



Debates

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Tuesday, 12 May 2015

Visitors.....	1571
Nepal (Motion of condolence).....	1571
Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee.....	1578
Water safety and awareness program (Ministerial statement).....	1578
Social inclusion (Ministerial statement).....	1582
Statute Law Amendment Bill 2015.....	1592
Health—funding.....	1595
Questions without notice:	
Minister for Education and Training.....	1610
Education—teacher concerns.....	1613
Hospitals—University of Canberra.....	1615
Education—capital works program.....	1619
Canberra Hospital—emergency department.....	1620
Schools—Coombs primary school.....	1622
Alexander Maconochie Centre—security breaches.....	1625
Roads—active transport.....	1626
Supplementary answers to questions without notice:	
Youth—homelessness.....	1630
Education—capital works program.....	1630
Public Accounts—Standing Committee.....	1630
Papers.....	1631
Financial Management Act—instrument.....	1632
Financial Management Act—instrument.....	1632
Disability and Community Services Commissioner.....	1633
Papers.....	1634
Government—fees and charges (Matter of public importance).....	1635
Adjournment:	
Canberra Sand and Gravel earth awards 2015.....	1646
Karinya House—Mother’s Day ball.....	1647
Hawker Primary School—fete.....	1648
Hall school museum.....	1649
Hospitals—handwashing.....	1650

Tuesday, 12 May 2015

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.

Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call the Chief Minister, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the Ambassador of Nepal, Mr Rudra Kumar Nepal, and 24 members of the Australia Nepal Friendship Society. Welcome to the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Nepal

Motion of condolence

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events): I move:

That this Assembly expresses its profound sorrow at the devastating loss of life and destruction of homes and communities arising from the earthquake in Nepal, and offers its heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the families and friends of the many victims of this tragedy.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to express our community's grief in the wake of the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal late last month. I too would like to acknowledge His Excellency Mr Rudra Kumar Nepal, Ambassador of Nepal, for joining us today, along with members of Canberra's Nepalese community. This community has been working tirelessly with their Australian friends to provide aid and support for those who are suffering.

If only we could be together today under happier circumstances, Madam Speaker. But I acknowledge the community's determination, along with that of everyone in Canberra, to aid those living half a world away and to provide a small ray of light in these dark times.

The nightly footage on our television news and the distressing stories online of loved ones lost to the disaster provide a small glimpse of the scale of this human tragedy. Here in Canberra we can only imagine the immense sense of despair that the people of Nepal are confronting as each day passes. The awful loss of life and widespread destruction of some of the nation's most precious cultural monuments and relics is very difficult to comprehend. In particular, our city's thoughts are with those who are still awaiting news of their loved ones, and those who are facing bleak conditions in the many isolated areas that are affected.

During this difficult time it is important that we also rally around members of Canberra's Nepalese community. Our city is home to more than 1,000 people of

Nepalese origin, including students at the Australian National University and the University of Canberra, as well as four cultural organisations, who have added so much to our city's life and culture. We thank them for making Canberra their home.

Since the earthquake it has been heartening to see the support of Canberra's multicultural sector and the support that our wider community has shown. With local coordination led by the Australia Nepal Friendship Society, a beautiful candlelight vigil was hosted in Garema Place on 1 May and attended by hundreds of Canberrans.

At a special fundraising night held at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre on 10 May, jointly organised by the Federation of Chinese Community and the Red Cross, much-needed funds were collected to assist with the recovery efforts. The generosity of our community in supporting others in this time of tragedy shows how dear our Nepalese friends are to us, and how caring Canberrans are in times of extreme need.

In that spirit, the ACT government last week donated \$10,000 on behalf of Canberrans to Oxfam Australia's Nepal Earthquake Relief Appeal to help with humanitarian efforts. Donations made to Oxfam's appeal contribute towards emergency relief and recovery assistance, water and sanitation, shelter, health, protection, livelihoods, community safety and resilience initiatives, as well as sending specialist aid workers to assist in relief, recovery and long-term disaster management operations. Canberrans who would like to support this appeal further can do so by making a donation via the website at www.oxfam.org.au.

Another way of showing support is to take up the opportunity to express your thoughts at this time of tragedy for so many people. A condolence book has been placed in the foyer of the ACT Assembly here in the city for anyone who would like to pen a message or simply sign their name in support of Nepal. It will be here for the next month, and we encourage all citizens of Canberra to come to the Assembly to sign the book.

