are finite. We have the common sense to know that the city we live in now is simply not sustainable. As the most progressive city in the nation, we are tackling the big issues while others suffer from indecision and delay. Canberra is already well on its way to achieving 90 per cent renewable energy by 2020 and carbon neutrality by 2060. The ACT's first and the country's largest operational solar farm to date joined the grid earlier this month, producing enough energy to power 4,500 Canberra homes. Plans for a second solar project are already well underway.

But there are big challenges to overcome before we become a truly sustainable city. Between now and 2050, Canberra will need to accommodate another 200,000 residents, increasing the city's population to over 600,000. Motor vehicles are responsible for over 20 per cent of the territory's greenhouse gas emissions, well above the national average of 14 per cent, reflecting one of the highest car dependency rates of any centre in the country. In car dependent cities, it does not take much thinking to understand that, with an increasing population, more cars results in even more congestion.

It is clear that we need to change the way our city functions so that we can comfortably accommodate more people and avoid the pitfalls of focusing on one transport mode at the expense of others. It would be irresponsible to do nothing, to simply pass these challenges on to some future distant generation. As a government that takes a long-term view, and with plans for the next 10, 20 and 50 years, we have researched, engaged and planned to ensure that we choose the right path.

The government's transport, planning and climate change strategies are all working together to set a path for the city's transition to a sustainable, vibrant capital city of which all Australians can be proud. We know that we need to work in a holistic way and that all of these elements of our responsibility must be brought together. We are ensuring that land is used more efficiently and that access to services is more equitable by encouraging higher density development along transport routes. We are ensuring the delivery of an integrated transport system that will help make it easier and more efficient for Canberrans and visitors alike to move around the city; a transport system that encourages more active travel, reduces the city's car dependence and its greenhouse gas emissions, while supporting more connected and accessible communities.

Good public transport is essential for all great cities. Of the top 10 cities listed in the 2012 Economic Intelligence Unit's global liveability indexes, eight have light rail systems. This is no coincidence. Over the last 60 years, as a city we have embraced the motor car with a passion. We have invested heavily in road infrastructure. As a result, our main avenues are car thoroughfares and the city centre has declined as activity has spread outwards. In the last four years alone, we have spent over \$1.13 billion on transport infrastructure, with the main proportion of that going on roads. We have \$716 million of infrastructure projects planned for the next four years, including works in progress. The government has an annual budget of \$4.5 billion, double the budget it was 10 years ago. We are no longer a small territory and good, long-term infrastructure is a critical investment.

To those that talk down our economy, the territory has one of the strongest and most secure economies in Australia. With the ACT's long-term economic growth tracking at around three per cent for each of the last five years, Canberra has consistently outperformed most other jurisdictions. Its continued growth during the global economic downturn has seen the territory recognised as a star performer among many advanced economies. It should be noted that without light rail, Canberra's public transportation expenditure is limited in its diversity, focusing on modes at the expense of an integrated, accessible-to-all system. This is in contrast to other Australian jurisdictions.

Let me take a moment to mention what our neighbours are currently investing in transport infrastructure. The New South Wales Liberal government has announced a four-year, \$6.4 billion investment program in transportation infrastructure which predominantly consists of rail investments, including the \$4 billion north-west rail link and the \$782 million south-west rail link. In May this year, the Victorian Liberal government noted \$15 billion of foreshadowed investment in the public transport network, delivering a new metropolitan rail tunnel, new railway stations, a rail link to Melbourne Airport and new bus services.

As the minister responsible for Canberra's light rail project, I am pleased to confirm to the Assembly again today that the government has agreed to procure the capital metro light rail project as outlined in the approved business case via an availability private-public partnership. By committing to capital metro, the ACT Labor government is backing public transport. It is backing Canberra's infrastructure investment. It is backing the revitalisation of the Northbourne Avenue corridor. It is backing smarter land use and it is providing a significant economic stimulus and diversifying the territory's economy.

Capital metro will be delivered as a public-private partnership to ensure price certainty and to minimise the risk borne by taxpayers. It is the right and responsible way to deliver and operate light rail. The funding mechanism is a common-sense decision that will provide the best value outcome by making use of proven expertise. The government has clearly not previously built, owned or operated a light rail system so it makes sense to seek the best expertise the nation and indeed the world can offer, and there is no doubt after yesterday's industry briefing that this project is attracting significant attention.

By funding it as a PPP, the territory is opening up the project to national and international experienced operators and financiers, driving a competitive and value-driven process. Much experience has been applied to the selection of the PPP approach. The author of the latest authoritative book on PPPs has been closely involved in developing this approach. The capital metro project board chair, Mr John Fitzgerald, has extensive experience in successful PPP delivery. The government has looked at recently successful PPP approaches applied to the delivery of light rail in Sydney and on the Gold Coast.

Under a PPP the territory does not begin paying for the service until it is operational. The territory will then start making regular payments over time, similar to a home loan but also including ongoing operational costs. An availability PPP means the expenditure is spread over future decades, ensuring that light rail costs are paid for by future users.

Following positive market sounding and over 300 local, national and international representatives attending yesterday's industry briefing, the government is confident that the project is attracting strong interest and proposals from the market, which will in turn drive a competitive price, value for money and high quality outcomes for the territory.

The government intends to release the business case when it is prudent and sensible to do so, at a time that is appropriate in the procurement process. We are currently seeking advice on whether any of the current business case may negatively affect the procurement process. But all things being equal, we anticipate its release on 31 October. This investigation, combined with our intent to release a suite of documents, means the government currently intends to share the business case at the same time as the release of the EOI process which, as I have said, is on 31 October.

The government is committed to taking this unusual step of releasing the business case at the same time as the EOI to demonstrate the open and transparent delivery of

this project. It also demonstrates that the government is prepared to act in a transparent manner that exceeds the recommendations made by the recent Select Committee on Estimates in their recommendation No 65.

I would like to strongly emphasise that this is not just a public transport project. The introduction of light rail to the city's transport infrastructure will fundamentally change the way that the city grows and Canberrans live. It is very much a city-shaping project. It is the glue that helps bind our city urban renewal plans together. These plans include a range of important projects such as city to the lake, creating a world-class recreational facility for all residents and visitors to enjoy, and, over time, the delivery of the city stadium and convention centre.

Capital metro is also pivotal to the much-needed rejuvenation of the gateway to the city, Northbourne Avenue. This avenue has the potential to be one of the world's impressive urban boulevards. The avenue already hosts over 40 per cent of the city's hotels, many businesses and vibrant surrounding precincts. It is also a corridor where the government owns a large proportion of the land, so as a territory, as a community, we are in an enviable position to be able to shape and benefit from the transport-oriented development instigated by this transport investment.

The government intends to use light rail to unlock the potential of the city centre and this important avenue, catalysing urban renewal. As has been the experience in cities all over the world, the government expects that investment in light rail will stimulate business activity, whilst increasing population density and employment opportunities along the corridor. A recent interview with CityLink engineer Alan Hale in the *Age* discussed, and I quote:

The evidence from cities around the world where real renewal has been achieved is that public transport should be the primary focus, not just more and more roads.

He admitted that for those involved in major transport projects long enough, the lessons learnt, often the hard way, are that building more roads without investing in public transport is simply a recipe for inducing more vehicular travel. Decision makers, professionals and communities are all waking up to the fact that more roads on their own are simply not the answer.

As well as benefiting local industry, the government's light rail investment is the economic stimulus and potential to provide new and sustainable jobs for the territory—jobs that are not public sector jobs that will be accessible to young Canberrans and the long-term unemployed. The territory is already identifying skills shortages and introducing training opportunities to increase employment through this initial light rail investment.

During the construction phase, the consultants EY have estimated that over 3,500 direct and indirect jobs will be supported. Future mapping across a 30-year period indicates that around 50,000 jobs will be supported. At a time when youth unemployment is high and public service jobs are being cut, this is an important contribution to diversifying and strengthening employment opportunities for all Canberrans.

There are, of course, also significant environmental benefits from reducing our city's level of car dependence. Twenty-three per cent of the territory's carbon emissions are from transport, compared to the national average of 14 per cent. All the world's cities need to act now to stop the upward trend in vehicle emissions, and investment in light rail will help us play our part.

The project also has important health benefits. The American Journal of Preventive Medicine released a report in 2010 tying weight loss to transit systems. Researchers found the construction of a light rail resulted in increased physical activity and subsequent weight loss by people using the system. The study found there is a significant association between light rail transit use and reductions in body mass index. The study also reported light rail transit users were 81 per cent less likely to become obese over time. At a time when our city's obesity rates have grown from 23 per cent in 1995 to 63 per cent last year, this must be a key consideration in the government's decision making.

We also need to apply some common sense and invest in a well-integrated transport network with light rail as its spine. Over the past few years we have explored different options, looked at different transport modes and understood their weaknesses and strengths. Importantly for the Northbourne corridor, light rail must integrate with the surrounding areas. A busway would need to have barriers and be segregated, acting as a divisive structure within the important Northbourne Avenue corridor and turning this avenue into an eight-lane road and a concrete landscape. It would split communities along the corridor and turn it into solely a bus and car thoroughfare.

In contrast, light rail can blend with urban areas and soft landscaped areas and bring communities together. You can see this in Bourke Street in Melbourne and in cities throughout Europe. Maybe this is why people demonstrate a preference for light rail, and why it is the only public transport mode that has demonstrated its capacity to attract passengers directly out of using their cars.

Public transport in Canberra requires an excellent integration of buses and light rail. As the government has said before, we will use transport modes in an integrated and appropriate way.

Through the transport for Canberra policy and the light rail master plan we are planning a broader city-wide network. The success of stage 1 is imperative to lay the foundation for light rail to the rest of the city. It is the government's intent that all of Canberra is serviced by a high quality, strongly integrated public transport system.

This is a vision that befits our planned legacy and one we intend to deliver in partnership with the best knowledge and skills of the transport industry. The government will be consulting, through my colleague Mr Gentleman, as Minister for Planning, on the wider light rail network over the coming months.

The territory has clear aspirations for this project, which I will briefly outline. It must attract Canberrans to public transport through a high quality customer experience, focusing on a reliable, frequent, easy to use, safe and modern light rail service. It must

deliver excellent urban design that befits the system's prominent location in the primary gateway to the nation's capital. It must support our community by engaging local industry, creating jobs, supporting local industry and minimising disruption. And it must achieve value, through ensuring innovation is used to deliver the best outcomes for the territory at an affordable price.

The government is not delivering this project in isolation or on its own. We are delivering it through a consultative and responsible approach, ensuring we have sought out well-qualified and experienced consultants and staff to guide and develop the project, commissioning world leaders in infrastructure and economic analysis to design and develop the business case for the project.

We have recently closed a six-week community consultation on the early design to ensure we fully understand the community's needs and expectations for this project. I would like to briefly summarise the outcomes of that consultation process to date.

Over the past few months Capital Metro Agency has been seeking feedback from the community on the design features of this project. The dedicated six-week consultation period included activities such as a pop-up information centre on Mort Street at the city bus interchange; community information sessions at Gungahlin, Dickson, Erindale and Tuggeranong; and direct mailing, with a letterbox drop to 17,000 residents within the corridor and direct email to over 20,000 Canberra Connect registered residents; the establishment of a dedicated "engagement hub" on the capital metro website; an online survey to seek feedback on specific aspects of the project's design; a stakeholder deliberative forum, with representatives including industry, social services, businesses, universities, special interest groups such as the Blind Society, the Heart Foundation and Pedal Power, and community groups; presentations and workshops with stakeholders and community councils; media and print advertising to encourage public participation; a rigorous social media program; and the creation of over 30 short online films to help people understand the key aspects of and reasons for the project. The Capital Metro Agency recorded over 16,500 interactions with the public, with people seeking information online, completing surveys and taking part in face-to-face discussion.

This consultation will inform other areas of government activity, including our planning for Northbourne Avenue and the light rail master plan.

The community gave the strong message that the light rail service should be safe, be easily accessible and interact effectively with other modes of transport, including cycling, cars and the ACTION bus network. There were questions from the community about how much it will cost to travel on the light rail and what the timetable, routes and stops will be.

Reflecting Canberra's strong cycling culture, there was a keen interest in being able to travel with bicycles or ensure their safe storage. Responses to the online survey indicated that 44 per cent would take a bicycle on the light rail, with 25 per cent suggesting they would take a bike on the light rail every day. Further in-depth engagement with cycle groups highlighted the importance of planning for the bicycle,

citing capital metro as an important opportunity to integrate cycling into the overall design and construction of the transport corridor.

In relation to the urban environment, over 70 per cent of survey responses supported the proposal to make the area of Hibberson Street between Gungahlin Place and Hinder Street in Gungahlin a pedestrian and light rail only zone. There was also strong support for replanting native trees along Northbourne Avenue and emphasising the “bush capital” appearance of the city. The Dickson interchange is also seen as an important priority area. The light rail design needs to complement plans for the area and encourage strong and safe integration with buses, pedestrians and cyclists. In particular, local schools and safe crossings were frequently raised as important considerations for this precinct. The extension of stage 1 to Russell also received strong support and is seen as a sensible option to be considered considering the increase in patronage it will generate and the plans to upgrade Constitution Avenue. Feedback from stakeholder discussions also indicated that plans for light rail should accommodate future growth and the proposed activity set out in the city plan and city to the lake initiative.

In the territory we have a choice: we can start addressing transport issues now at a relatively low cost, or we can wait until congestion, pollution and poor accessibility cripple our city and we pay a much higher price. As calculated by the Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics in 2007, congestion cost the territory \$110 million a year in 2005 and is projected to increase by 82 per cent to \$200 million in 2020. During peak travel times, road congestion already adds approximately 15 minutes to the travel along the city to Gungahlin corridor. Introducing light rail is projected to halve corridor congestion immediately, providing travel benefits to road users and a frequent and reliable service for public transport users. We want to stay true to our planned city heritage, not fall into the pitfalls of other cities, by making sure that congestion does not cripple our city and does not impose unreasonable burdens on residents.

I am pleased to say that the Capital Metro Agency has delivered against all of its key strategic priorities to date. The business case has been finalised; cabinet has been able to make a well-informed decision on stage 1. The agency has identified the most suitable financial and funding model for the delivery and operation of this service. Ongoing, the agency’s priorities now are further engaging with the community to further refine the design; engage with industry to refine and prosecute an agreed procurement strategy; and work across government to develop the appropriate integration of light rail with the territory’s existing transport systems, including our walking network, cycling network, existing public transport through ACTION bus services and private motor vehicle networks.

To support that work, Capital Metro Agency will continue its successful and appropriate program of strategic engagement of key advisers, particularly for those aspects of the project that are new to the territory—for example, the investigation of innovative and prudent operating parameters and design considerations for the light rail service, and the specialist commercial and legal experience required to prosecute the delivery strategy.

Over the last six months there has been extensive work to determine the technical work for engineering, urban design and light rail operations. The technical adviser consultancy, involving Arup, Hassell, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Brown Consulting and others, has progressed the project through the phases of feasibility, scoping and definition design. Each phase has been delivered as required and the growing level of detail has provided the understanding needed to progress our planning, community discussions and, importantly, the financial analysis in the business case.

We have seen a great deal of market interest in the project for all aspects of its delivery, including planning, financing, constructing and operations. In addition to completing a number of market-requested individual briefings, the Capital Metro Agency has completed a detailed market sounding process, and the feedback received from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. A project of this size and significance requires extensive organisation on the side of the private sector, and we will need to do all that we can to inform industry and facilitate their preparation.

It is for this reason that the industry briefing was held yesterday which saw such strong interest from local, national and international firms. The purpose of the briefing was to provide participants with all that they needed to understand the project and to respond strongly to our expression of interest process. There was also a strong turnout from local suppliers, who are very keen to understand the opportunities for their businesses.

The Capital Metro Agency has developed a local industry participation policy to ensure that local businesses and suppliers are involved in delivering the first stage of light rail. This policy is available on the capital metro website and is now being developed into a local industry plan that will be an important part of the procurement strategy.

The industry briefing provided the government with an opportunity to outline the key aspects of the project. This event demonstrates the ongoing progress of this project, following on from design, definition design and community consultation. Following the government's commitment to proceed with the project, we are now preparing to deliver the procurement process, with the expression of interest process to commence at the end of next month.

The approval of the final business case by the government enables the project to progress into the procurement phase. The procurement phase will run until a preferred tender is identified and a contract agreed and executed. The procurement phase of the project begins with the announcement of the EOI phase at the end of October, and this will be the first opportunity for the market to officially respond to the project's requirements. It is anticipated that that process will last approximately three months and result in the identification of a short-list of respondents.

Proponents short-listed at the EOI stage will then be invited to provide their formal proposals. This process is anticipated to commence in the second quarter of 2015 and last until the end of next year.