Whilst a condolence book is a small gesture during a time of such grave tragedy, it is a way for our community to express the sorrow we are all feeling for such a warm-hearted, welcoming and beautiful people. Significantly, it is also a symbol of hope, a symbol of reflection and a symbol of the well wishes for Nepal's future from the people of Canberra.

In 2003 our city confronted natural disaster when the devastating firestorm wreaked havoc across Canberra. Our recovery process was long and fraught, but the support and well wishes that we were shown from people across the world brightened our city's darkest days. I wish the same for the people of Nepal. With the love and support of your friends here and in every corner of the globe, we will help you through this dark time.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that I speak on behalf of all of my Assembly colleagues as we express this sentiment and support this condolence motion today for the people of Nepal.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition): I commend the Chief Minister for bringing this motion before us today. I thank him for doing so. I will start where he finished—that is, I am sure all members of this place would have similar sentiments in expressing our condolences to the people of Nepal. I express our deepest sympathies to all of those in Nepal, and to the Canberra Nepalese community. It is great to see representatives here today. I acknowledge and welcome His Excellency Mr Rudra Kumar, the Ambassador of Nepal, and also Mr Sam Wong. It is great to see Mr Wong here again in our Assembly, representing our multicultural communities.

Madam Speaker, our thoughts are with the millions of people who have been affected by this tragic event. This was Nepal's deadliest earthquake in more than 80 years, and it was with shock that Australians heard the news of the massive devastation.

It is simply impossible to fathom the sorrow and grief being experienced by the Nepalese community. They have seen so many of their loved ones die or become homeless, as well as the devastation that has now been wreaked upon this beautiful nation.

There is also heartache closer to home for many Australians, the many people who are lost or who have been killed, the trekkers, the NGO volunteers, the guides, residents and people who have been buried by landslides and avalanches triggered by the earthquake. My understanding is that in many areas the searches have been suspended and there is now the grim task of recovering the deceased. The horror, shock and desperation are just unimaginable.

I was very pleased, as I am sure we all were, to know that the Australian nation has stepped up, with bipartisan support, to provide funding to help Nepal recover. Certainly Nepal will need every cent that is being provided. The funding that has been provided by the federal government will support women, vulnerable communities and small businesses, and will provide support to devastated areas. My understanding is that, at this stage, the casualty toll is close to 8,000 people, with 17,800 injured—a phenomenal number.

The amount provided is about \$15 million, and it is supporting the United Nations relief effort, the WHO, the Red Cross and other Australian and international NGOs. The federal government also provided two C-17 aircraft, carrying tonnes of Australian aid and two RAAF aeromedical evacuation teams.

I thank the Chief Minister for the support that has been provided by the ACT government—a donation of \$10,000. I think that is most welcome and certainly has support from those on this side of the chamber.

It is also great to see the fundraising activities that are occurring in our community. It is good to see that the multicultural community is getting together and that the Canberra community is getting together with fundraising activities. I am aware of those activities. I am also aware that there was a soccer match at which Mr Doszpot officiated. Congratulations to the Narayani Warriors, who were the victors of that tournament that raised much-needed funds for the community as well.

Our relationship with Nepal spans many years. We have had a longstanding diplomatic relationship. There has also been a significant relationship between the people of Australia and the people of Nepal. Many Australians have visited that wonderful country. For many Australians it is a rite of passage to go and trek in Nepal and see that magnificent landscape. I have not had the opportunity to do that but my wife, as a younger woman, trekked through Nepal. As the devastation was unfolding she was visibly upset as she recounted some of her adventures, the wonderful scenery and the people that she met there, whom she described as being gentle and gracious people. I think that is what we all take away from that tragedy.

We send our condolences to the people of Nepal and to the members of the Nepalese community in Canberra. We will not just be with you now, as this tragedy unfolds and in the immediate aftermath, but I am sure that as a Canberra community and as an Australian community our thoughts and our support will remain with you in the many months and years to come as you rebuild your beautiful nation.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo): I rise on behalf of the ACT Greens to join my Assembly colleagues in offering my sincere condolences to the people of Nepal for the losses they have suffered as a result of the earthquake that struck on 25 April. I would also like to offer my condolences to the Nepalese community here in Canberra, some of whom have joined us this morning, as they grieve for family and friends who have been affected by the tragedy back home.

I also offer condolences to the people of India, China and Tibet who were also affected by the impacts of this earthquake, and where people were also killed. Many foreign nationals were killed or injured as a result of this quake, including two Australians, one dead and one unaccounted for. To your families and loved ones, I offer our sincere condolences.

It is hard, sitting here in the comfort of our homes and offices in Canberra, to imagine the horror of this event and to conjure up the fear that those who experienced it on 25 April felt. What we do know is that Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries and one that is not especially well equipped to deal with the human casualties or the physical devastation to villages, cities, roads and other infrastructure.

Nepal is, however—Mr Hanson has just touched on this—a beautiful country. I know firsthand how welcoming the Nepalese people are to visitors from around the world. This time just three years ago I was in Nepal myself for the first time. I was incredibly taken, as so many people are, by the warmth of the people and the massively contrasting landscape to Australia's. Coming from one of the flattest countries on earth, going to perhaps one of the most mountainous on earth, as an Australian it is an extraordinary place to go. It is a country that I think leaves an indelible mark on any of us that have been there.

It was with great personal sadness that I heard the news of the earthquake that occurred on what was Anzac Day here in Australia. Initial reports were bad, and over the days that followed it became clear that the loss of life and the impact of the earthquake were massive. Recent counts indicate that the death toll is in excess of 7,400 and injuries are reported to be more than 14,000. But both figures are sure to increase as authorities reach and assess some of the more remote parts of Nepal.

Of course, the ongoing risk of harm to people is very high. The United Nations has estimated that some 2.8 million people have been displaced. Current estimates have around 150,000 houses destroyed and another 136,000 damaged. The risk of disease outbreak is high. The United Nations has estimated that 1.7 million children alone are living without shelter and in desperate need of drinking water and sanitation. The UN estimates that over three million people are in need of food assistance. The rainy season is just around the corner, the onset of which will only serve to worsen the risks of disease outbreak.

In an assessment of hospitals across the affected districts, the World Health Organisation found that four out of 21 hospitals had been destroyed. The other 17 districts had functional hospitals but they required extra supplies. Of course, there are not only the physical injuries that have been inflicted. The grief and loss and fear and anguish that the Nepalese people are suffering must be immense: the grief of losing loved ones, of losing homes, villages and places of work; the anguish of caring for injured family and worrying about their health; the anguish of worrying about food and water and having somewhere to sleep; and the fear of it happening again as the aftershocks continue to shake the country.

There is physical damage to public buildings, as well as homes. Engineers from around the world have gone to Nepal to undertake assessments as to the safety and integrity of structures. Nepal has also lost many of its UNESCO listed temples and structures. A Kathmandu University academic said, "Kathmandu was a city of temples. Now it is a city of tents." The cost to the Nepalese people will be extensive, as the local economy benefited from international visitors to these sites.

But there is also the sadness that goes with the loss of sites that have great intrinsic and cultural value, aside from the financial benefit they bring. Structures that have been standing for centuries were turned to rubble in minutes. I have to say that I admire the optimism and resilience of a people who can commit to rebuilding these in five to seven years, as was being anticipated by archaeologists in Kathmandu.

The proportions of this disaster are humbling and the scale of loss is still not fully known, but we do know that many, many villages in remote regions of Nepal have been destroyed—some of them simply wiped off the map. Avalanches and landslides obliterated entire communities. In the Langtang Valley, a popular destination for trekkers and where an Australian is still missing, an avalanche two to three kilometres wide wiped out the villages of Ghodatabela and Langtang. This is just one example of the rural destruction that has taken place.

Earthquakes are, by their nature, random. They are not entirely predictable. We know that Nepal sits in an area of great earthly forces as the plates come together. Nepal is confronted with that geography that makes this threat one that is perhaps always in the back of the mind. That is perhaps compounded by issues such as a lack of transport and communications infrastructure in many parts of the country.

We are not, of course, powerless to respond. We can do things to help. The international community has stepped up to deliver aid to Nepal, including the

Australian government, which has been one of the more substantial government donors. Many NGOs were already working on the ground in Nepal; so they had organising structures in place and employed Nepalese people. This left them in a good position to mobilise and respond. Countries have delivered essential equipment, food and medical assistance, and personnel such as doctors, nurses and engineers.

I understand, and Mr Hanson touched on this, that Australia again has provided significant support, with the provision of two RAAF aircraft to evacuate people and also to deliver necessary supplies, which have been distributed by helicopter in remote areas. Of course, the Canberra community have dipped into their pockets to raise money to help, just as people around the world have. I welcome the donation by the ACT government. This money will contribute towards helping to rebuild Nepal and to support those who need it.