By the end of 2015, a preferred tenderer will be identified and negotiation with the proponent will take place. It is anticipated that agreement will be reached and contract close achieved early in 2016, enabling construction to commence later in the same year.

I am pleased to confirm the government's commitment to Canberra's first light rail project and that we are well on schedule to commence construction in 2016. The government remains committed to this project. We have allocated significant resources to making it happen. We are being open and consultative in our approach. We have provided detailed designs and plans to the community as we progress. We want to build a public transport network that meets the needs of our community and stakeholders. I encourage everyone to learn more about this exciting project. This is a new and much-needed change in our city's approach. What we have now is not sustainable, and it is our responsibility to meet the challenges this city faces, not shy away from difficult decisions.

The Labor government went to the last election with this project as a commitment because it is the best long-term outcome for our city. It will deliver dedicated, rapid, reliable public transport services that will form the backbone of a well-integrated public transport system that is sustainable and that encourages smarter land use and more active lifestyles.

Stage 1 sets the foundation for a future network across the city, providing the capability to galvanise development along transport corridors and around our town centres. By doing so we will link transport and development to ensure we deliver the sustainable pattern of urban development that our city now needs. We have the highest level of car dependency of any city in the country. We have higher levels of obesity, higher levels of greenhouse gas pollution, higher congestion and lower productivity. It is time to start the journey to reduce and change these patterns. Let us not plan our city for the car; let us plan around people and ensure we deliver a city that is accessible to all, sustainable, vibrant and active. That is our vision for this city, and that is why this project is so important.

Major Events Bill 2014

Debate resumed from 14 August 2014, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Motion (by **Mr Hanson**) put:

That the debate be adjourned.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Noes 8

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

Question so resolved in the negative.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events) (11.05): Major events are an important part of the city's social, cultural and economic life and they create enthusiasm and excitement, build civic pride and raise the profile and perception of a community and a city. Raising the profile of a city can lead to lasting economic benefits for the city and for the broader region. Like the athletes that participate in these tournaments, host cities also have their moment of fame and opportunity to showcase to the world what they have to offer.

Canberra was put on the world stage in 2013-14, hosting numerous international sporting events. The success of these events has helped position our city as a successful host of national and international events, and we are building on this centenary year legacy in 2015, when Canberra will host 10 matches as part of the Asian Football Confederation, the AFC, Asian Cup 2015 and the International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup.

Six pool matches and a quarter final will be played at Canberra stadium for the Asian Cup in January 2015, while three matches will be played at Manuka Oval as part of the ICC Cricket World Cup in February and March. The AFC Asian Cup takes place in January next year and is contested by 16 teams from across Asia. The tournament will be broadcast to 80 countries, with a television reach of 2.5 billion viewers. It is one of the few sporting events that link Australia to all of the countries of Asia.

Canberra will join Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Newcastle as host cities for the tournament. GIO Stadium will host six games and a quarter final. The ACT government has made a contribution as a host city to these matches.

In 2006 the ICC announced that Cricket Australia and New Zealand Cricket would jointly host the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup. The government has supported the proposal to host the World Cup in 2015 and provided funding in the 2014-15 budget. This is the world's fourth largest tournament and the fourth most viewed sporting event in the world, representing a potential television audience of around a billion people, and it engages one-fifth of the world's population.

The ICC Cricket World Cup is contested by 14 teams from around the world, and the tournament will be held in Australia and New Zealand over a six-week period in February and March 2015, and Canberra hosts three matches at Manuka Oval.

So, in agreeing to be a host city for the Asian Cup and the Cricket World Cup, the territory government guaranteed that major event legislation would be in place to address four broad areas. These are to provide specific powers for police officers and other authorised people to ensure the safety and security of people participating in or attending major events, including sporting events, to create protections for the commercial and intellectual property rights of event sponsors, to provide for ticketing arrangements and to create offences to support these provisions. The Major Events

Bill 2014 will also keep a number of provisions and concepts from the existing major event legislation of 2000.

However, a modern events management legislative scheme is required to ensure that the ACT complies for the safe running of these tournaments. The current legislation for events does not address the specific requirements that event organisers and international bodies now require. The Major Events Bill will provide an opportunity for appropriate safeguards for event participants, event spectators and event organisers.

The changes proposed in the bill will provide an important legacy for the territory and will support our ongoing capability to attract and host major events in the future. They will allow us to bid for future major events, and the ACT is undoubtedly an emerging market for such events, and we are in competition with other jurisdictions, including New South Wales and Victoria. The significant and enduring economic impact to Canberra from hosting major events is substantial, and it provides an opportunity to showcase our city to a world audience, showcase for trade and business and investment opportunities for the city.

In 2010 PricewaterhouseCoopers undertook an economic impact assessment of next year's Asian Cup, which found that the tournament is expected to generate additional government revenues as follows: \$9.4 million for the commonwealth and \$4.6 million for state and local governments in the low scenario, \$11.4 million for the commonwealth and \$6 million for state and local governments in the medium scenario, and \$18.3 million for the commonwealth and \$8.9 million for state and local governments in the high scenario. These results indicate that the Asian Cup has potential to generate a positive economic impact for the ACT and nationally with a relatively low capital commitment.

Further, Deloitte Access Economics conducted an economic impact assessment of Canberra's Cricket World Cup bid. It was estimated that the event would bring a direct expenditure to the territory of more than \$8 million with a total added value of over \$7 million. These figures, though, were based on the ACT hosting only one full match. We now have won the rights to host three.

This Major Events Bill supports Canberra plan objectives to ensure that a strong, dynamic, resilient and diverse economy is present to meet the needs of the Canberra community and to promote the territory's place as the heart of a broader economic region. The intention is to test the provisions of the Major Events Bill for the one-day international cricket match between Australia and South Africa to be held at Manuka Oval on 19 November.

In introducing major new events legislation for the ACT, it is important that we ensure that the territory is event ready for the world stage, and this bill facilitates major events being staged here and builds on the significant momentum our centenary year major event celebrations have generated for the city.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.13): Firstly, I will explain why I moved to adjourn this debate this morning. It is for two main reasons. The first is that the bill is still incomplete. There are amendments being drafted by the

government that we have not seen, and therefore, by virtue of the fact we are coming back next week to go through the detail stage, it would make sense to me that we deal with this in one chunk when the opposition has the ability to actually see the full entirety of this bill, because, as is so often the case, the devil is in the detail. Secondly, the bill does seem inconsistent with other jurisdictions' approaches, and I will deal with each of those issues in turn.

We are being asked to deal with a bill today that is going to be debated in principle, but it is not the eventual bill that we are going to pass. We do not know the extent of the amendments that are being drafted. We know that they are coming. Do they change the intent of the bill in a significant way? We simply do not know the answer to that, so I am being asked, and the opposition is being asked today, to support a piece of legislation that we do not have all the details for and is not necessary.

It seems ludicrous that we would be asked to do that and then come back next week for the detail stage, to go through this process again when we do have that before us, and we have not been provided with an adequate explanation as to why that is occurring. So to do so is just poor process, and I think it is irresponsible of us when we could do it in its entirety next week.

The second point is that the bill is inconsistent with New South Wales and actually comes in after New South Wales have just assessed their own legislation. The New South Wales bill does not have some of the elements that this bill does with regard to security and crowd control, and their ticket reselling part does have differences in approach, but in the New South Wales parliament they felt sufficiently doubtful that they have referred their bill to committee for review.

We are an island in New South Wales. There is a reality that people from Queanbeyan and, obviously, from the outlying areas—perhaps they will come down from Sydney as well—will attend major events in Canberra. Let us hope that they do. The intent of these major events is to encourage people, particularly from New South Wales, to come here.

So not looking at, not addressing and not considering what New South Wales are doing smacks of poor policy to me. Their bill is in committee, and it seems rash to me that we would not wait to see what the learnings are, what it is that their committee is going to look at, both positively and negatively, for us to wait for that process to unfold so that we can then incorporate the relevant aspects of that into our legislation. We are not saying, "Stop." We are not saying, "Don't do this." We are saying, "Let us have a better process for doing this instead of rushing in and going off half cocked while the government is drafting amendments to its own bill."

That said, there are a number of issues that are going to be considered in this bill, which I will go through. There are four main areas that are being addressed, as has been outlined by Minister Barr today. There is event security, which includes search on entry; seizure powers; direction to move-on powers; crowd control, which includes the ability to seize prohibited items; and interfering with event fines, rather than just ejection and personal bans for serial pests. There are commercial and marketing restrictions, ranging from exclusive rights in a designated "clean zone"; no street

trading in this zone unless authorised; anti-ambush marketing provisions; and ticket reselling, scalping, being banned at values above face value, plus reasonable on-costs.

I will go through each one of these in more detail. The security and crowd control issues are being enacted, or are already enacted, in other states and territories. Failure to do so would put Canberra at risk in its ability to host major events. We are aware of the security concerns that exist across a broad range of areas, and we support these measures in principle.

Similarly, crowd control is an issue of which we are aware, and generally we are supportive. We accept that the current laws may be inadequate, in that the only recourse is ejection, which by its definition is a reactive rather than a proactive measure. My office has received, in a briefing from the government, examples where the penalty provisions can be used in a proactive sense, and this would be desirable, but, as ever, we look to review the application of these provisions.

The third element then is the commercial protection issues, and they are, in essence, requirements of event organisers to consider jurisdictions when holding events. It is important to note that these provisions are limited to declared major events within a declared zone. Existing businesses have specific exemption, which would be something that we would insist upon, obviously, and I think there would be consensus agreement on that. We will look at how that plays out when these provisions are enacted.

So generally speaking, we are supportive of those businesses that take the risks to support an event, and before any tickets are sold, and accept that some protection for that investment is reasonable from a public policy perspective to encourage more organisations to take that risk, let alone take the steps to bring those events to our city.

The issue then of ticket reselling, the fourth element, has created the most controversy and certainly the most amount of correspondence that we have received and, as I understand it, representations also to the government. These issues were discussed in a Senate committee earlier this year. Despite what was originally proclaimed by the minister, the committee recommended that “there was no need to change regulation” but operators “could do more to protect customers from unscrupulous arguments”.

It is arguable that there should not be any further regulation in this area at all but that there should be a policy response where government works with industry to protect consumers and event organisers. Given, however, that there is legislation before us, we have to look at the policy itself. Firstly, there is also the policy position that, if a person owns an item, it is essentially theirs to sell at any price that they can.

Is it up to governments to refuse to allow a free market to basically take place, and really is the government’s role just to make sure that it is a safe and legitimate market? There are certainly resellers arguing that it is going to happen regardless and a regulated, secure market provides the protection for consumers. That is a point that they make there. Without a market like that, there is fear that this legislation could have the perverse effect of driving a lot of this onto the black market and removing some of the safeguards that are developing in this place.

Also, we do not want to see major resources, including police and so on, diverted into an area that we have had a Senate committee say is not a significant problem, outside a few events. In other jurisdictions it has resulted in problematic implementation. Certainly there is a case that was reported in the media where a dad who resold a ticket that he could not use was then charged. That occurred in Victoria.

That said, the government have argued in briefings—and I would like to acknowledge those briefings that were provided by the government and thank them for that—that such provisions are a requirement to attract major events, that scalping is broadly condemned and unsatisfactory and that people are allowed to resell their tickets even to a major event for face value. We note that there is a special provision to include reasonable costs in selling and buying to be included; for example, booking fees, costs to advertise, deliver and so on. So, under this legislation, people can sell their tickets essentially at the same cost as an original ticket plus reasonable costs, and certainly I acknowledge that.

But it is a problematic piece of legislation. There are arguments for and against, as is often the case, and that is why I go back to my original point that, in considering this legislation, it would be very useful, if we were doing it in principle, to actually know the full extent of the legislation, to have actually had the government's amendments, which we have not seen, and also to keep that watchful eye and just see what rolls out of New South Wales and what the results of their parliamentary committee were before we were in a position where we had to essentially vote on this legislation. So they are the principal concerns with the four major elements for this bill.

The other issue I would like to raise is when the minister is actually going to apply this legislation. Essentially it is specified that this is for major events, and the minister has outlined those two events, the Asian soccer and the World Cup Cricket. We support getting those events to Canberra, and certainly we are not going to be doing anything that would stand in the way of that eventuating.

But we do want to make sure that we do not see a situation where other events without similar significance are prescribed and that we essentially see that the effect of a major event is diluted to the point where this becomes just a normal process for a Giants game, for a Brumbies game or for a final of the Raiders or whatever it might be. We need to make sure that this retains its special case as special events or major events. Certainly, when we watch this legislation roll out, that would be a major part of what we look at to make sure that the minister is not misusing this legislation in a way that is not intended or is not in the spirit of this legislation. I would certainly indicate that, should we see that occurring, we would certainly bring legislation in this place to restrict the minister doing so.

In conclusion, as I have said, we will not oppose this legislation but I think it is not being done in a good way. I think it would be judicious to wait for the amendments, it would be judicious to see what is occurring in New South Wales, and certainly we will be paying very close attention to the way that this legislation actually rolls out to make sure that it does not go beyond the intent of what is being passed here today.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.25): Let me first turn to the reasons I did not support adjourning the bill. I do think it is reasonable that we get on with the business and debate the bill in principle; I do not think there is a reason to adjourn the entire bill today. I understand that the government would like to debate the bill in principle and defer the detail to a later stage. This acknowledges that there are several concerns about how the bill will operate, particularly in relation to the limitations it places on the rights and liberties of people. I have raised those specific concerns with Mr Corbell, and I understand that at the moment he is working with the directorate on a series of amendments which I hope will address the issues that have been raised.

In principle I do support the intent of this bill, and that is actually what we are debating here this morning. The bill intends to ensure that major and important ACT events operate safely and efficiently. It deals with security at these events as well as the commercial arrangements accompanying them. On the first of these issues—the security—I do have some concerns, which I will talk to in a moment.

The suggestion this morning was that we adjourn the entire bill to a later date. Mr Hanson noted in particular that New South Wales has just sent a bill to committee called the New South Wales Fair Trading Amendment (Ticket Reselling) Bill 2014. That is something that I and my office have had a look at. The first point I would make here is that New South Wales already has anti-scalping provisions in place that are essentially the same as those in the proposed ACT bill. Secondly, the bill going to the committee is different from the ACT bill. It is an extension to the existing laws. The bill in committee, for example, would require photographic proof of tickets that are being resold; it sets a 10 per cent threshold on resale price over the original price; and it requires websites to remove sellers that are in breach or face fines.

I also think that there will almost always be a reason to delay this legislation based on an argument of inconsistency between jurisdictions or diverse views from stakeholders. Some major stakeholders, it seems, support anti-scalping legislation; some do not support it. There are certainly a range of different approaches that have been put on the table. We are seeing an area where there are a significant range of views. I think that here in the ACT we need to come up with a position, and I think we should seek to move forward on that.

There have already been committee reports looking at this issue. The federal Senate committee, for example, talked about the benefits of coordinating efforts across Australia, such as through an industry code of practice. I agree that this would help, but it does not seem to be forthcoming, and I note that major industry stakeholders such as Ticketek and Ticketmaster do not actually agree on an approach to ticket scalping. In the meantime, it is appropriate that the ACT introduce some kind of ticket scalping protections, particularly given the hosting of large sporting events in our city soon, including the Asian football cup and the Cricket World Cup.

I really think it is appropriate to try and tackle something that I consider to be a scourge of sporting events, and that is the practice of people who obtain large numbers of tickets and then seek to sell them at significant profit. I do not think there is any problem with reselling a ticket if you cannot attend. And if you have bought a

few tickets for you and your mates and one of your mates cannot come along, I think it is quite appropriate to be able to sell them at the gate to someone who is trying to get in. But I believe the legislation allows for that in its reference to selling essentially at face value and any costs incurred, which would cover the fees that go with buying tickets and the like. I do not think that that is an unreasonable thing. My interpretation, having looked at this provision, because I think that is an important consideration, is that the legislation allows for that sort of conduct.

The reality of major events such as the Olympics or, locally, the Cricket World Cup and the Asian football cup is that the organisers and rights holders put a significant amount of money and effort into the events and they expect to be able to control the merchandising and other commercial opportunities and to refinance the event and get some return on the money that has been invested. The events are typically subject to opportunistic efforts from people or businesses who seek to profit from the event through activities such as pretending they are an official sponsor or official merchandiser, creating pirate merchandise, or buying and reselling tickets for a profit. I think it is acceptable that the government take some appropriate measures to help protect the rights holders of these events, noting that the legislation is designed in a way to apply only to special declared events.

I was interested in Mr Hanson's comments on what would be considered a specially declared event. From the discussions that I was involved in in cabinet, when I listened to Mr Corbell's explanation of this, I think there is a clear expectation that it will be only limited to particular events. If we saw it more widely applied, that would warrant further discussion here in the Assembly.