I also attended the vigil in Canberra for victims of the earthquake. It was a very moving occasion. There were several hundred people in attendance, coming together both to grieve but also to support each other. I would like to say thank you to Glenn White, the Australian Ambassador to Nepal. He sent me an email this week in which he said:

Australians are not strangers to Nepal, with many thousands each year visiting to enjoy not just the scenic beauty of the varied landscapes, but also the warmth and friendliness of Nepal's people. They have a special place in many Australian hearts, and I have been inspired by the number of Australian groups seeking to give something back to the communities they have been touched by.

This condolence motion is a small tribute to pay to the people of Nepal at this very difficult time but I do hope that it communicates our caring and our pain at the losses that the Nepalese people have suffered. I hope it communicates to the Nepalese community here in Canberra that we are thinking of them and that we want to support them through what is a time of great grief for them, their families and their community.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality): Before I start I would like to formally acknowledge and welcome Nepal's Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Mr Rudra Kumar Nepal, and the representatives of the Nepalese community and other community organisations that have come to the Assembly today. Thank you very much for coming along.

I rise to join the Chief Minister and others in supporting this motion of condolence in the wake of the devastating earthquake which struck Nepal on 25 April. It is a natural disaster which has killed more than 7,000 people and seriously injured more than 14,000 people. The earthquake destroyed significant parts of Nepal's vital infrastructure, its cultural heritage and the homes of many thousands of its people. Its impact will be felt upon the livelihoods, security and prosperity of Nepal and its people for many years to come. Beyond the borders of Nepal, the impact has been felt by Nepalese communities all over the world, including here in Australia and our city, Canberra.

It is a burden that is difficult for many of us to fully comprehend, grappling with such devastation and death and in some cases not yet knowing the fate of friends and family. Over 1,000 people of Nepalese origin call Canberra their home, with an additional 100 Nepali overseas students currently studying at the University of Canberra and the Australian National University. I was heartened that, when the earthquake struck, members of our city's Nepalese community and the wider ACT community rallied to support each other and the Nepal earthquake relief appeals.

As the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I take this opportunity to applaud the collective efforts of community organisations and individuals who have come together to support each other and the people of Nepal in their hour of need. The Chief Minister has already mentioned the wonderful work that has been done by members of the Nepalese community and their friends who live in the region.

I would personally like to thank the President of the ACT Branch of the Australian Nepal Friendship Society, Dr Binod Nepal, and members of the coordination committee, representing ACT multicultural and community organisations and volunteers.

This hardworking team is currently working to support immediate emergency relief such as medical care, food and temporary shelter and with community, businesses and government to support medium and long-term support and rebuilding efforts.

I am also honoured to mention the valuable work of particular members of our local Nepalese community, including Suni Pandey Karki and Rabindra Pradham, and their considerable efforts to coordinate the transportation of vitally needed sleeping bags, blankets and tents to Nepal in the past two weeks. ACT Nepalese community member Soodeep Chetri is on the ground in Nepal coordinating the distribution of this vital relief equipment.

Other ACT multicultural community organisations, clubs and businesses are also rallying to the cause by showing their generosity and support, including the India Australia Association, with an event to be held at the Labor Club in Belconnen on 17 May. The Hyatt Hotel Canberra is organising a high tea to raise funds for Nepal on Sunday, 17 May, from 12.30 to 2.30. The Rotary Club of Kaleen will conduct an information sharing session at their club rooms in Kaleen at 6.30 pm on 18 May. The India Australia Association of Canberra is holding a charity Ghazal night to raise funds at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre in Civic Square from 6 pm on 7 June.

Madam Speaker, these are just some of the wonderful examples of community spirit and generosity at work within our multicultural and broader ACT communities. The citizens of Canberra are working together to help the people and nation of Nepal during their time of need. I am immensely proud of them all.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you personally for your support for a public condolence book to be placed in the foyer of this Assembly for anyone who would like to write a message of solidarity with and condolence for the people of Nepal. I remind members that the condolence book will remain within the reception area of the

Assembly for the next month. I encourage you to let the community know about it and to make a contribution. It is a gesture that I hope will engender hope, reflection and well wishes for the people of Nepal as they rebuild and recover.

I stand with the Chief Minister and others and commend to the Assembly this condolence motion for the people of Nepal.

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

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 32

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

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 32, dated 11 May 2015, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MR DOSZPOT: Scrutiny report 32 contains the committee's comments on 14 pieces of subordinate legislation and one government response. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Water safety and awareness program Ministerial statement

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Racing and Gaming and Minister for the Arts) (10.27), by leave: It is with great pleasure today that I outline a new ACT government water safety and awareness program for year 2 students attending Canberra public schools. This program is an initiative of the ACT government to safeguard the wellbeing of our children and young people and to support lifelong participation in physical activity and recreation in, on and around water.

We are indeed fortunate to live in the beautiful city of Canberra, where there is easy access to a range of aquatic environments for our community to enjoy physical activity and recreational activities. These include local indoor and outdoor swimming pools and waterways such as Lake Burley Griffin and Lake Tuggeranong, with each of the lakes having designated areas for swimming, extensive parks and cycleways. Spaces for family and community gatherings are a feature. Our region also boasts the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo rivers, with corridors, nature reserves and abundant wildlife, providing a range of opportunities for swimming, fishing, boating and other water-based pursuits.

I want to ensure that our children grow up with the knowledge and skills to enjoy the many benefits that our beautiful city and region can offer and the opportunities

afforded by our close proximity to the inland waterways and magnificent beaches. This is why I am committed to delivering a water safety and awareness program for year 2 students attending Canberra's public schools, as part of the government's commitment to the water safety 2014-16 action plan.

Recreation activities in, on and around water provide many opportunities for physical activity and enjoyment. Sadly, however, aquatic environments also present a danger to people who do not have the skills and knowledge to avoid dangerous situations. The *Royal Life Saving national drowning report* of last year found that 266 people drowned in Australian waterways from 1 July 2013 through to June of last year. The highest percentage of these incidents, nearly 40 per cent, occurred in inland waterways such as creeks, rivers and lakes. Although these numbers were the lowest on record for the last 12 years, there was a steep increase in drowning deaths recorded against the 10-year average in 18 to 24-year-olds and 25 to 34-year-olds. A disturbing 81 per cent of drowning deaths were male victims. While an overall improvement in the numbers is encouraging, the incidence of drowning remains unacceptable, particularly as many drowning deaths are preventable.

In 2013-14 the ACT recorded the lowest drowning rate in the country. During this time, with the support of the ACT government, over 50 primary schools participated in the territory-wide ACT primary schools swim and survive program. The Royal Life Saving Society's swim and survive program teaches children a number of important skills, such as safe entry and exit from the water, basic swimming skills, sculling, floating and treading water. This important program equips children with the essential skills that may prevent drowning and enable them to make lifesaving decisions when in an emergency situation.

The aim of the safe waters ACT 2014-16 action plan is to build on the provision of successful initiatives such as the swim and survive program, to reduce drowning incidents to zero through a range of evidence-based but highly targeted initiatives. This is an inspirational goal, but it is my view that it is entirely achievable through a strong, collaborative, evidence-based approach. That is why the ACT government is implementing a water safety and awareness program in Canberra's public primary schools next year.

Our ACT education system has an important role to play in providing children and young people with a quality education and the range of skills, knowledge and understanding they need to lead happy, healthy and productive lives. Schools also play a key role in influencing a child's physical activity behaviour. Primary schools in particular have an opportunity to encourage the development of positive attitudes and practices towards leading an active life. The primary school years are the most effective time for children to learn and refine motor skills and complex movement sequences such as swimming. Evidence also suggests that regular aquatic-based physical activity has positive effects on children beyond purely fitness and skills, extending to positive impacts on their social, psychological and physical wellbeing.

I am committed to decisive action to ensure that children leave primary school equipped with the skill and knowledge to participate safely in aquatic activities and prevent drowning. Not all children have access to this kind of water safety and awareness education. Royal Life Saving believes that a large percentage of Australian

children will leave primary school this year without the swimming and water safety skills and knowledge that they will need to be safe in and around water. Royal Life Saving believes that provision of these programs is a key strategy to equip children with sufficient water safety skills as a means to prevent drowning deaths.

The introduction of a comprehensive water safety and awareness program for primary school students in Canberra's public schools will complement existing learn to swim programs and support children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to avoid danger and prevent death in and around water.

To prevent drowning, research indicates that every Australian child must be taught basic swimming and water safety skills and have knowledge of how to stay safe when they are in or around water. This kind of water safety and awareness education is different from traditional learn to swim programs in that it includes a holistic mix of swimming, survival and rescue skills and water safety knowledge that can be applied to a range of aquatic environments.