I would like to turn to the issue of security questions. A key part of the major events bill is the new security arrangements which will apply at declared major or important events. I have noted with interest the comments made by the scrutiny committee, and I believe they raise some important issues. These warrant close attention, and I have sought further information from Mr Corbell about his response. As was touched on earlier, I understand he is working to respond to those, and that is why we are only discussing this in principle today. I look forward to seeing the further amendments and how some of those concerns raised by scrutiny are addressed to ensure that we get the right balance there. We always have to be very careful about the intrusions that parliaments can make on people's personal rights and liberties, particularly in the name of security. I understand there is a balance to be had—after all, the police and the parliament have a job to ensure safety—but security laws are also an area where individual rights can be eroded away if great care is not taken in the drafting of legislation and the powers that are granted under that legislation.

As an example—and this is one pointed out by the scrutiny committee—clauses 16 and 17 allow authorised officers “stop, detain and search powers”. The bill contains no criteria to guide an authorised officer as to the circumstances in which it is appropriate to exercise this power. Imagine a situation in which this can be used. It essentially allows these authorised officers to stop anybody at a declared event—it could be a football or cricket match, for example—and search them. The person has no right to refuse and in fact faces a strict liability penalty if they do.

Rather than allow this broad power, the bill should require limitations, for example that the officer could search someone if they have a reasonable suspicion. Many people, of course, will not mind being searched; others might feel persecuted. There is always a concern that the powers might not be used fairly or appropriately. As the scrutiny committee notes:

At common law power does not exist for the personal search by police of suspects prior to their being arrested. There is no general power at common law ... enabling police to stop and search suspects, either by frisk or more intrusive search, or to seize their property.

The report continues:

Of course this statement applies with more force to a person who is not suspected of crime.

There are a number of other areas raised by the scrutiny committee, such as the police power to require provision of a name and address without any limitation or justification; the power of an authorised officer to direct a person to leave an event venue, which is a very widely expressed power; and the power of authorised officers to deny entry to someone if they decide it is likely they will commit an offence, which is also a very widely expressed power.

Generally, I am supportive of the need to ensure major events run smoothly and safely. The legislation sets out new laws to help keep serial pests away from events, and to prevent other disruptive or dangerous behaviour such as pitch invasion.

On that basis, I support this legislation, I support the intent of the legislation and I look forward to working with Assembly colleagues on the proposed amendments so that we strike the appropriate balance between security, safety and efficiency, on the one hand, and ensuring appropriate protection of people's rights and liberties, on the other.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (11.34), in reply: It is significant that the Assembly is considering this bill today, so soon after the Australian government's decision to raise the national terrorism public alert level from medium to high. That decision, of course, is based on advice from security and intelligence agencies who have relied on a body of evidence that points to the increased likelihood of a terrorist attack in Australia. Raising the alert level to high is designed to increase vigilance and raise awareness.

The government is therefore working closely here in Canberra with all agencies to ensure our plans and arrangements are in place to ensure the ongoing security and safety of our community. This includes for major events which are scheduled for 2015. The measures in this bill will help support ACT Policing's ability to effectively respond to the security assessments for major events.

Before I go on I would like to foreshadow that I will be moving during the detail stage government amendments to address a number of issues that have been raised by the scrutiny of bills committee in their report No 22. I wish to thank the committee for the thoughtful attention they have given to this bill.

I will provide a summary of matters to be addressed by way of government amendment shortly. The committee's close attention and the government's willingness to address these concerns and questions underscore the importance of the subject of this bill—the safety of the community at major events. I will therefore also table a revised explanatory statement at the detail stage to address a number of issues raised by the committee. The revised statement will also address a minor error that I drew to the committee's attention in writing on 4 September.

I saw and heard Mr Hanson in this debate indicate that he felt that it would be desirable for debate on this bill to not proceed ahead of consideration of a similar bill by the New South Wales parliament. The bill that Mr Hanson refers to is the New South Wales Fair Trading Amendment (Ticket Reselling) Bill 2014. It is not an event security bill. It is not a bill that deals with the management of events. It is a bill that solely deals with the issue of ticket reselling, which is an element—an element only—of this bill.

The provisions in that New South Wales bill appear to apply a blanket approach which prohibits any selling of tickets contrary to terms and conditions; that is, if the terms and conditions specify no resale then the legislation would prohibit such resale. These new provisions would apply whether or not an event is declared or otherwise applied by the relevant New South Wales minister. Therefore the New South Wales bill would directly affect any forum advertising to sell tickets, including websites, magazines, newspapers or other publications.

The approach proposed in the ACT bill is far more limited than that proposed under the New South Wales bill. Reselling provisions and prohibitions on resale and limits on their resale will only apply if an event is declared—not the broad-ranging provisions that appear to be proposed in the New South Wales bill. For this reason any proposal to delay consideration of the ACT bill to await the outcomes of the New South Wales parliamentary committee's views on their own bill is, in the government's view, unjustified. I would also make the observation that the New South Wales bill was only referred to the committee on 10 September this year; therefore any report will be some time away.

Turning to the ACT bill, it is the intention of the bill to repeal the Major Events Security Act 2000 and replace it with a comprehensive and transparent regime for dealing with major events so that they can be hosted safely and effectively. The bill, as my colleague Mr Barr has pointed out, helps to promote the ACT nationally and internationally as a welcoming place to visit, to live in, to study and invest in. Provisions in the bill allow the intellectual property and other commercial rights of sponsors to be protected. That helps to ensure the ACT is competitive when it bids to host such major events.

The legislation is a critical part of the ACT's preparation for hosting games as part of the Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup and the International Cricket Council World Cup, both of which will take place next year. Both events, of course, are expected to generate significant positive economic and social benefits both here in the ACT and elsewhere.

Building on existing security and management arrangements under the Major Events Security Act, the bill draws on elements of New Zealand, Victorian, New South Wales and commonwealth law to safeguard human rights and protect the commercial interests of events, event organisers and their sponsors.

The measures in the bill can be applied selectively to particular events when it is necessary to provide additional crowd management, ticketing or commercial and intellectual property protections. In order for the act to apply, a minister must give notice that either a major event or an important sporting event will occur.

This bill ensures that the ACT government meets the government guarantees associated with hosting events for both the Asian Cup and the International Cricket Council World Cup.

The new legislation will meet these guarantees by ensuring the safety and security of all event attendees at major events by providing specific powers for police and other authorised people, protecting against ticket scalping in specific circumstances for certain declared events, protecting intellectual property and other commercial rights of event sponsors, and supporting those provisions with new offences.

If the Assembly passes this bill, we will be the first jurisdiction to fully meet all the government guarantees for these events within a human rights framework. Not only will the bill meet the government guarantees but it will create an important legacy for future events.

Rights protection is a critical element of hosting incentives for major events. The provisions of the bill ensure protection of commercial rights and the investment made by event organisers or sponsors. Events with a national or international profile will be eligible for a major event declaration and some of these events will call for the commercial protections available under the bill. These events will rely on the valuable support of their sponsors so that costs associated with the event can be met.

A key part of attracting sponsorship is making certain that sponsors are able to enjoy the benefits associated with the event without interference from commercial interlopers or competitors. Ambush marketing also risks damaging the commercial reputation of event organisers and, by extension, risks the reputation of host jurisdictions.

The bill also ensures that both spectators and event participants are kept safe by creating powers for authorised officials and police officers to allow them to give reasonable directions and otherwise intervene in problematic situations. The bill creates offences such as failing to comply with directions made by authorised officials

or police so that powers can be enforced. This not only ensures safety but allows attendees to enjoy the major events experience that they have paid good money for.

Appropriate laws allowing effective management of major events can have tangible community benefits. Giving authorities the ability to effectively manage security for major events is an important part of the overall safe management of these events.

The government recognises that the security and enforcement powers contained in the bill are significant and, for that reason, the government proposes to keep their use under review. I note the way we regard security in 2014 is very different from the way we regarded security in 2000 when the Major Events Security Act was passed. This is reflected in the revisions to the security framework in this bill.

The government is committed to the view that extraordinary security powers like those available in the bill should be balanced with the appropriate protections and safeguards. The bill engages and places limitations on a number of rights under our Human Rights Act.

The government amendments to be proposed in response to the scrutiny comments will supplement the rights protections already included in the bill, ensuring that these rights are limited in a justifiable and proportionate way and that the least restrictive option available has been taken in each case.

For example, the bill engages and limits the right to privacy by providing entry, search and seizure powers to authorised people. It is necessary to limit this right to ensure a safe and secure environment for major events. As the event must be declared publicly, people attending the event will be on notice about the conditions of entry, search powers and which items are prohibited.

The bill protects the intellectual property of sponsors by creating “clean zones” around major events where unauthorised advertising and sales cannot occur. These protections engage and limit the right to freedom of expression, but are necessary to allow events to be commercially viable. The limitation on the right is restricted as “clean zones” are strictly defined in terms of time period and geography. The bill also provides exemptions so that normal, existing business and individual activities are not curtailed.

The bill supports the right to liberty and security of participants and people attending declared major events as the bill provides powers to ensure a safe experience for everyone at the event.

I also take the opportunity to provide members with an indication of the amendments that will be moved to deal with the matters raised by the scrutiny of bills committee report. The committee raised concern that the power of the executive to make event declarations, notifications or variations is framed in broad terms. Government amendments will be proposed so that the exercise of these powers by the executive is based on being satisfied on “reasonable grounds” about the factors informing a declaration or notification.

This issue will also apply where the minister is considering whether to give notice of protection of ticketing arrangements. An amendment will provide that the minister must be satisfied on “reasonable grounds” that the ticketing protections are necessary, having regard to factors already set out in clause 38 of the bill. Although not specifically raised by the committee, this amendment is consequential to the issues raised by them, and therefore necessary to properly respond to the issues they have raised.

I note there has been keen interest in the ticketing protections available under the bill. The proposed amendment will also have the effect of clarifying that the protections will only be available where necessary to respond to the needs of event organisers.

When considering whether to enliven ticketing protections, the minister is also required to consider both the likely demand for tickets to an event and the availability of tickets to the public. When considering these factors, the minister may consider whether an event organiser is ensuring adequate or transparent information about the availability to the public of tickets for each proposed event.

The offences under the ticketing protections apply maximum penalties of 30 penalty units and are not punishable by imprisonment. The most likely way these offences would be pursued would be by summons. Only in very limited circumstances would there be sufficient grounds to arrest a person engaging in ticket scalping. Given the nature of the ticketing offences, the likelihood that the police would arrest an alleged offender is remote.

Similarly, the power of the minister to make variations to event declarations will be amended so that it too is subject to a “reasonable grounds” requirement and is disallowable. This will provide further safeguards in relation to amendments to a declaration. Minor amendments will be moved to how prohibited items are described to ensure that those descriptions are not overly broad.

The committee raised a number of matters relating to safeguards for crowd control powers in the bill. In response the government will move a series of amendments to address some of these concerns, including amendments that will make certain that searches are conducted appropriately.

The committee has also raised a number of issues with respect to whether giving authorised people a power to stop, detain and search a person without a need to be satisfied that an offence has been or is likely to be committed is necessary. The committee has asked why the existing general law protections are not sufficient.

The committee is right to draw the Assembly’s attention to these powers. The powers are extensive and they do limit important human rights. I therefore refer members to pages 2 to 4 of the explanatory statement. It is the government’s view that these powers are necessary to provide for the safe hosting of major events.

I also refer members to section 10 of the current Major Events Security Act 2000, which provides police officers with a power to conduct a frisk search in the same

circumstances as those proposed in the bill. There have been five declarations under the act and we have seen those powers exercised responsibly and effectively, particularly during the Canberra leg of the Beijing Olympics torch relay in 2008.

Major events as envisaged in the bill occur in a very different environment. Major events are unlike everyday events in terms of scale, and tighter security measures are required to ensure that members of the community attending these events can do so safely, and comfortable in the knowledge that the event is secure.

In considering the appropriate measures to support security at major events, it is important to recognise that a major event is a special circumstance which gives rise to special requirements. It is not unlike the requirement for special powers to stop, detain or search a person which is applied to our airports. The environment in airports requires a special approach to security. This is recognised in aviation security law, and similar approaches are being proposed in this bill. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Clause 1.

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

Gas Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

Debate resumed from 5 June 2014, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (11.50): The opposition will be supporting the Gas Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This bill amends the Gas Safety Act and regulation as well as the Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act and regulation. The bill is designed to improve the operation of gas safety regulation and move accreditation of gas appliance workers to the same framework as other occupations. The bill inserts objects for the Gas Safety Act. It is usual for acts to include an “objects of the act” section but there is currently not one in the Gas Safety Act. The objects section makes it clear what the purpose and scope of the act is. This is an important amendment because it removes any ambiguity about what provisions may be included in this act.

The bill also removes the requirement to attach a compliance plate to premises when gasfitting work has been carried out. The current practice of installing compliance plates serves little purpose. The plate is merely an indication that the gasfitter completed gasfitting work. It does not indicate that the system has passed an inspection or that it continues to comply with the requirements.

The bill requires the gasfitter to provide a certificate of compliance to those people prescribed under the regulations. The certificate of compliance replaces a compliance indicator and certifies that the gasfitting work was carried out in accordance with the gas safety legislation and any consumer piping system or appliance that is part of the work is safe to use and complies with the gas safety legislation.

The bill amends the gas product approval processes. The current legislation does not make it clear, but there are two types of gas appliances that must be approved and certified. Type A appliances are generally smaller, mass-produced consumer appliances that are certified by external bodies. Type B appliances are generally custom or large commercial and industrial appliances that are approved by technical regulators in each jurisdiction. This bill makes it clear which appliances require approval, how they are approved and who they can be certified by.

The bill removes the current declaration process and replaces it with the ability to declare prescribed appliances in a corresponding law or in a safety standard under regulation if required. The default position would be to accept the approval of an appliance which complies with the Australian standards for gas appliances. However, the registrar would retain the power to prevent the sale of an unsafe item.

The bill removes the accreditation of gas appliance workers from the Gas Safety Act. Gas appliance workers will now be administered under the occupations regulatory framework established under the Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act. Accreditation of gas appliance workers is regulated by a code which requires revision. Instead of duplicated provisions in the licensing act in a new code for gas appliance workers, they will now be accredited under the same licensing act as other construction occupations.

In conclusion, the opposition will be supporting this bill today. We believe it is a sensible bill which updates the regulation provisions and we hope that it will reduce complexity in the sector.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.53): The Greens will be supporting the Gas Safety Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill brings the accreditation of gas workers in under the Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act—the last occupations to be brought in under the same regime as other construction occupations—and repeals the code under which gas workers are currently accredited—the Gas Safety (Appliance Worker Accreditation Code) Approval 2007. Accreditation of gas workers under COLA will be easily managed, as the same people are already responsible for managing this under the licensing act. It will make it easier for workers too who have licences under COLA for other occupations, as they will now only need to hold one licence with one licence number.

There are a number of transitional arrangements in the bill that ensure continuity for those who are, for example, in the process of applying for a licence or have a pending decision on a suspension or cancellation of a licence. The licensing act gives a clearer process for rights of review and obligations of accredited gas workers. Then there are amendments to the Gas Safety Act 2000 and the Gas Safety Regulations 2001. A few

of these highlights include new objects for the Gas Safety Act, which has previously not had them. There are also a number of offence clauses, which are updated, and offences are clarified and made consistent with the Criminal Code.

The bill also revises the product approvals process. It clarifies which type of appliance is being referred to. The two types of gas appliances that require approval are type A, which are generally mass-produced products, which are generally approved under a national system of standards and certification, and type B, which are not covered by product-specific standards. Often these are custom built or larger scale or industrial appliances. The process for the approval of type B appliances is clarified and, although unlikely to occur often in the ACT, may be occasionally required.

The bill also takes the opportunity to ensure that energy efficiency standards are complied with in gas appliances. Currently there are provisions that require a certain level of energy efficiency to be met under specific circumstances that are triggered under the building code or the plumbing code, but the amendments to the Gas Safety Act will allow energy efficiency standards to be applied for gas installations and appliances that are not installed as part of building or plumbing work.

The new provisions in the bill are to allow regulations to promote the efficient use or conservation of power and energy or limit harm to the environment rather than purely for a safety outcome. The bill requires that the products are labelled with energy efficiency information and that the product actually meets the standard that the product is labelled as. Offence provisions are laid out for not meeting these requirements. This amendment is consistent with the commonwealth government's Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards Act 2012, which regulates for the supply of products rather than the installation.

This bill streamlines and updates the provisions for gas accredited workers and for gas safety in the territory. As such, it is an important bill to ensure that the regulation of this sector is kept up to date and all provisions are clearly laid out for those working in the sector. I am happy to support the bill today.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (11.57), in reply: I thank members for their support of this bill. The bill recognises the importance of effective standards for safety and public protection associated with the use of gas products.