Water safety knowledge and awareness are as vitally important as the physical skills and competence children develop through learning to swim. A sound knowledge of when and why to use a particular survival skill or basic rescue technique is as necessary as the ability to safely and effectively perform the skills. Knowledge about the features, risks and potential dangers of the aquatic environment and the strategies to ensure personal safety and the safety of others is an essential component for safeguarding children's wellbeing that is not always taught during a learn to swim program.

I believe that the incidence of drowning in inland waterways such as creeks, rivers and lakes means that provision of a water safety and awareness program must be a priority for our children.

The new water safety and awareness program will target children in year 2, who are typically seven to eight years of age. Evidence suggests that children of this age are becoming increasingly independent, particularly around water. Increased confidence and moving away from the immediate proximity of parents and carers highlight the importance of programs that equip children with the information and know-how to make safe decisions around water.

Children in this age group are also at the right stage of learning and development to further develop basic swimming skills; an awareness of the features, differences and dangers of a range of different aquatic environments; and an understanding of effective ways to avoid danger and to prevent serious injury or drowning. Many of the skills that will be taught through the program are considerably more difficult to learn during the adolescent years.

The new water safety and awareness program will include two complementary components. The first is delivery of a program of 10 practical lessons at a local swimming pool or water park. These practical lessons will include learning sculling and treading water, the use of life jackets and other aids, basic rescues, survival skills and developing students' awareness of inland waterways, including their features and potential dangers.

The children's classroom teachers will be supported through the provision of a teacher resource as a second component of the water safety and awareness program. Professional learning delivered by experts will support classroom teachers to deliver five lessons about high risk aquatic locations, to reinforce and further develop students' knowledge and awareness. Lesson content will be linked to "Australian curriculum: health and physical education" and incorporate water safety at home; water safety at the pool; safe behaviour and equipment for use at the beach; and staying safe in, around and on inland waterways, including creeks, rivers, lakes and dams. Teachers will have the necessary flexibility to deliver each lesson at an appropriate time and pace to suit the needs of their students.

As I stated earlier, I am steadfast in my commitment to implementing this significant and important initiative to ensure that children in the Canberra community have the skills, knowledge and understanding to enjoy water-based activities, recognise risk in aquatic environments and avoid danger to prevent drowning.

The ACT government will provide funding support of over half a million dollars over three years to ensure that all year 2 students can access the water safety and awareness program. A modest parents' contribution will be capped at \$50 per child, which is approximately 50 per cent of the total cost of the program per student. Schools will be able to draw on equity funds and student support funds to assist the children of families in need.

It is my firm belief that capacity to pay should in no way prevent any child from achieving a level of proficiency in swimming and accessing a quality water safety and awareness education program. Likewise, I am committed to access for all students, regardless of their background or ability. Appropriate adjustments will be made to the components of the program to ensure that all year 2 students may participate and benefit.

Involvement in physical activity and the development of a child's knowledge and understanding in the primary years has a lifelong impact. The value of a comprehensive water safety and awareness program delivered during this important stage of a child's development cannot be underestimated. It is my view that the development of water safety skills and awareness is a vital and necessary element of a holistic education that promotes and safeguards the wellbeing of our children and young people and prepares them to lead happy, healthy and productive lives. It is my wish, and I am sure it is one that all here share, that this new program will serve our children well, giving them the skills necessary to be confident and safe around our waterways.

I present the following paper:

Water Safety and Awareness Program—Ministerial statement, 12 May 2015.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

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

Social inclusion

Ministerial statement

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality) (10.39), by leave: Today I am proud to deliver a progress statement on the ACT government's social inclusion and equality agenda. I thank Dr Bourke for bringing this discussion to the Assembly on 18 March and echo his reflection that Canberra is indeed a community that strives for inclusion. I also acknowledge my colleagues who described, across their many portfolios, the work the government have done and are continuing to do to progress our social inclusion agenda.

It is clear that social inclusion means different things to different people. In working for an inclusive community, government will naturally connect with people in different ways, and it is important to embrace difference in the way people engage in the community. Despite the different perspectives of government across health, education, transport, justice, infrastructure and planning, there was a common thread that spoke of a unified effort to improve the quality of life for everyone in our capital.

This government has long shown leadership in tackling inequality and disadvantage. We have done this through embedding the principles of social inclusion in legislation, policies, services and practices that improve the lives of people who have been pushed to the edges of society. We have done this so that no-one misses out on being part of the life of our city and everything it offers.