The bill is a good example of regulatory reform principles the government has committed to to ensure that it removes regulations that are no longer required, rationalises legislation covering regulation of occupations in the construction sector, streamlines the existing framework for product safety approvals, ensures the regulatory framework allows for important community objectives such as the efficient use of resources, and modernises the legislation to make it easier to use and understand.

Importantly, the bill does this without removing protections that are in place to ensure that fundamental safety standards are met. The relocation of gas appliance work

accreditations to the Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act further advances the single licensing framework. The licensing act covers all construction licensees, so there is equity in licensing and disciplinary powers for all licensees, be they an asbestos assessor, an electrician or a gas appliance worker. Although the work may be different, the principles are the same, and this is important for consistency across industry.

A further amendment transfers any residual powers of the Planning and Land Authority under the Gas Safety Act to the Construction Occupations Registrar. This reflects the administrative responsibilities under the Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act. It also supports the intention to integrate all relevant construction legislation as part of a broader legislative system.

The combination of proposed amendments to gas safety law will enhance the operation of the law. New objects for the Gas Safety Act help the reader to interpret the legislation and can be used to resolve uncertainty or ambiguity. New definitions and explanatory information will help people using the act. Revisions to gas appliance approvals remove the need for duplicative administrative processes in the ACT and recognise the ACT as part of a national market.

Gas appliance work categories align the legislation with practices and training that has evolved since the beginning of the accreditation system. Prescribing work standards and delineating requirements for different types of gas appliance will assist people to understand and meet their obligations. Repealing provisions for compliance indicators will remove an unnecessary requirement for industry. As well as this, the bill will support the functions of the Construction Occupations Registrar in carrying out relevant acts by clarifying requirements for written directions given to people to fix an unsafe installation or appliance.

Gas safety standards are well established in the ACT. Technical standards have long included some efficiency requirements, but the focus of those standards is on efficiency for safety—to make sure that fuel is combusted in a way that does not lead to health problems or increased safety risks.

However, there may be times when it is desirable to apply an efficiency standard to an installation or appliances to reduce the use of resources also. The bill therefore expands the focus of efficiency beyond that for just safety to efficiency for energy conservation. It also recognises the need to limit damage to the environment from the use of certain fuels, materials and products. New powers will allow incidental standards to minimise harm, such as where an environmental impact may arise from the use of a particular appliance or disposal of certain materials.

I note that these provisions are consistent with those for efficiency in the Electricity Safety Act. They also work with the commonwealth Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards Act. National standards and labelling requirements are set as part of the cross-jurisdictional equipment energy efficiency program which the ACT participates in. This program has traditionally focused on electrical appliances but it is now expanding into gas appliances in Australia and New Zealand where feasible. The

commonwealth act can regulate the supply of products. ACT law can also regulate installation standards.

The bill includes a range of amendments designed to improve the effectiveness of gas safety regulation. The amendments support regulatory reform and maintain the critical protections already existing in legislation. I commend the bill to the Assembly and thank members for their support.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Education—vocational Ministerial statement

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Racing and Gaming, Minister for Women and Minister for the Arts), by leave: Vocational education and training play a vital role in the prosperity of the ACT, both economically and socially. I would like to start by acknowledging the many dedicated educators, staff and students that make the ACT vocational and education training sector so strong.

The ACT government is dedicated to supporting economic growth and social prosperity in the ACT. To achieve this, we need a flexible and responsive training sector that meets the needs of industry, students and the ACT community.

We are undertaking an ambitious program of reform to ensure that we attain even higher levels of performance in the ACT training sector. This change is being supported by our own ongoing annual funding of over \$100 million for the provision of training services as well as through the \$28 million provided by the previous federal Labor government under the national partnership on skills reform.

For the individual, access to education and training has a life-changing effect and opens the doors to satisfying careers and new opportunities previously unattainable. The government is committed to supporting people to achieve prosperity through access to high quality and up-to-date training.

Thankfully, the ACT is fortunate to already have a vibrant training sector providing training to over 30,000 students through public and private training organisations. These training organisations currently employ 1,500 people directly. This includes our strong public provider, the Canberra Institute of Technology, which provides the majority of training delivered in the ACT.

The ACT is one of the most educated populations in the country and has one of the lowest levels of unemployment and disadvantage compared with other states and jurisdictions. But we still face challenges. Our economy relies heavily on the public sector, hospitality, tourism and other service industries for which training plays a

pivotal role. Working with industry, we can identify the greatest areas of demand and target our efforts accordingly.

I believe this is an exciting and challenging time for training and skills development in the ACT. The current operating environment is one of progressive change. This includes changes in policy at the commonwealth and jurisdiction level and the emergence of a significant private sector. The ACT government is amending the Training and Tertiary Education Act to reflect the transformation to the tertiary education landscape that has occurred in recent years.

To continue to meet the territory's high-performing training sector in this environment, these changes have to be responded to at the system level as well as at the provider level.

At a system level, the ACT government has recently defined the key skills and training policy directions for the territory. These align with commonwealth priorities and will focus on strengthening engagement with industries and business to match training to employment; targeting ACT government funding for training to meet skills needs and promote employment; ensuring the highest quality training; and providing better access to training through additional supports for the disadvantaged.

The skills reform funding has already enabled significant progress for these policy directions. One of our biggest challenges is raising the profile of vocational education and training and ensuring that its benefits are understood. While improved stakeholder engagement by government will go some way to addressing this challenge, the government also needs to rely on our public and private providers to support this agenda through quality training.

Our commitment to quality is strong and is exemplified by the introduction of a new quality framework to ensure our high quality organisations are able to provide training in the ACT. We also want to ensure that the ACT community, including school leavers, are making an informed choice about the education and training pathways available. This starts by ensuring that training opportunities provided in schools provide Canberrans with real pathways that are respected by industry.

We have established a strong evidence base to inform ongoing government investment in training. This has resulted in the skills capital training initiative. Skills capital will provide \$21 million over three years to support training in the areas of skills needs most likely to lead to improved employment outcomes. Next year this initiative will complement the user choice funding for Australian apprenticeships and the range of programs offered to our community by CIT, to deliver an entitlement to training for all Canberrans.

Skilled capital is a flexible and sustainable funding model for training in the ACT. The key objective of the program is to deliver a productive and highly skilled workforce which contributes to the economic future of the ACT. The significant elements of skilled capital include the introduction of a limited demand-driven model and the targeting of government funding to support training in areas of highest need as identified by the ACT skills needs list. The list is informed by an evidence-based

model known as forecasting industry needs and entitlement, FINE, which also informs the variable levels of subsidy applied to qualifications based on the level of skills needs.

The initiative also recognises that for some there are barriers to undertaking training and completing a qualification. A comprehensive approach to improving access and support for training, through the provision of loadings, concessions, additional support funding and an embedding of foundation skills, will support those experiencing disadvantage and maximise the chance of qualification completions. Skilled capital will allow funded training to respond in a more agile way to the needs of students and to our economy.

CIT embraces training across a range of levels. This recognises that this broader skills work is supported by significant changes underway at the CIT. Firstly, however, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution that CIT makes to our economy and to the skills of our community. The role CIT plays is critical to the future of vocational education and training, not only as our public provider but as our largest registered training organisation. The provision of training through CIT is a vital element in the government's commitment to assist the people of the ACT to be part of a well trained and highly skilled workforce.

In considering the current national landscape, changes underway in some jurisdictions have not been kind to the TAFE sector. However, the ACT's skills reform implementation plan is explicit in its commitment to support CIT to continue to thrive in a more competitive market. For the past two years, CIT has been preparing and developing an integrated blueprint to position its future in a rapidly changing world. Elements of the blueprint are interdependent and are fundamental in their entirety. Much of the work has already been put in place.

The blueprint comprises a contemporary strategic plan and flexible operational business plans; a business development strategy; effective systems and a new organisation structure; leadership and cultural development; a five-year financial plan and a strategic risk review; and two elements I will mention in a bit more detail, the campus modernisation strategy and changes to CIT governance.

CIT has undertaken a detailed analysis to identify accommodation needs for future delivery of vocational education and training. This analysis has informed the initiation of a CIT campus modernisation strategy. The strategy will deliver contemporary highly utilised assets, and will increase the quality of learning environments. In this way, it will also provide for the operational and financial sustainability of CIT's property management.

In summary, this strategy is focused on providing fit-for-purpose facilities and technology to enable CIT to prosper in the new competitive training environment, including a larger CIT at Tuggeranong. Both the Treasurer and I have agreed in principle to the strategy, and CIT is progressing this work with the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

Under skills reform, the ACT government has pledged to develop and implement revised governance arrangements. CIT's advisory council commissioned a review of CIT governance late last year. The final report highlighted that it is increasingly difficult for CIT to operate as part of the ACT public service while also responding to the push to operate in a more competitive market. In considering this report, the government has confirmed that strengthening CIT's governance is vital to position CIT for success in this increasingly competitive VET and higher ed market. Changes to governance will also require amendments to the Canberra Institute of Technology Act; I intend to introduce those to the Assembly later this year.

The intended result is the establishment of a new governing board with private and public sector expertise working together to ensure that CIT is best placed to meet the needs of the territory. A governing board, with powers delegated from the minister, will allow streamlining of decisions and the full application of fiduciary responsibilities to the conduct of CIT affairs.

Of course, CIT will always remain a public provider, owned by government, balancing the demands of being a public education provider with the absolute imperative of a flexible business organisation. This may present some challenges, but it is essential and it can be achieved.

In summary, CIT aspires to be an education and training business organisation that pursues its strategic and competitive advantages; supports contemporary learning in contemporary facilities; delivers some niche higher education products; has a committed staff in tune with their working environment, with a diversity of students; has an effective governance system; and is perceived as an entity in and of itself. Importantly, CIT must always remain an institution that provides a discernible alternative as the public provider, responsive to the needs of the ACT community.

Finally, it is also worth acknowledging that CIT continues to work closely with the Education and Training Directorate to implement other important training initiatives. This includes the income contingent loans for students studying subsidised diplomas and advanced diplomas from January of next year.

In conclusion, the ACT government acknowledges the fundamental importance of training to the territory. We are committed to developing a flexible and responsive training sector that meets the needs of industry and business, current and prospective students, and the broader ACT community. To meet these needs, a strong public provider is vital. It is also vital that we have a vibrant and supported private market competing to deliver quality training in areas of highest skills needs. Continued reform and activities, clear policy directions and the introduction of skilled capital will improve access for all Canberrans to high quality training and rewarding careers. This will also ensure that the territory's economic and social prosperity is maintained and grows.

Sitting suspended from 12.15 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Canberra Hospital—bed occupancy rates

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, on 1 September 2014 a senior staff member at the Canberra Hospital, Dr Michael Hall, said that current patient numbers are “unsafe” and “unsustainable”. When referring to hospital bed occupancy rates, he said:

Ninety-five per cent is unsafe ... once you reach above 90 the hospital is under stress, once you reach above 95 the hospital is seriously under stress.

Dr Hall went on to say:

So it increases time in hospital, it increases costs, it increases complications and in fact it increases mortality.

He suggested that the hospital could also be more efficient by ensuring that more of its services operate on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week model. Minister, are the current high bed occupancy rates making the Canberra Hospital unsafe and unsustainable?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. In relation to the bed occupancy levels, they are certainly placing the hospital under pressure. Any hospital that is operating at that level of occupancy is going to be under pressure. I would like to put on the record my thanks to all the staff, particularly over the last month, for the extremely busy circumstances in which they have been working. I know that executive staff at the hospital have been working, particularly with the emergency department but also with other clinical leaders across the hospital, to put in place short-term and longer term planning about how to deal with this continued spike in activity that we are seeing.

For example, in 2013-14 there were 125,890 presentations across our hospital emergency departments. This was 6,921 more presentations than last year and it was a six per cent increase, and an 18 per cent increase compared with four years ago.

In terms of what the government can do to respond to this, and this is something that is monitored every day—in fact, several times a day—we are continuing to look at strategies which include opening extra beds which are coming on line in Canberra Hospital in September this year and at Calvary Hospital in January 2015 and also looking at other ways, for example through our elective surgery program, to take elective surgery work out of Canberra, as it continues to be a magnet for presentations across the region.

So it is not ideal—no-one is pretending it is—and senior staff are working very hard to deal with the level of activity. On Sunday, for example, there were 226 presentations to Canberra Hospital. I think there were 150-odd at Calvary. So Canberra is getting nearly 90 more patients a day, and that is on a slow day; Sunday is traditionally not a day of high activity. It is to some degree unexplained. We have the new after-hours medical service that is operating—the home doctor visiting service.

They are busy. From my understanding, they are much busier than they expected to be. We have both walk-in centres operating. They are both busy. We have a busy Calvary public hospital and an extremely busy Canberra public hospital.

In the short term, measures are being taken to try to address the pressure. There are longer term questions which Mr Hanson went to in relation to changing the hospital to a 24-hour service. That is not easy to achieve; it sounds easier than it is because it requires quite an overhaul of our current employment arrangements, including the way we manage our junior staff across the hospital, but there is an acknowledgement that we need to ramp up our after-hours service so that we are not creating pressure in the ED that has to wait overnight to be dealt with at 6 or 7 o'clock the following morning.

There is a lot of work underway. I would like to thank staff at the hospital and acknowledge that these are not bed occupancy figures that we would like to see continue for any longer than is necessary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Are the current high bed occupancy rates increasing time spent in hospital, increasing costs, increasing complications and increasing mortality?

MS GALLAGHER: I have not seen any evidence of that; nor have I been advised of that. We certainly have a group of long stay patients within the hospital, and I have talked about that in this place before. We do get some quite significant discharge block, particularly with older Canberrans in their transition perhaps from the hospital back to aged care facilities or to the community.

There are a number of beds that are being used long term in the hospital, which creates additional pressure, especially when you are having more presentations coming in. Of that 226 that came in on Sunday, I think around 60 required admission into the hospital. You can see that that sort of churn is happening every day. If you have 20 or more beds tied up with patients who are spending a long time in hospital, not for medical reasons but for other reasons, that does place pressure.

But I have not seen that. I know Dr Hall reasonably well, and I know that he is well aware of the literature in relation to high bed occupancy. I am not pretending it is something that we would like to see happen, but I can assure the Canberra community that services at Canberra Hospital are high quality and safe.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, what consideration has been given to a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operating model for Canberra Hospital in the past, and will you now reconsider this in the light of the words from Dr Michael Hall?

MS GALLAGHER: It has certainly come up from time to time about how you increase your services out of hours. We have been doing that incrementally in particular areas. For example, one of the pressures is around imaging, so where you

are in the emergency department and you might need some imaging done. We are looking at how we change the arrangements for how we run that service now, and that goes to this point.

A large-scale overhaul to run any hospital 24 hours a day will have significant costs and will require significant industrial relations change. I am not aware of any hospital anywhere that has been able to do that. I think we will need to do it incrementally, so we will have to start ramping up services. We have been doing that with the way we have been rostering junior doctors, for example, through the hospital and the work that is being done there.

So it is happening, but it will have to happen in stages. You are never going to have working at 2 am the same level of staff that you have got working at 2 pm or at the peak times when we have two shifts come in at once and you have double the number of staff there. Certainly, we are going to need more than we have at the moment as we continue to roll out the enhanced health services we have been doing for the last six years or so under the health infrastructure program. It will change, but it will have to change in time. I can assure you that the IR issues alone are not insignificant, or the cost involved.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, what solutions do you have for making the Canberra Hospital safe, given Dr Hall's warnings that the current situation increases time in hospital, increases cost, increases complications and in fact increases mortality?

MS GALLAGHER: We have a number of initiatives. One of them is the health infrastructure program which now receives funding in the order of \$877 million to grow the health infrastructure we need. Some of the pressure is coming from the availability of beds. We have about 40 additional beds opening this year in a combination between Calvary and Canberra. We have also added capacity in the emergency department.

There is a huge amount of work going on. In every budget we have initiatives. This is the largest part of the budget and always has a larger share of budget initiatives. Almost every single one of those initiatives goes to improving the efficiency and safety of the hospital and supporting particularly the work that the emergency department has been doing to ensure that patients are getting seen as quickly as possible.

But Dr Hall is right, in the sense that he focuses the debate very squarely at a whole-of-hospital solution and not just the emergency department. Whilst it is very easy to point the finger at the emergency department and say "You are not seeing people quickly enough", it is much harder to encourage other parts of the hospital to support the work the emergency department does and take patients quickly from that area. We have had cases where people have had an extended wait in the ED, waiting for their admission process in the ward. It is areas like that where we really need to ensure the reform happens, and I certainly support the work that Dr Hall has been doing in advocating that across the hospital.

Transport—light rail

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, on 25 June this year in estimates, you said:

The government is not proposing to release revised cost estimates as we approach the procurement process. To do so would be to potentially compromise that procurement process and competitive tension in that process. It could also compromise value for money for the government and the community.