For 14 years this government has made social inclusion part of business. We have at different times approached it from a central perspective, and we have always embedded it in the work of government. We have worked with Canberrans to achieve a lot over that time, and the agenda continues today through the different arms and mechanisms of government.

This government has seen significant success in legislative reform that seeks to overcome formal barriers to inclusion in our community and to lead changes in social attitudes. I begin with the ACT's Human Rights Act, which was introduced in 2004. As members would be aware, this act was the first of its kind in Australia. It forms the foundation for an effective social inclusion and equality agenda. It means we have a legal imperative, not only a moral one, to do everything we can to ensure all citizens can be active participants across all aspects of our society.

Also on the subject of legislation, the government's changes to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act and the relevant arrangements that have been made mean that people in the LGBTIQ community are afforded the same right as everyone else—to simply be themselves under the law.

While we have started with legislation, our policies and practices have also undergone significant reform. This reform is about providing ways to better support some of our most vulnerable Canberrans so that they can be empowered to make positive change and to live good lives. We are doing this based on the principle of investing in services and programs for those in most need and for social benefits that span the ACT. The 2015 report on government services tells us we are getting it right across disability, housing, out of home care and youth justice. The ACT leads the nation in the proportion of public housing for low-income households—this is at 98.9 per cent—while the allocation to people with the greatest needs as a proportion of new tenancies is at 96.9 per cent.

Important to our social inclusion agenda is that we have always believed social housing in our city should be embedded in all our communities and that no neighbourhood does not open itself up. As our social housing program has evolved to provide support to those in the greatest need, our resolve to ensure Canberrans from all walks of life live together and build understanding of each other's experiences has only grown. We continue this attitude across government. In youth justice, the rate of young people on community-based supervision is the lowest it has been in the ACT for five years and reflects a commitment to helping young people re-engage in their communities.

We lead the nation in the percentage of people with a disability accessing community support services. This is at 48 per cent. Our work in supporting children and young people in care and protection is reflected positively. Data shows that the ACT is providing the most stable placements for children and young people who leave care after a year or more. Of this group, more than half of children and young people had been in only one or two homes during that time. This builds them connections, not just with carers but with schools, communities, doctors, services, homes and friends that build those informal supports we know are key to inclusion.

The need for greater social inclusion and equality has been a driver for reform right across government. In health, these concepts are at the centre of service planning and delivery within the ACT health system, expressed through the duty statement of your health, our priority. We see this reflected in the seven community health centres that place the consumer as the centre of the model of care. In this way, individuals and families are involved in decision-making, and the focus is on connecting and integrating all aspects of a person's care and treatment.

Inclusion is also reflected in the decision to make mental health a priority. We are working with our health partners to implement greater support for people with mental illness who are involved in the justice system, along with better support for step-up and step-down services.

We know transport and planning play key roles in shaping inclusive communities. Good urban planning connects citizens, bringing opportunities to enhance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our community. It also increases a sense of identity and belonging. Good planning is about removing or avoiding those elements that contribute to exclusion.

A socially inclusive society must also manage the fine balance between public safety and giving people in the justice system, including those in the youth justice system, a chance to rehabilitate and re-enter the community. Justice reinvestment is about developing a smarter, more cost-effective approach to improving criminal justice outcomes. It includes implementing initiatives that divert people from criminal activity and reduce the likelihood of Canberrans getting stuck in cycles of criminal offending.

Most of us would agree that having a stable home is important to having a decent life. This principle has driven this government's unprecedented investment, along with policy changes to increase housing affordability and strengthen the social housing sector. Since 2004 the government have consistently invested in social housing so that we can respond effectively to the changing needs of our community. Under the guidance of the public housing renewal task force we are replacing our ageing public housing stock—essentially, the replacement of 1,288 outdated public housing units with units that reflect both the needs and aspirations of Canberrans in our community today.

Through changes in housing policy and practice, we have overhauled the way we work with people who rent in our social housing system. There is a greater focus on collaborative practice across the housing and homelessness sector to ensure that a person is seen holistically rather than only as someone who needs housing. In this way people are assisted to maintain their tenancies and to access the most appropriate services and supports that can equip them to better manage their circumstances. We are also seeing innovation in how support is provided—for example, the work of First Point and the establishment of Common Ground to assist people experiencing homelessness in the ACT.