Minister, why did you disclose the revised cost estimate of \$783 million? Aren't you now jeopardising a competitive procurement process, to use your words?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Coe for the question. Absolutely not, Madam Speaker. The decision to release the capital delivery cost is based on the very clear and unambiguous advice from the board of Capital Metro and, in particular, the board chair, Mr John Fitzgerald, that it does not compromise. But clearly there are potentially a range of other issues associated with the business case that could potentially compromise. Therefore we are taking further advice from the Capital Metro board and, indeed, from our other advisers, before making a decision on the detail that will be released when the final business case is released.

Of course, this is consistent with the government's approach to both protect value for money for the territory and to be open and transparent and provide the highest level of information possible. We have done more as a government than most governments around the country when it comes to infrastructure projects of this size and cost, and we will continue to adopt a very proactive approach. I note that the estimates committee recommended that there be no release of any material until after the competitive process was completed. The government agrees with the sentiment but does not agree with all of the detail behind that recommendation because the advice we have to us is that some information can be released. We continue to adopt a prudent and careful approach on that matter, and will continue to do that as we lead up to the release of the business case for the capital metro project at the end of October.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, does the government have a final estimate of the cost of the relocation of the pipes and wires and utilities along the route?

MR CORBELL: All of these matters are outlined in the final business case. Once the government has concluded and received the further advice that I referred to earlier, we will be proceeding to release that final business case for scrutiny.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, has the government revised the cost-benefit ratio to \$783 million, and when will you release the updated BCR?

MR CORBELL: When the final business case is released.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, why is the government spending \$783 million on a light rail project while school classrooms are over capacity and education infrastructure is decaying?

MR CORBELL: This government is committed to investing in health, education and better public transport and supporting those home owners who are facing real challenges as a result of the asbestos legacy issues left to us by the commonwealth. Those are the government's priorities. We spend over half of our budget each and every year on health and education for the citizens of Canberra, and we are going to continue to make that investment. But we also need to make an investment in better public transport for our city and for our community.

Over the last 10 years, we have spent over \$700 million on road infrastructure in this city. To suggest that we are not able to make a similar commitment to better public transport belies the facts. The fact is that we can invest in better public transport; we can invest in the type of infrastructure we need to shift more people out of their cars and onto public transport; we can invest in infrastructure that gives people more transport choices and lays the foundation for a better transport system for our city. Those are the decisions this government is committed to taking.

Canberra Hospital—adult mental health unit

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, on 10 September this year the *Canberra Times* reported that within the adult mental health unit there has been an increase in the number of attacks on staff over the last 12 months. It has also come to light that a provisional improvement notice was issued on the facility by WorkSafe in July. Minister, why is staff safety so at risk that a provisional improvement notice was issued and why has there been an increase in the number of attacks on staff within this facility over the past 12 months?

MS GALLAGHER: I acknowledge Mrs Jones's interest in this matter and see that we will be debating this subject at length tomorrow. In short, I do not think any of us here can understand the workplace that is the adult mental health unit and the work that is required to be done—

Mr Hanson: You don't understand your own workplace?

MS GALLAGHER: What I am saying is that I do not know how many shifts you have done in a psychiatric unit. Let us not underestimate the workplace and the nature of the work that is required to be done. And I am not diminishing staff concerns here. I am saying that I cannot think of a harder workplace in which staff work, the nature of the work, the risk that staff place themselves into in order to keep other people safe—people who are very unwell and traumatised and who require professional and clinical help in order to support them.

There is, as we speak, a lot of work being done by the executive team at the adult mental health unit to ensure that staff concerns, where they can be addressed in the short term, are being addressed, and that has been done by the addition of some staff. But in my discussions with ACT Health, it also goes to how much training and other support we can provide staff as well. Some of the issues that have been identified by staff are not necessarily going to be addressed just by providing extra staff into the mix.

So there is a lot of work underway. No-one is downplaying the seriousness of some of the issues or the positions that some of our staff have found themselves in. ACT Health are, in advice to me, responding appropriately.

This is the reason why we have PINs as well. Whilst we do not want them in place, they are there to serve a purpose. They put a formal engagement around how the employer addresses employee safety concerns, and that is exactly what is happening now. ACT Health are working with WorkSafe, with the ANMF and with staff, delegates and representatives in the workplace to address their concerns.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, what are you doing to address the increased number of attacks on staff and to deal with the provisional improvement notice, or do you maintain that the nature of this workplace means that it is unable to be made safe?

MS GALLAGHER: I will stand here and argue that you will not find a mental health unit in the country that does not have patient aggression as an issue that staff need to deal with. I think anyone who pretends otherwise does not understand the patient requirements. In terms of can it be made safe and should it be made safe, yes; as much as it can be it should be, and that is exactly what is happening now. There are additional staff going in, and the post-occupancy review will inform—

Mr Hanson: It is unacceptable.

MS GALLAGHER: You say it is unacceptable.

Mr Hanson: Yes I do.

MS GALLAGHER: The patient load, the patient presentation with particular conditions, means we will not ever be able to remove aggression from patients towards staff as part of a mental health unit. You simply cannot do that. Can you minimise risks to staff? Can you minimise those risks as much as they can be? Yes, you can and you should, and that is exactly what is happening.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, why has it taken the issuing of a provisional improvement notice for you to address this issue of violence against nurses in the adult mental health unit?

MS GALLAGHER: It did not take the issuing of a provisional improvement notice. As I understand it, there was work underway with the executive team in responding to staff concerns. Staff felt that they wanted to pursue it further through the provisional improvement notice and they have done that, as is their right. Management are responding appropriately to that.

Yes, there were discussions with staff and there were efforts made to address those issues that staff had raised. The PIN was a formal process that came and management are dealing with that, as they should, to ensure that the unit is as safe as possible for staff to work there and to ensure that we have the right mix of staff working in that environment and that the model of care that has been agreed to by staff for the adult mental health unit is implemented and that staff are supported to do just that.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, what are you doing personally as minister to ensure that staff are working in a safe environment and not remaining in a situation where they are in fear of attack?

MS GALLAGHER: I am doing what I need to do, which is speaking with ACT Health to ensure that they are responding appropriately to the issues that staff raise, including approving additional resources, and asking Health if any other additional resources need to be made available for that unit.

Schools—safety

MR DOSZPOT: My question is for the minister for education. Minister, in recent months there have been safety incidents at three ACT public schools. The first, at Gowrie Primary School, closed the school for five days and resulted in a staff member being admitted to hospital. The second incident, at Belconnen High School, was apparently due to a faulty electrical switchboard. And in the third, at Lyneham High School, smoke in the hall caused the school to be evacuated and the fire brigade called to the school. In light of these incidents, can the minister confirm whether all ACT schools meet current electrical and fire safety standards?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Doszpot for his question. Each school has quite a rigorous condition assessment report. I think that by your own question there you made recognition that one of the problems was indeed a human error: the actions of one of the folks that came in to service a piece of equipment led to a problem; they did not quite operate it as they should.

Our schools are safe. Our schools are well maintained. We spend around \$20 million a year across the schools maintaining their conditions.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what additional audits have been done in ACT schools to ascertain whether switchboards in other schools might suffer the same fault as that at Belconnen high?

MS BURCH: Again, I thank Mr Doszpot for the interest in this question. The condition assessment reports are undertaken every three years at every school. That is what leads to the priority of our schedule of repairs. Where incidents like this happen and we identify that it is a user fault, not a system fault—and we are quite confident—we go and talk to the maintenance operator and make sure that the staff they bring in understand our systems and equipment to make sure that it does not happen again.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, are all ACT schools fitted with earth stake electrodes or an earth leakage circuit breaker, which are required for ACT homes when new circuits are connected or electrical switchboards are replaced?

MS BURCH: I have to confess that I have to take that one on notice, Mr Wall.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what confidence can parents and teachers have that all schools have been properly assessed in respect of current electrical and fire safety standards and that ACT schools are in fact a safe place for our children?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Wall for his question. Parents can have confidence that our schools are safe, and I will come back to that answer as soon as I can, Mr Wall. When faults are identified, we have quite a forensic investigation to make sure that we identify what it is—whether it is a failure, whether it is a faulty piece of equipment, or whether it is something that is just unique to that site, in which case we will deal with it on that site. If it is something that could be connected to other pieces of equipment then we certainly go out to those other pieces of equipment and investigate it. If it is a user fault, we do all the training and preparation that we need to do for staff on site—the maintenance managers within the school and more particularly the contractors that come in to our schools.

Transport—light rail

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, why is the government committed to building light rail before releasing the final business case, and will any changes be made to the business case before it is made public?

MR CORBELL: The government has determined to proceed with the project because we have considered and endorsed the final business case. That is the right way about; I am not quite sure how Mr Smyth envisages these decisions are made. We have considered and endorsed the final business case and given approval for the project to proceed to the procurement stage.

In relation to the release of the final business case, the government has committed to a transparent release of as much information as possible—

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! Mr Corbell has the floor. Chief Minister, Mr Coe, I cannot hear Mr Corbell.

MR CORBELL: with the only consideration being whether or not the release of some information may compromise the tender process, and we are seeking further advice on those questions.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, will the final full business case provide an extensive cost-benefit analysis, and will that cost-benefit analysis be released in full?

MR CORBELL: The final business case contains a detailed cost-benefit analysis, and I expect that information will be made available.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, does the full business case urge the government to deliberately favour development in the corridor, as was argued by the Capital Metro Agency in the rapid business case?

MR CORBELL: There are good reasons why the government is seeking further advice about the release of the final business case before undertaking that exercise, for the reasons that I have outlined earlier. In relation to a range of these questions that the opposition is asking, those details will become very clear when the final business case is released.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, have the contractors working on the final full business case completed work on that document?

MR CORBELL: Yes, they have.

Asbestos—loose-fill insulation

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, could you please advise the Assembly what impact you believe the Mr Fluffy legacy will have on our infrastructure budget in the short to medium term and what will be the key priorities for the government as you prepare to meet this challenge once and for all?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Dr Bourke for the question. As Dr Bourke's question indicates, the government is determined to resolve the Mr Fluffy legacy once and for all. The history of the issue spans close to 50 years, half the life of our city, and I believe—and I think it is a shared view across this Assembly—that now is the time to end the saga for the sake of the 1,000-plus Canberra homes affected.

This undoubtedly holds consequences for our budget that were unforeseen even as late as the time our budget was finalised this year. When the 2014-15 budget was framed we did not have any detailed knowledge of the extent of the contamination of the Mr Fluffy homes at that point in time, compared to what we now have. And it is only through the process of more than 500 asbestos assessments that have now been done that it is clear how pervasive the problem is and, to some extent, how costly the solutions are.

The Mr Fluffy issue presents the government with a major budget imposition. The net cost is likely to run to at least \$300 million over coming years. Depending on the type of program of remediation or the cleaning program which is agreed, the up-front costs could be significantly more than that. This is an unavoidable price of dealing once and for all with such an intractable legacy and, subject to receiving commonwealth assistance in line with the original remediation program, the ACT must make provision, through our budget, for the costs incurred.

Negotiations continue with the commonwealth and I would like to assure the Mr Fluffy home owners who continue to show patience that work is underway both across the ACT government and the commonwealth government to settle on a long-term solution. It is in that context that the government is reviewing our infrastructure spend. We will continue to give a high priority to health, to education, to transport, including public transport, and to the cost of dealing with the Mr Fluffy legacy.

We have also confirmed this week our commitment to capital metro which is a genuine, city-building project and a clear Labor commitment at the 2012 election—indeed, a commitment in the parliamentary agreement. Where other priorities need to be reconsidered, the government will do so to ensure the strength and sustainability of our budget.

The government has provision for major capital works over the next few years, \$2½ billion over five years, including \$735 million this year. Key areas of this investment will continue to roll out which will help to cushion the territory economy from some of the external challenges we are facing. We now expect an ACT government contribution to a Mr Fluffy program will need to come into that provision and this may cause delays to other components of the infrastructure program.

But the government will maintain a strong focus on our priority areas that I have mentioned and we, as a government, will continue to balance a range of priorities as we serve the community by continuing to back those four key priority areas and making some changes over the next few months in terms of what we will be able to afford, particularly over the next five years.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Chief Minister, what happens to those projects that fall outside those key priority areas?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Dr Bourke for the question. There are initiatives which fall outside those key priority areas, and we will need to work through those on a case-by-case basis. We have given strong support to the city to the lake concept, the city to the lake project, and that will continue, but we will be looking at individual components of that and the phasing of decisions relating to particular infrastructure. Obviously the Civic pool, the stadium and Parkes Way all factor as key and large infrastructure items under there—the Australia Forum as well; we have made provision in this year’s budget to get that project to a financing stage, and I must say, in terms of some of the commentary that I have heard—shock that the ACT government would not be committing hundreds of millions of dollars to that project—that we have never agreed to do that. We had agreed to get it to a certain point, and then we were always hopeful that it would be private sector or commonwealth government supported for the size of the project that it is.

We will have to adjust our time frames where we need to. We have a process in place with ministers to have a look at all of those and to provide updates to cabinet in terms of how we re-phase some of those priorities. We will know more once the commonwealth have given us an answer on our request for assistance relating to Mr Fluffy, because if that assistance is provided it will lessen the impact on our own budget. But we will not know that until the commonwealth government has responded to us.

MS BERRY: Minister, what process is underway to finalise the necessary reprioritisation task?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Ms Berry for the question. I alluded to it in my previous answer that the process we have put in place is for ministers to have a look at initiatives and current projects and look at whether there is an ability to reprioritise some of that to inform the mid-year financial update, which is scheduled for release in February. I think that is a very transparent and accountable way of making clear to Assembly members and the broader community any decisions that cabinet takes in relation to this. Indeed, the public announcement, I am sure, will generate some feedback from the community about what priorities or what timetable they would like to see pursued. Also, the Treasurer has announced the formal commencement of the ACT government’s budget consultation process, which we would use as well in terms of getting feedback.

The Mr Fluffy challenge is going to have an impact on our budget. I guess the question we do not have the answer to is to what extent it will and over what time frame. It is a responsible way of dealing with this to start making provision and start doing our planning around having a considerable budget impact even if we do not know the final figure.

So that is the work that is underway. It is important to be upfront with people that that is exactly what is going to be before cabinet over the next few months.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, why is it that you have scrapped your city to the lake vision, Minister Barr's stadium and government support for the Australia forum prior to finalising costs for Mr Fluffy, or is the bigger and real reason the state of debt and deficit in the budget and the high cost of light rail?

MS GALLAGHER: As Mr Hanson would know, we are one of the few jurisdictions in the country with a AAA credit rating and a strong budget position. The question you ask is wrong. Never in any of the public comments I have made, or anyone else, on this matter has the word "scrapped" been used. In fact the opposite is the case. I have said we will continue with city to the lake but we are looking at the phasing of particular infrastructure and the timing for it. That is it, Mr Hanson; there is nothing else to read into it, and the premise of your question is wrong.

Transport—light rail

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro and relates to the cost of capital metro. Minister, you said on 16 May last year in relation to the \$614 million cost of light rail:

The current cost assessment includes a significant contingency for unknown factors.

However, you said today on radio, explaining your \$783 million total cost, "What we've done is added to that a contingency that was not explicit in the earlier URS costings." Minister, how do you reconcile these two statements?

MR CORBELL: I do not need to reconcile them because Mr Wall misrepresents my answer, and so has Mr Coe in his comments on the radio.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Sit down, Mr Corbell. Firstly, it is unparliamentary to suggest that someone has misrepresented you. Would you like to (a) withdraw and (b) rephrase that?

MR CORBELL: I am happy to withdraw, Madam Speaker. The assertion made by those opposite is wrong. It is wrong because my answer was in relation to the costings then being developed by capital metro. They were not in relation to the 614 figure; they were in relation to the costings being developed by capital metro. So the claim is absolutely accurate and consistent. It is the case that the URS figure, the \$614 million figure, had no explicit contingency. In contrast, the figures for capital metro, the capital delivery figures that the government released yesterday, have an explicit and detailed contingency, and we have been up-front and very clear with the Canberra community about that.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, why did you state last week that an \$800 million price tag is “well and truly over and above what we are anticipating”, and then announce a cost of \$783 million?

MR CORBELL: We have heard all sorts of outlandish claims from Mr Coe, and I was responding to those. Mr Coe has made all sorts of outlandish claims, including claims that may or may not involve a contingency, and may or may not involve other assumptions. The facts are that Mr Coe seems to believe this figure is heading upwards, past \$800 million. I hear that even today they are using \$800 million when they know that is not the figure released by the government. It is not surprising that we will take with a fairly large bucket of salt any suggestion made by Mr Coe and those opposite.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, what other statements have you made on the costings of light rail which are inconsistent with previous statements?

MR CORBELL: It is a ridiculous question, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, how can the public have any confidence in your costings when you have been inconsistent in detailing how your previous costings were calculated?

MR CORBELL: I have been entirely consistent. With those opposite, the only consistency we have seen from them is the consistency to confuse and mislead the Canberra community. We have seen it from day one, and they continue to do so.

This government has made a rock-solid commitment to release a very high level of detail around the business case and financial analysis for this project. That stands in marked contrast to state Liberal administrations around the country—around the country—who refuse to release any detailed assessments in relation to their business cases. Go and look at the Naphthine government in Victoria; they are refusing—just point-blank refusing—to release any detail of any significance in relation to their infrastructure projects. There are similar approaches in New South Wales from the Liberal government there. In this territory, though, the government has committed to a detailed release of the full business case. We remain committed to that, and we will be working through the process the government outlined yesterday to achieve that and to make that available at the end of October, the same period of time when the expression of interest process commences.

Transport—light rail

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, on 10 June 2014 you said, in relation to the \$614 million cost of capital metro:

Cabinet’s tolerance is in that order, updated for 2014 dollars.

Updating the \$614 million figure to 2014 gives you a cost of approximately \$665 million. Chief Minister, given your previous statement in June this year, why did cabinet then endorse a \$783 million tramline?

MS GALLAGHER: My comments that I have made in relation to the costings for the capital metro project are consistent on a like-for-like comparison. The \$614 million figure, when compared with the capital construction cost, or the capital construction estimate, as was released yesterday and will be released with the full business case, is consistent with those costs.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Chief Minister, is the cost of building park and ride facilities at Well Station Drive, EPIC and Dickson factored into the \$783 million cost estimate?

MS GALLAGHER: No, it is not.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Chief Minister, did you see a cost-benefit ratio for other routes before committing to the Gungahlin to the city option?

MS GALLAGHER: On all of the issues relating to this I am not going to get drawn into releasing the business case drip by drip. It will be released, as we have agreed, on 31 October.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, why is the government pushing ahead with this \$783 million project when our hospitals are full and described by senior clinicians as unsafe?

MS GALLAGHER: I welcome the supplementary from the Leader of the Opposition. In relation to the health infrastructure fund, the health infrastructure program, I can inform the Assembly that \$878 million has been spent on hospital infrastructure over the last six years. I am happy to take members through that. It has included a new hospital for women and children, it has included extra capacity in the emergency department—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MS GALLAGHER: You might not want to hear this but let me answer the question. It included intensive care unit expansion, the Calvary hospital emergency department expansion, the Gungahlin community health centre and the Duffy House respite centre. We have the Belconnen and Tuggeranong walk-in centres, the Tuggeranong community health centre, the Belconnen community health centre, the Capital Region Cancer Centre, additional operating theatres at Canberra Hospital, additional beds at Canberra Hospital, the mental health assessment unit, the new PET scan, the

neurosurgery suite, the intensive care unit at Calvary hospital, the multistorey car park, an adult mental health unit, with funding now being provided for further staging and decanting at the Canberra Hospital, the Calvary car park, the clinical services and inpatient unit design, the linear accelerator procurement and replacement project, and the adult secure mental health unit. They are the priorities of this government, all \$878 million and counting.

Transport—light rail

MS BERRY: My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, yesterday you announced that the government has approved the business case for Capital Metro. Can you please detail for the Assembly what this means for the project?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Berry for her question and I thank the opposition for their support as well and for their ongoing interest in relation to this project.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR CORBELL: The approval of the business case means that the government can now proceed to the procurement stage for the delivery of the first stage of Canberra's light rail network through a public-private partnership. This will entail the design and construction of the 12-kilometre light rail route from the city centre to the Gungahlin town centre, including stops, the depot, road, signalling, preparatory and other works, the supply of the light rail vehicles themselves, and the financing and ongoing operation and maintenance of the light rail system.

Ultimately, the cost will be determined through the competitive market process. The government has outlined its understanding of the estimated capital delivery cost of \$610 million plus \$173 million in contingency. This estimate is consistent with the previous estimates of \$614 million adjusted for considerations, including installation and risk. We know that there is very strong interest in this project—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR CORBELL: strong interest from industry, who are paying close attention to the significant opportunity to reshape this city and deliver better public transport for Canberrans.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, I warn you.

MR CORBELL: Of course we heard the claims earlier from Mr Coe and others, who said, "Industry will never be interested in this; no-one is going to seriously look at this project." Those were the claims of the Liberal opposition. There were over 350 industry representatives at the industry briefing yesterday—350 from national and international firms who clearly were interested in this project. They understand its potential for the city, they understand why it is important for our city, and this government is committing and backing better public transport for our city.

We have clear priorities for Canberra. We continue to support and invest in health, in education and in better transport. Those are our objectives, those are our commitments, and we are committed to delivering on them in a prudent and responsible way. The feedback from the industry briefing yesterday was very strong and positive. We look forward to the expression of interest process and we look forward to those consortiums coming together and to their further engagement in this process.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, could you please tell us more about why the government will be releasing the business case?

MR CORBELL: It is very important that the government releases as much detail as possible about the project and the government remains committed to doing that in a responsible and prudent way. As I said in question time earlier today, it is unusual for a state or territory government to release a very large amount of detail from the business case, but that is our commitment. That is our commitment to being open and transparent about the analysis behind this very important project for our city. And it stands in marked contrast to the approach adopted by Liberal governments around the country who continue to refuse to release any substantive detail in relation to business cases for their infrastructure projects.

The government is taking a short period before releasing the final business case to obtain final, external advice on managing the procurement process to make sure we deliver value for money through that procurement process. But we are going well beyond the approach adopted by other state jurisdictions or, indeed, well beyond the approach suggested even in the bipartisan recommendations of the estimates committee.

The government have a very detailed process in front of us. We remain committed to releasing that information and we have said we will do so on 31 October this year.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, what is the annual ongoing liability that taxpayers will take on for the cost of finance and the cost of running the trains?

MR CORBELL: The point to be made first of all in relation to these matters is that through a PPP process the government makes an annual payment over the concession term. It is not broken up in the way Mr Coe suggests; it is an annual payment for both the capital delivery and the operational costs of the infrastructure. The government is not going to compromise the competitive tendering process by outlining those details. We are interested, absolutely interested, and committed to achieving value for taxpayers, value for the Canberra community, and we are not going to disclose our assessment of those liability payments ahead of the competitive process. That would not be a sensible or prudent approach.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what are the next steps for this project?

MR CORBELL: The next steps are to progress to the procurement phase. On 31 October, we will open the EOI process. Industry will be forming consortia both before and during that stage, and there will be an opportunity for them to lodge their interest through that EOI process until late December. Submissions will then be assessed in the first quarter of 2015, and a minimum of two consortia will be short-listed. Those short-listed consortia will prepare their detailed formal proposals throughout the remainder of 2015. The contract negotiations with the selected tenderer will occur at the beginning of 2016. We expect financial close also around that time, the beginning of 2016. And those contract negotiations with the selected tenderer will see the contract commence in the first half of 2016.

This is a very important time frame, one that the government set out clearly at the beginning of its parliamentary term and one that we are pleased we are able to demonstrate and deliver commitment on so that we will meet the time frame set out in our agreements for the purposes of forming government, including commencing construction in the second half of 2016.

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

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Legislative Assembly (Members' Superannuation) Act, pursuant to section 11A—Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly Members Superannuation Board—Annual Report 2013-2014, dated 18 August 2014.

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act, pursuant to subsection 20(2)—Independent Reviewer—Report for the period 1 January to 30 June 2014, prepared by—

Derek Volker—1 January to 11 February 2014, dated 11 February 2014.

Prof Dennis Pearce—12 February to 30 June 2014, dated 18 August 2014.

Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, pursuant to Continuing Resolution 6A of the Assembly of 10 April 2008, as amended 21 August 2008—Report for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, dated 18 August 2013.

Standing order 191—Amendments to:

Appropriation Bill 2014-2015, dated 18 August 2014.

Territory and Municipal Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, dated 18 August 2014.

Estimates 2014-2015—Select Committee—Report—*Appropriation Bill 2014-2015 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2014-2015* (3 volumes)—Correspondence from the Minister for Corrective Services to the Speaker, dated 13 August 2014, concerning an error in volume 1.

Committee Reports—Schedule of Government Responses—Eighth Assembly, as at 1 September 2014.

Pregnancy discrimination in the workplace—Resolution of the Assembly of 6 August 2014—Correspondence from the Attorney General to the Speaker, dated 29 August 2014.

Executive contracts Papers and statement by minister

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

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

Long-term contracts:

Alan Paul Carmody, dated 25 August and 2 September 2014.

Helen Pappas, dated 25 August 2014.

Margaret Jones, dated 6 August 2014.

Mark Doverty, dated 1 September 2014.

Mark Dykgraaf, dated 6 and 25 August 2014.

Neville Drumgold, dated 6 August 2014.

Steven Wright, dated 26 August 2014.

Short-term contracts:

David Collett, dated 3 and 18 August 2014.

Elizabeth Sharpe, dated 25 August 2014.

Goran Josipovic, dated 1 September 2014.

Grant Kennealy, dated 1 and 2 September 2014.

Peter Le Lievre, dated 22 and 26 August 2014.

Susan Hall, dated 14 and 15 August 2014.

Contract variations:

Alison Playford, dated 23 July and 8 August 2014.

Moira Crowhurst, dated 9 and 12 August 2014.

Peter Murray, dated 14 August 2014.

Trevor Vivian, dated 26 August 2014—

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

Leave granted.

MS GALLAGHER: I present another set of executive contracts. These documents were tabled in accordance with sections 31A and 79 of the Public Sector Management Act which require the tabling of all director-general and executive contracts and

contract variations. Today I present seven long-term contracts, six short-term contracts and four contract variations, the details of which will be circulated to members.

Paper

Ms Gallagher presented the following paper:

Gene Technology Act, pursuant to subsection 136A(3)—Operations of the Gene Technology Regulator—Quarterly report—1 January to 31 March 2014, dated 9 July 2014.

Planning and Development Act 2007—variation No 325 to the territory plan

Paper and statement by minister

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approval of Variation No. 325 to the Territory Plan—Woden Bus Layover—Part Block 13 and Block 14 Section 23 Phillip, dated 22 August 2014, together with background papers, a copy of the summaries and reports, and a copy of any direction or report required.

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

Leave granted.

MR GENTLEMAN: Variation 325 to the territory plan proposes to clarify the definition of “public transport facility” to include a bus layover, to rezone part of block 13, section 23 Phillip from Parks and Recreation—PRZ2—to Transport and Service—TSZ1—to allow the development of a bus layover, to rezone block 14, section 23 Phillip from commercial—CZ2—to Parks and Recreation—PRZ2—to enhance the viability of the Phillip Oval and to vary the public land overlay to reflect the previously mentioned zone changes. Variation 325 was released for public comment in April this year and it attracted one public submission. The main issue related to developing the layover at an alternative site in Phillip.

A report on consultation was prepared by the Environment and Planning Directorate, responding to the issues raised in the submission. Under section 73 of the Planning and Development Act, I have chosen to exercise my discretion to not refer the draft variation to the planning and environment committee, as I believe the public concerns have been adequately addressed.

Papers

Mr Corbell presented the following papers:

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act and Financial Management Act—ACT Teacher Quality Institute Board Appointment 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-233 (LR, 11 August 2014).

Dangerous Substances Act—Dangerous Substances (General) Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2014-19 (LR, 18 August 2014).

Education Act—

Education (Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-230 (LR, 7 August 2014).

Education (Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-231 (LR, 7 August 2014).

Education (Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-232 (LR, 18 August 2014).

Health Act—

Health (Local Hospital Network Council-Member) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-234 (LR, 18 August 2014).

Health (Local Hospital Network Council-Member) Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-235 (LR, 18 August 2014).

Health (Local Hospital Network Council-Member) Appointment 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-236 (LR, 18 August 2014).

Health (Local Hospital Network Council-Member) Appointment 2014 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-237 (LR, 18 August 2014).

Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names (Denman Prospect) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-229 (LR, 7 August 2014).

Tree Protection Act—

Tree Protection (Advisory Panel) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-238 (LR, 21 August 2014).

Tree Protection (Advisory Panel) Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-239 (LR, 21 August 2014).

Work Health and Safety Act—Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2014-20 (LR, 26 August 2014).

Government—priorities

Discussion of matter of public importance

MADAM SPEAKER: I have received letters from Ms Berry, Dr Bourke, Mr Hanson, Mr Smyth and Mr Wall proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to

the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, I have determined that the matter proposed by Mr Wall be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of government getting its priorities right for the people of the ACT.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (3:28): Today's matter of public importance goes to the heart of what should be the fundamental role of governments at every tier, be it federal, state or municipal level; getting the priorities right for the people you represent. When ACT residents went to the polls in 2012 they put their faith and trust into individuals whom they believed would put them first. However, unfortunately, through the quirks of our Hare-Clark electoral system, we are left with a government that has passed its use-by date, propped up by one individual whose priorities and views are undoubtedly not reflective of those of most Canberrans.

Priorities for this Labor-Greens alliance government have been firmly attached to ideology and they more closely reflect the perspective of a champagne socialist rather than the traditional working class whom the Labor Party once stood to represent. Their track record shows just how arrogant you can get if you are in government for too long—13 years too long, to be exact.

It would be remiss of me not to start today with the big ticket item on the priority list of the current Labor-Green government: light rail. Of course the one and only Green in this place, Mr Rattenbury, is cheering quite loudly following the Chief Minister's recent announcement that this project has been given the all important green light. After all, it is the ALP's commitment to proceed with this project, amongst other ideological pet projects that saw them form government in this place, the agreement of which has given Mr Rattenbury so much influence in decisions made in this place.

We have heard Mr Corbell here today wax lyrical once again about his grand vision for this almost, but not quite, \$800 million project—expenditure which has been given the final tick of approval by cabinet. The word “transformational” appears in almost every publication, speech, piece of material or propaganda that is put out on this project by this government. Mr Corbell is very fond of the word and the connotations it brings. But the question is: for whom is this project transformational, minister? I wager here and now that the overwhelming majority of the people of Tuggeranong do not see this train set folly as a priority for them now or into the future.

Madam Speaker, this morning on radio there was an overwhelming outpouring of views about the project. Listeners were asked to share their thoughts on whether light rail was a great idea for Canberra or a future white elephant and a waste of money. One of the main themes coming from all comments, positive and negative, was priorities. I would just like to share briefly some of the comments that appeared today on a radio station's Facebook page:

Complete waste of money! Put the money into other infrastructure, hospitals & education where it's needed. Fix the bus schedule and it will work fine. Canberra is not built for light rail and it will not be supported.

And again:

Dumbest. Idea. Ever.

Costs will blow out to closer to \$1 billion.

The empty buses that run this exact same route now can be held up waiting for an empty train to pass by.

What an utter waste of money! There are more urgent things that money could be spent on. Typical Government waste.

Or how about:

What about the rest of Canberra? That money can go to something better. Gungahlin is a small part of Canberra. What about the rest of the people. It's just rude and annoying and a waste of money for such a small part of Canberra's population.

As I mentioned before, those views were shared by listeners on a radio station's Facebook pages this morning.

However, regardless of popular opinion, this government is arrogant enough to steamroll ahead with this project, all for the sake of keeping its ideological fires burning. This project is not viable, this project is not affordable, many Canberrans will not benefit from it, yet light rail will continue to sit as the cornerstone of this government's agenda.

Now what exactly are the priorities of the current government besides an almost \$800 million train set? The Chief Minister stated in the media on the 12th of this month:

The cabinet has agreed that hospitals, schools, public transport and asbestos are now the four key priorities for the government to work on for the next five years ... outside of that, there isn't going to be much else.

In other words, this government have failed to prepare for the future and have failed to properly assess the future priorities of this city over the past 13 years. They have failed to plan with a budget in deficit for some years to come. The time has now come to shift around some of the priorities. Unfortunately, though, the priorities that they have chosen are not necessarily the ones needed in our city the most. Our hospitals have consistently had the longest waiting times in the country. Our school infrastructure is not keeping pace with the community's needs and is bursting at the seams. Our roads, footpaths and shopping centres are all falling into disrepair, particularly in Tuggeranong and southern parts of Canberra, as the infrastructure ages. ACTION continues to cost money while patronage is not improving.

All of this neglect has not happened overnight. These issues have been on a downward spiral for years. Madam Assistant Speaker, after 13 years of office, many

of these problems that exist in health, education and public transport are the sole responsibility of those opposite. After 13 years of pulling the levers in office, it is fair to say that the problems that they are proclaiming to fix are in fact problems that they have created themselves. The same may even be true when it comes to the government's handling of the Mr Fluffy issue, but perhaps we will have to wait for a board of inquiry to unravel the truth there.

What ACT taxpayers now have, and have had for a very long time, is a government that fails to plan for the future, a government that rates its own legacy projects above the needs of its citizens. What the ACT has is a government that rates ideological pursuits as its first priority. Pet projects are the name of the game here.

I have spoken many times in this place about the residents of Uriarra who have had large scale solar development forced upon them despite their robust opposition to it on very valid grounds. The government has continued to ignore the residents' argument against the project, vowing to proceed in an effort to become the greenest city in Australia. This pursuit has also had an impact on residents in surrounding areas. We saw just this morning in a petition brought by my colleague Ms Lawder on the wind farms that the government has prioritised and has on its agenda having an impact not only on Canberra as the taxpayers support these initiatives but also on the wider region as residents are forced to live with the result of these proposals.

Stopping the whole city from smoking is another pet project that this Chief Minister is championing. The discussions have now begun about whether smoking should be banned at the jail. Yet in total contrast to this, the Labor and Greens government have outlined as a priority in their parliamentary agreement that it is a moral cause to hand out needles to prisoners in our jail system just so they can continue with the drug addiction that most likely brought them there in the first place, all the while ignoring the concerns of corrections officers and detainees who are at the coal face in these situations daily. This is a priority of the Labor-Green alliance. This is yet another project like light rail that will proceed come hell or high water, all in the name of ideology.

Madam Assistant Speaker, I am proud to be part of an alternative government that has vowed that priorities will be reordered and will focus on the true needs of Canberrans come the next election. I am proud that ideological follies such as light rail will not proceed under a Canberra Liberal government and that the focus will once again be on the things that matter most to Canberrans: putting families first, getting our hospitals in order, ensuring that our schools can cope with future demand, maintaining our existing ageing infrastructure, and focusing on affordable and deliverable infrastructure projects that benefit the whole community. These are the priorities of a responsible government, a government that I hope to be part of.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development) (3.36): It is so important that it took eight minutes of the scheduled time, although I should not encourage long speeches that are repetitive in nature in this place. I am very happy to—

Mr Coe: And executive business has gone so long today, hasn't it?

MS GALLAGHER: It has gone very well; we are very pleased with the program today, Mr Coe.

Mr Coe: We will be done by 4 o'clock; a long day!

MS GALLAGHER: I can tell you that my day does not finish at 4 o'clock. I do not know about yours. You might go and sit down and have a cup of tea upstairs, but there is plenty of work on this side of the chamber.

I thank Mr Wall for bringing the matter of public importance to the Assembly today. Indeed I welcome the opportunity to speak on the MPI, because it is very important to talk about priorities when you are in government—what those priorities are, what informs those priorities and having regard to the role of a jurisdictional government like ours, with state and municipal functions.

It is no secret to those opposite that the key areas for the ACT government are: health, and I am happy to list the projects to demonstrate that commitment; education, and again there is a very strong record having regard to the investments we have made in education and the hard decisions we have taken to ensure that our education system remains the system of choice; and public transport, which again is very important. If you listened to those opposite you would think we were dreaming up a whole new area of government service delivery when we are actually talking about delivering core functions of government which are involved in an integrated, modern public transport system in the nation's capital that will support the development of the north part of Canberra and flow through to the rest of Canberra as the city develops over time.

It is a challenge for those opposite to get their minds around, because it does paint a longer vision than the next election. It does look out beyond that and makes us think about what are the right decisions for the city in the long term, and what Canberra deserves as the nation's capital in terms of building and preparing the city, and in terms of our infrastructure.

We have seen the opposition challenge this time and time again, when they are given outlines of long-term projects that will be delivered over a number of electoral cycles. The health infrastructure program is an example of that. It has now been running for six years, and it will have at a minimum another six years to go.

I refer to the changes to school infrastructure—the growing of new schools, the building of new schools, the investment in existing infrastructure, and being able to manage the demographic change in student populations. That will be an ongoing piece of work, just as public transport will—as well as, of course, as we spoke about in question time, delivering a fair and solid future for the thousand Canberra homes and the more than a thousand home owners who have found themselves living with the legacy of Mr Fluffy in the city.

They are all core priorities of government, and I do not think you will hear those opposite out campaigning that they are not. We are being very clear and up-front with

the community about what those priorities are. We are being clear that there is a new call on the budget that we had not foreseen, and that it will require some reprioritisation across our existing infrastructure plans in order to meet it. Again, I have not heard a strong response that it is not fair or that it is not what the broader community expects us to be doing in relation to these homes.

I will start with health spending, because health is number one. It has always been number one. In terms of recurrent expenditure, every year the ACT community funds a health system with a recurrent budget of \$1.3 billion. That forms the largest single component of ACT government expenditure. We have invested in the last six years a total of \$878 million. It is the territory's largest infrastructure project. I hear others talking about capital metro being the largest infrastructure project. The health infrastructure project is larger and will be much larger than any of the investments we make in public transport.

Mr Hanson: That is a series of projects.

MS GALLAGHER: The health infrastructure program, Mr Hanson, whether you like it or not, is about preparing health infrastructure across the system, across the city, for the entire community.

In relation to education, again, we have a very strong record in making the tough decisions to ensure the sustainability of our public education system and the quality of our public education system, and ensuring that we are making responsible and affordable investments in our school infrastructure. It is hard, as your schools age, and as the number of assets on your capital register increase, to continue to make the required investments over time. But we know that over the last 10 budgets around \$900 million has been spent on school infrastructure.

Some of that, I think about \$150 million of that, would have been part of building the education revolution. This has allowed investment going into early childhood schools, it has allowed investment going into new schools and it has allowed investment going into existing schools—schools that need upgrades, the work that needs to be done. And the results speak for themselves, in that we are seeing increased enrolments across the public education system, which is great. That is something we set out to achieve when we took those tough decisions that those opposite campaigned strongly against. And we are seeing what we said would happen, in that we are seeing enrolment return to the public system. Now we have to ensure that we can deal with that change, and make sure that all of the public school infrastructure is appropriate.

When problems have arisen—and Mount Taylor is an example there—the government has responded with resources to ensure that kids going to those schools are prioritised, within a tight envelope, to make sure that they are not disadvantaged and have access to top-quality school infrastructure.

In addition to health, education and asbestos, we are making additional investments in public transport, just like every other government around the country is doing. This is not a new area of government spending. Capital metro is about backing public transport. It is also about backing infrastructure investment in Canberra. It is about

backing the Northbourne Avenue revitalisation. It is about improving our urban density and making sure that we can increase the number of people living close to services and infrastructure along that corridor.

It is about using that land in a much smarter way. It is about generating jobs. It is very clear from the work that has been done to date that there will be 3½ thousand direct jobs related to the project. You will not see another project in this city that will generate those sorts of jobs, particularly at a time when we are seeing our job opportunities reduced, particularly for young people and those that are in the unskilled trades, who will be able to have some job opportunities that have not been previously on offer. That should not be diminished as it is one of the good, solid outcomes of proceeding with light rail.

We believe that the community deserves this type of infrastructure spend, and also that this is money well spent in terms of the future of our city. We will continue to argue for it, just as those opposite will continue to argue against it and have no alternative about what they would do. It is very clear that the do-nothing approach, whether it be in health, education or public transport, is not one of the options that presents itself to anyone who wants to reasonably plan for Canberra's future.

We know from the data that has been provided to us that we are not at a crisis point, like some states get to in terms of public transport, where people demand a response from their government, where they campaign for a response from their government. We are actually in a good position. We are doing that planning ahead. With the infrastructure, if it commences, say, in 2021, we will actually meet some of the challenges. The warning signs are there. Congestion on that corridor is going to get worse. It is real, it has an impact on the economy and we need to be planning for that. I will be interested to hear at some point what the opposition's plans for that will be. If they are opposed to capital metro, what are they going to do about those congestion issues?

Returning to Mr Fluffy, the fourth pillar of our priorities, we will continue to work with the commonwealth to ensure that we get a good outcome there. I hope the outcome is one that lessens the impact on the ACT budget, but whatever happens we need to make sure that we prioritise those families as well. (*Time expired.*)

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (3:46): I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter today and I thank Mr Wall for bringing it forward because it gives us a chance to articulate some of the priorities that each of us sees for this city. I am certainly happy to talk about mine.

Going into the last election, the Greens were very clear that we wanted a city that was sustainable, we wanted a city that was liveable—one that had a diversified economy that was looking at the knowledge and creative sectors of the economy, at sustainability sectors, a city that was about healthy lifestyles, one where people really valued living in this city. In a more descriptive sense, they were the values and the ideas that we took to the last election.

Then, of course, the Labor Party and I sat down and worked out an agreement to go forward for this term of the Assembly. We were very transparent in having that agreement and publishing it online within hours of its being made. People have known exactly what we put into that agreement right from the beginning. Obviously the light rail project is in there. There is the move to ensure that the ACT is getting its energy sources from renewable energy, with 90 per cent by 2020. It is about restoring the health of Canberra's lakes. For a long time I have been agitating for that; it is an important issue for recreational facilities in this city. I note that Ms Lawder brought that issue forward recently; it is something we have been working on for some time. There are other matters in there, and I am happy to continue to talk on them. There are things like Common Ground, tackling the problem of homelessness in this city. These were set out, and work is continuing on those projects.

I would like to say at this point that very clearly I support the four priorities the Chief Minister stated in Saturday's papers. It follows a cabinet decision last week. Governments must be clear about the areas they are going to focus on, and I wholeheartedly endorse the four priorities of health, education, public transport and dealing with the Mr Fluffy legacy that this city has been left with. Each of these areas is incredibly important; they are areas that we must prioritise.

We ask what prioritising means. This is where key resources are going and where ministers and the bureaucracy will be spending their time. We know that around 50 per cent of the budget each year is already spent on health and education. To suggest they are not a priority is simply silly. But there is a large amount of resources going in there and a considerable amount of time and effort.

Public transport clearly does need work. As this city grows, we cannot ignore the need to diversify our transport options. Canberra is a car city; that is the way it has been built, over many years now, and that is a legacy we must live with. But we cannot rely on cars alone for the future of this city. As the population grows, if we keep simply relying on car-based transport, we will spend more and more of our time in traffic jams. Nobody in our community wants to spend more of their time in traffic jams. We need to provide alternatives that tackle the question of congestion as this city grows.

Talk to people from other cities. One of the things they say about Canberra is that they are so glad it is different from Sydney. In particular they cite Sydney, but also Melbourne. They talk about the quality of life in the city by the fact that we do not have huge amounts of traffic congestion.

We have a choice. We can keep going like Sydney has done and just build more and more road infrastructure, attempt to cut the increasing volume, or come up with a decent alternative. Through these commitments that the Labor Party and the Greens are working on, we are ensuring that this city will not end up like Sydney. We will continue to have a good quality of life. You will not need to spend an hour in your car to get your child to football. You will not need to spend an hour in your car to get to a dinner party. You will not need to spend an hour in your car to get to health services. There will be decent alternatives in this city, and we will have done that before we get to the crisis point.

That is what responsible governments do. That is what communities tell us they want. They want leaders to take decisions that are in the long term. They get sick of just election cycle decisions; they want us to take decisions that are in the long term.

This week we have heard from those opposite a lot of commentary that we need to focus on health and education. I come back to my earlier comments: the government is focused on delivering on health and education, but we must deliver in these other areas as well. And I see transport infrastructure as a key priority for quality of life in this city.

The Mr Fluffy issue probably does not need extra commentary from me at this point. The Chief Minister has spoken about that, and there has been a lot of public discussion. There is no doubt that we must deal with that issue. We have a large number of householders or families across this city—home owners, renters—who have been affected by this legacy. It has now become very clear to us that the clean-up that was previously done was not adequate. The evidence now shows that further steps must be taken. I share the sentiment that we should deal with this once and for all. We cannot leave it to some other government to have to deal with it again in the future, and we cannot leave people affected by it in some sort of half-fixed situation or in some sort of limbo situation. We need to come up with a clear solution that deals with it for the long term.

One of the elements I am concerned about when it comes to talking about priorities is the parochialism that we see creeping into the criticism of light rail. I think it is a concern. The first stage of light rail is from Gungahlin to the city. It services that particular part of Canberra, with a particular emphasis, but there is a clear commitment to continue to build across the rest of the city.

It has to be built somewhere first. I would be interested to see what happened if we built it down Mr Coe's preferred route from Belconnen to the city. Would he be in here saying, "What about the rest of Canberra?" If we had chosen to build it first, if the best decision had been to build it, from Fyshwick-Kingston through the parliamentary triangle into the city, would Mr Doszpot be in here saying, "That is not okay"? That is his preferred area, the inner south. Would he be saying, "It is okay because it is my area"? What about the rest of it? This sort of parochialism is not a basis for public policy; it is simply parochialism. We have to start somewhere.

We cannot simply make policy decisions on those bases. Otherwise we will end up with a situation where other members will come here and say, "Clean up Lake Tuggeranong," or "I live on the north side; I do not ever use Lake Tuggeranong; why spend money on that?" That is the equivalent sort of thing. Or there is the Tuggeranong health centre. Will people say, "I live on the north side; I will go to health services on the north side of the lake; don't worry about the Tuggeranong health centre"? What about the new emergency services station at Charnwood? "My house is in Woden. I will never need a fire truck from Charnwood, so don't worry about it."

This is the logic that has been put forward in these arguments—that we cannot provide this style of infrastructure for Canberra because other parts of Canberra will not necessarily use it. It is a false argument. It is a poor argument from people who are supposed to be leaders in this community. It is simply not the way a government for Canberra should be working. This is one city that is still a relatively small city. We need to provide services right across the city. We cannot get into this kind of parochialism if we are going to do effective government for Canberra.

There is a whole lot more that can be said about the priorities. I have articulated today where I am coming from. Transport is one of those issues we must tackle. Over the last decade we have certainly seen a very heavy focus on spending on roads. Mr Corbell outlined some of those figures today when he indicated that even in the last four years the ACT government spent over \$1.13 billion on transport infrastructure, the main proportion of which was on roads.

We have invested in roads; now it is time to make sure we get the balance of our transport system right and ensure that we are not over-prioritising roads. That is what has been happening. We have put too much emphasis on it. We now need to make sure that we provide alternative transport options for people who cannot drive, or perhaps do not want to drive, and to make sure that we have a city that does not have massive congestion problems into the future.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (3:56): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr Wall for bringing this important matter before the Assembly. It is most appropriate in a week where we see the Canberra Liberals focused on the priorities that matter to the people of Canberra. You will see it in the motions that we will move tomorrow; you saw it today in the petition tabled. In particular, we are talking about health, we are talking about education and we are talking about the cost of living.

In a week when those opposite are talking about their light rail project, the \$800 million light rail project—and later in the week Mr Rattenbury is going to be talking about euthanasia, and we are talking about solar and how they are going to be putting up everyone's cost of living—it is ironic that Mr Rattenbury would boast of the message that the Greens took to the last election. He seems to be forgetful of the fact that that very message that the Greens took to the last election resulted in a wipe-out of 75 per cent of the Greens' membership. Mr Rattenbury, you need to reconsider the message you take to the electorate, because the last time you took that message to the electorate all of your colleagues were wiped out.

Mr Rattenbury is talking about his priorities. We know that Mr Rattenbury comes to this place and tries to sound reasonable. He tries to sound pure; he tries to sound as though he is the only one who really looks at evidence, who really cares about evidence. He is trying to say, "It is parochialism that you are concerned about light rail being in the inner north." Where is the evidence to put this in the inner north? I ask, through you, Madam Assistant Speaker, that he put that evidence on the table. You decided it would go through the inner north, went through your electorate, before any of these business cases were done, before a proper study was done. That is parochialism.

We know that Mr Rattenbury will come in here all pure and innocent, but what about behind the scenes? Remember that this is the mob that has taken \$50,000 from the CFMEU. While Mr Rattenbury is trying to be Mr Pure, his priorities are for sale. Mr Rattenbury's priorities are for sale. He has taken 50,000 bucks from the CFMEU, whilst he is coming in here talking about environmentalism. And he is taking \$30,000—his party is—from professional gamblers while he is talking about the evils of gambling. We know where Mr Rattenbury's priorities are. They lie very fairly and squarely with “\$800 million into my electorate in the inner north and as much money as we can funnel into the party from people whom we try and pretend we would not support in the Assembly although behind the scenes it is very different”.

I just have to correct a couple of things that the Chief Minister was saying. The health infrastructure program, I would accept, is a very big infrastructure program, as it should be. But it is not a project. It is a hospital car park, a women and children's hospital and a nurse-led walk-in centre—three very discrete projects. The biggest project in the territory's history is light rail. I am not going to be snowballed and no-one in the community can be under any illusion that this is not the biggest capital investment that this territory has ever made on any project. I would refer back to some previous examples with this government. With health infrastructure we have seen blowouts in various projects. But let us not forget the dam, let us not forget the GDE and let us not forget the jail.

I am not surprised by the rhetoric and the actions of the government this week. You have to remember, Madam Assistant Speaker, that shortly after the last election it was Mr Rattenbury, in front of the media, who said that he wanted the government to be the most green and the most progressive government in Australia. So we should not be surprised. Katy Gallagher followed and said, “Well, we would wear that with pride.” This is the point. We have a government, based on their actions just this week, that are focused on their priorities and on what matters to them. Increasingly, as Mr Wall identified, after 13 years of Labor, they have become increasingly detached from the people that they are supposed to represent.

As a consequence, we are seeing the cost of living going through the roof. Just in this budget alone, I remember on the Thursday when the budget was passed that we had essentially four bills, including the appropriation bill, putting up everybody's cost of living, and not just incrementally—be it rates or other fees and charges—but in most cases you look at rates going up 10 per cent and other fees and charges going up two or three times the rate of CPI. How is that affordable? That is a consequence of this government's agenda.

The other consequence is the degradation in the delivery of services. When you look at those services, when you look at some of the debates that we have been having, when you look at what has been reported in the media and when you look at the motions that we will be debating in this place tomorrow, you will see, when it comes to health, a hospital that is now so full that the clinical director of ED is saying it is unsafe. He is talking about the impact of that on mortality. As much as the Chief Minister wants to come in here and boast about nurse-led walk-in centres and so on, the reality is that this is a hospital that is full. After 13 years of Labor, the legacy is a

hospital so full it is not safe, and it has an impact on mortality rates. That is inescapable, and that is a reflection of this government's priorities over the last 13 years.

In education, we have the same sorts of reports. We have schools, particularly at the lower grades—and ironically in areas where this government previously closed schools—that are so full that they are bursting at the seams. Kids are being put into temporary accommodation and the infrastructure is being degraded. That is the legacy of this government.

All members of the opposition—I know, Madam Assistant Speaker, that you are very active in getting out into the community—get out there and talk to people about their local infrastructure. When you go down to the local shops and talk to people in Tuggeranong—if Mr Rattenbury ever gets out of the inner north and goes down to Tuggeranong—Belconnen, Weston Creek and Woden about how they see their decaying infrastructure and eroding services they will tell you plenty about the priorities of this government.

Mr Coe: Particularly in Gungahlin.

MR HANSON: Particularly in Gungahlin; indeed. That is a good point, Mr Coe.

Mr Rattenbury interjecting—

MR HANSON: There are interjections from Mr Rattenbury. He is engaged when it is Gungahlin because he thinks that is where his tram is going. There was no comment when it was Weston Creek or Belconnen or Tuggeranong. He has written them off. All Mr Rattenbury cares about is light rail and where it goes to and where it is coming from.

There is a cost to what Mr Rattenbury and Mr Corbell are pursuing—a 90 per cent renewable target and 40 per cent carbon emission targets. What this means is solar and it means wind. We have seen just today the impact that your wind policies are having on people in our region. We have seen previously in motions brought forward by Mr Wall the impact of solar on the people of Uriarra. But there is also an impact on everybody when they turn on their lights, because the wholesale price for electricity in this town is significantly cheaper than solar or wind. In fact, the advice that I have, on good authority, is that solar power, in the grid, in the feed-in, is about double that of the wholesale price on the market and for wind it is about four times. That flows through into everybody's power bills.

The final point I want to talk about is light rail. Essentially, I will finish where Mr Wall started. There is no doubt that this is something that is going to be a major issue in our community. Of all the projects that this government has embarked on, I think this is probably the one that is the greatest exemplar of its priorities as opposed to the community's priorities. This is a tram—despite the glossies that get put out and the spin—that is going to service, based on the government's figures, 3,500 people in peak. That is the number of people that are using the bus, and that is less than one per cent of the population.

So when the government say they are committed to public transport infrastructure, that this is a solution, a transformational project for Canberra, then just remember it might be transformational but the only transformation that is going to occur is less than one per cent of this population getting off the bus and getting on a tram. If that is your idea of transformation for \$800 million, your priorities are clearly wrong.

Discussion concluded.

Adjournment

Motion by **Mr Gentleman** proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Education—awards

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (4.06): Tonight I want to note the nominees and the winners of the 2014 ACT Public Education Excellence Awards, recognising school leaders, teachers, support staff and volunteers in the ACT public school system.

Since 2010 the awards have celebrated the outstanding schools and the people working in them. I am especially happy that in a new category, family and community partnerships, the staff at Charnwood-Dunlop School have won. They created the Active Brain Cafe, ABC, to build partnerships with families and the community and improve outcomes for students. ABC provides breakfast and reading for families before school every morning; extension literacy and maths clubs after school two afternoons a week; and a Koori homework club where schoolteachers, parents and community supporters work side by side to support students with reading and homework. Other winners from Ginninderra are Lynn Leon, Kaleen Primary School, Teaching/Leadership in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Education Award; and Sue Norton, Fraser Primary School, for outstanding school leadership.

I also congratulate Robyn Hammond, Hughes Primary School, Primary Teacher of the Year Award; Nor Idris, Lyneham High School, Secondary Teacher of the Year Award; Michele Foley, Turner primary school, Early Childhood Teacher of the Year Award; Matthew Eyles, Calwell High School, New Educator of the Year Award; Debbie Carne, Harrison School, Education Support of the Year Award; and Brian Johns, Hughes Primary School, School Hero of the Year Award.

The nominees for the awards include Bianca Bailetti, Sarah Baird, Niomi Ceely, Michele Foley, Maria Jofre, Kathy Joyce, Debra Lawrence, Kate Wylie, Libby Hicks, Lynn Leon, Louise Pinder, Sarah Baird, Daniela Banda, Amanda Beresford, Tricia Butters, Tom Camilleri, Leslie Carr, Natalie Collis, Karen Cossins, Jenelle Martin, Vicki Favel, Dan Graetz, Hawker Primary School staff, Robyn Hammond, Kathy Joyce, Nicole Kent, Lynne Kowalik, Debra Lawrence, Olivia Maidment, Kim McCormack, Kathleen Nash, Jodie Rowell, Bronwen Rutherford, Karen Simpson, Julia Tapp, Linda Baird, Mary Hutchinson, Sue Norton, Jo Padgham, Lyndall Read, Simon Smith, Kendal Achurch-Ihle, Leica Burt, Jenny Cowell, Marg Cummins,

Narisha Deonarain, Caroline Evers, Cameron Foster, Janelle Horsington, Nor Idris, Susan Johnson, Andrew Kay, Tabatha Kellett, Pauline Luchetti, Andrew Moss, Jodie Rowell, Christine Ward, Sarah Bowtell, Brooke Brown, Jennifer Edwards, Matthew Eyles, Christine Gaffney, Ashleigh Grey-Reitz, Katherine Guy, Katrina Harding, James Houlcroft, Kelly Knox, Shannon Kowalick, Daniel Lane, Casey-Anne Langler, Claire Sandry, Candice Scott, Mark Shiels, Isobel Short, Joanna Smith, Nicole Smith, Hayley Smith, Jodi Stoneman, Paul Swinbourne, Jessie-Kate Watson, Meredith Wells, Kate Wylie, Bob Bacchetto, Debbie Carne, Tammy Charalambous, Brenda Croft, Michelle Davis, Peter Griffin, Lianne Gyles, Mel Horrocks, Julie Humphreys, Pauline Luchetti, Craig Lyttle, Jacqueline Mengel, Dale Newbury, Margaret Quade, Judith Rouch, Mark Szeremet, Pauline Watson, Philip Batten, Amanda Beresford, Robert Brunato, Sharon Craft, Peter Dray, Boris Drobnjak, Brian Johns, Clement and Diane Jones, Nerys Knoke, Karen Love, James Mackenzie, Craig Midgelow, Jackie Neill, Sue Packer, Kirrilee Turner, Amanda Walsh, Christine Ward, Mercy Woodman, Charnwood-Dunlop School staff, Fraser Primary School community gardeners, Jackie Patten-Richens, Jervis Bay School staff, Monash Primary School staff, Mark Ransome and Reclink, School Volunteers Program at Arawang Primary School, and Stephanie Alexander kitchen garden specialists at Majura Primary School.

Congratulations to all nominees and winners. You do fantastic work for ACT students and the future of our Canberra community.

Menslink

MR COE (Ginninderra) (4.10): I rise this evening to talk about the wonderful work that is done by Menslink. Founded in 2002, Menslink aims to support young men and facilitate sustainable relationships that will help these men throughout their lives. This is a vital service. Statistics consistently show that men are far less likely to seek treatment for mental health conditions than women.

Menslink are most commonly known for the mentoring program they provide to young males. This program has proven highly successful and involves adult men volunteering their time to mentor teenage boys. Through this program teenage boys are provided with a mentor, outside their father, to help them through their teen years. The mentoring program is equally as beneficial for the mentors, who find joy in passing on their wisdom to the next generation.

To complement the mentoring program, Menslink also visits schools in Canberra and surrounding regions in order to encourage young males to speak about any issues they may be having. Over the last couple of years Menslink has successfully teamed up with both the Brumbies and the Raiders to produce their “silence is deadly” campaign across the region’s schools. Last year this campaign was provided to over 9,000 kids in 40 schools and saw a 133 per cent increase in the number of young men asking for help in order to deal with life issues and mental health problems. This is a great result and I hope the campaign is just as successful this year.

I know numerous members of this place have spoken at their midweekers functions, a great concept where men tell their stories. I know some MLAs such as Mr Wall have passed the hat around at sporting matches to try to raise funds to help the organisation.

Perhaps most importantly, Menslink also provides a free counselling service for men aged between 12 and 25. Counselling is available at the organisation's offices in Griffith as well as selected schools and centres throughout the ACT and is a valuable service for any young men who have to deal with tough issues.

Given the important services that Menslink provide to young men in Canberra, I would like to take this time to acknowledge all those involved in the organisation. In particular I would like to acknowledge the CEO, Martin Fisk; the mentoring manager, Ben Triglone; the mentoring coordinator, Neale Roberts; the counselling program manager, Mackenzie Clare; the counsellor, Rolf Einhaus; and the office manager, Fiona Brammall.

I would also like to acknowledge the Menslink board, which is comprised of the chairman, Peter Clark; the vice chair, Jim Rice; the treasurer, Simon Wallace; the secretary, Jenny Henderson; and committee members Wendy Addison, Glenn Cullen and Michael Battenally. I would also like to thank all those who donate to Menslink and make the organisation financially viable.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all the men who put up their hand and volunteer their time to be a mentor. There is no obligation to volunteer your time for any organisation, so it is right to acknowledge the terrific contribution they make to the lives of young men in Canberra. I commend the work of Menslink to the Assembly. If you would like to get involved in Menslink or attend one of their upcoming events, such as the annual breakfast which is being held next week, I encourage members to visit their website at www.menslink.org.au.

Fred Hollows schools award

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (4.13): Last week I was extremely pleased to represent the ACT government to help celebrate the 2014 Fred Hollows schools award. The Fred Hollows schools award celebrates the wonderful and caring contributions our ACT primary school students are making in their school community.

Students won awards for showing great leadership and making positive contributions, particularly in the areas of charity, citizenship and community service. They gave small acts of kindness to their classmates, supported fundraising drives within their school and community and they set a good example in the playground and helping those in need.

For students, the awards were an occasion to be recognised for their efforts and accomplishments and, judging by the smiles that were on display last week, it was clear that their schools, families, carers and friends are very proud of their achievements. The Fred Hollows schools award is in its third year and is only offered in the ACT.

Fred Hollows helped change the world by giving people the gift of sight, and that is pretty amazing. Fred believed that everyone in the world should be treated the same and that all Australians should care for others. These are things that all of us should try to do as we go about our lives.

The Fred Hollows schools award is held in Fred's honour to celebrate all of the great work that ACT primary school students do and inspire them for the future. Education is one of the ACT government's most important responsibilities. In the ACT we aim for all kids to do well in academics, but our schools have larger responsibilities to equip our students with the skills needed to achieve their full potential.

All schools are about values. We believe that inspiring students to be generous, caring and active citizens early in life will help them to become great members of their community regardless of where their lives take them.

In closing I would like to thank the Fred Hollows Foundation for their important work across Australia and the world. I would also like to thank the principals and teachers of Amaroo public school, Arawang public school, Canberra Christian School, Canberra Girls Grammar, Canberra Grammar, Charles Conder public school, Duffy public school, Forrest public school, Gold Creek public school, Hawker public school, Holy Spirit primary, Holy Trinity primary, Jervis Bay public school, Kaleen public school, Latham public school, Mawson public school, Namadgi public school, Radford College, Red Hill public school, St Edmund's College, St Francis of Assisi school, St John Vianney's school, St Jude's school, St Michael's school, St Thomas More's school, St Thomas the Apostle school, Trinity Christian School, Wanniasa Hills public school, Weetangera public school and Yarralumla public school.

I thank them for all the work they do that creates cultures of generosity and care in our schools, both through the programs they run and through the examples that they set. I hope the students who participated in the program continue their great work and continue giving back to the community by helping in various school, social and community activities.

Construction Industry Training Council 2014 awards

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.16): Recently I had the pleasure of attending the Construction Industry Training Council 2014 awards for outstanding graduating apprentices. The Council is a not for profit organisation that provides advice and assistance in industry policy, planning, delivery, resource allocation and other relevant issues for the building and construction industry. CITC aims to create an environment in which industry stakeholders can contribute to the vocational education, training and skills development in the ACT and surrounding region. It has direct responsibility for undertaking the consultation and implementation of the industry's national training packages as well as representing the region's broader training interests.

The event was a great success, and I wish to thank the organisers and especially acknowledge CITC chair, Mr Bill Cleary. I also wish to congratulate those who received awards at the event. Firstly, congratulations to the joint winners of the 2014 award for outstanding graduating apprentice, Bradley Monkhouse and Gary Mills.

My congratulations also to the following winners in their respective categories: bricklaying, Shaun Campbell; cabinet making, Joshua Kelly; cadet, Benjamin Dunlop; carpentry, Bradley Monkhouse; civil construction, Travis Luscombe; concreting, Brett Thoms; glass and glazing, James Lagudi; Indigenous (carpentry), Jordan Rowe;

landscaping, Jack Wallace; and metals engineering and light fabrication, Gary Mills. Meritorious awards went to Bantoon (James) Jantanop, Liam Muckle, Bradley Muir, Joshua McFarlane, Joel Nielson, Michael Tot, Sanota Vongpaseuth, and Mark Zwickert. Further awards went to Michael Lewkowicz, painting and decorating; plumbing, Ashley Crivici; refrigeration, Travis Kelly; systems electrician, Andrew Gibson; wall and ceiling lining, Mitchell Cook; wall and floor tiling, Zachary Gilroy; and woman in a non-traditional trade, Brianna Oakley.

The 2014 industry encouragement awards went to Thomas Armstrong, first-year carpentry; Campbell Ash, second-year carpentry; Rowan Maguire, third-year carpentry; Samantha Pope, first-year electrical; and Allyce Daley-Boom, first-year electrical also.

It was fantastic to see the opportunities that CITC offers to young apprentices, allowing them to further excel in their chosen fields. Once again, I acknowledge and thank the Construction Industry Training Council for their work, and again offer my congratulations to those who received an award.

Lifeline

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (4.19), in reply: This afternoon I rise to speak about a very enjoyable visit I recently made to the Lifeline bookfair warehouse in Mitchell. Lifeline Canberra is Australia's highest performing telephone crisis support service and is now aiming to answer more calls than ever following the enlargement of their existing phone room to eight lines. In 2013-14, 300 Lifeline volunteers answered almost 30,500 calls from members of the general public, an average of 85 calls a day.

As many of us in the Assembly would know, the Lifeline bookfairs have become an important fundraising opportunity for Lifeline and the established public face of Lifeline in Canberra. The fairs are very well supported by the community at large with the sale of books on every subject imaginable. You can also get CDs, DVDs, puzzles—and of course with the puzzles they are all tested first, so all the pieces are counted and checked—and games totalling in excess of \$1 million each year

As I witnessed for myself, putting on a book fair as large as Lifeline's takes a monumental effort from their volunteers and a substantial amount of planning. Around 300 volunteers sort through, wipe down, organise and price 200,000 books for each of the two main bookfairs held each year, with the next fair taking place this weekend, 19 to 21 September, at Exhibition Park, Mitchell.

During my visit I was able to talk with many of the warehouse volunteers who clearly derive great satisfaction from the work they do as well as having great fun together. I also learned that you can order online. The web address is www.act.lifeline.org.au, and you can search by category and then order online, price including postage. But also online you can order more than just books. As I mentioned earlier, there are games, puzzles, records and DVDs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Carrie Leeson, the new chief executive officer of Lifeline Canberra, for showing me around such a professionally organised warehouse, Phil O'Brien, the warehouse manager, and all the volunteers for giving their time so generously on behalf of a very good cause.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.22 pm.