This change in the way we provide social housing reflects the way we are revisiting and explicitly reshaping the government's social inclusion agenda, because we know more can be done. I hope there is never an ACT government that believes it could not do better for the people in this city. Because we are a government aware of where more can be done, we are driving change to meet the complexity and diversity of our community and the challenges that some face to full participation.

We see social inclusion as more than having an opportunity; it is about supporting Canberrans to reach equal outcomes. It is clear in the service we offer that two people may have a similar opportunity but their paths may well differ. Each person, inclusive of their circumstances, must have access to what is needed to achieve an equal outcome, and as a government we need to remove as many of the obstacles from their path as we can. This is the renewed focus we bring to the social inclusion agenda. We are coming together across government to apply the lessons of the NDIS and those emerging from the better services trials to complex and persistent problems.

This includes a focus on meeting the needs of our diverse communities in our services and in our broader community. We are increasingly understanding that, when Canberrans access services, they can bring experiences with them that shape the way they interact with that service. That means that every service we offer and our community as a whole need to find new ways to meet the people where they are.

I think for many Canberrans schools are the easiest example to understand the need for flexibility. I have given the example before of a CALD parent and the simple strategies we can use to make sure they feel able to be part of our school community. It is clear they would need something different from Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander parents, LGBT parents, or single mums to feel welcome and able to participate, but the principle remains that, to be able to call ourselves inclusive, the directorate, staff and our school communities all need to be ready to meet those parents where they are.

As a government we are learning about and moving towards this person-first and joined-up approach to services through the NDIS and better services. I am proud the ACT has been a leader in rolling out the national disability insurance scheme. The scheme realises the fundamental principle for people with a disability to have more choice and control about how they live their lives. Over the next two years the ACT will be the first site to transition all eligible people from zero to 65 years of age into the NDIS. This will see investment in the disability sector double to \$342 million by 2019-20.

Certainly the goal to transition people with disability to new arrangements and new lives comes with challenges, but I am confident that services and supports can work collaboratively with government to make this transition successful. I would like to mention here the great work Therapy ACT is doing to support clients to identify and engage the services that best suit them.

So while we have a plan for walking alongside people with disability, we are learning new things as we go, and there are lessons for the future in the way other human services and supports are delivered more broadly.

This approach is also at the heart of the human services blueprint, a framework that is changing the way services and supports are delivered to Canberrans. The blueprint will bring a better overall service experience so that people get the right kind of service at the right time for the time it is needed. Access to, and provision of, support under the blueprint is vastly different from the idea that support is about “doing for” or “doing to” a person. In this situation, a person is essentially removed from the decision-making. It is here that a person feels powerless to change their future. In such a case, the person has almost no chance of moving away from a cycle of dependence on services that may not be what is needed. Sometimes this becomes intergenerational.

This is an outcome that does little to benefit the person, the human services system as a whole and, ultimately, our community. The blueprint, through the better services initiatives of the human services gateway, strengthening families and the west Belconnen local services network, will make a difference.

I mentioned briefly the idea of a person becoming entrenched in disadvantage. This is where the better services, strengthening families program is making great progress with families who face many setbacks and, as a result, are involved with multiple services across government and the community. This program places a single worker

in a family to understand what is going well for a family and what could be improved through the right kind of service response. In this way the lead worker can work with families to tailor supports that respond to identified needs so that better outcomes can be achieved.

To show how this works I want to share the story of how strengthening families assisted a man with a disability and his family. In this case, the role of the lead worker was to co-design a tailored respite option that gave him a chance to get out and enjoy his life. Although the family had been getting support through respite services, the existing arrangements were not able to meet his needs within the family's situation. For example, his mother often had to leave her workplace to pick up her son to care for him. This situation affected not only the young man, whose opportunity to be part of a community was limited, but also his mother's job.

The lead worker had a critical role in working with the family to get a complete understanding of the complex issues faced by the family and identifying what was needed to address them. With the assistance of the lead worker in working across various agencies, the family were able to develop a real solution to their needs that could be sustained over time. This is an outcome that has made a positive difference to the whole family and demonstrates the holistic approach being taken by strengthening families. It is most successful because a single worker can see not just problems but strengths. A worker can know a family's commitment to one another. They can see parents' commitment to getting into or staying in the workforce.

As well, we are already seeing positive change in the way people are accessing support through the human services gateway in Nature Conservation House in Belconnen. For those who do not know, people can call into the gateway to access information and referral and be linked with the appropriate services. For example, people can come in to ask about housing and homelessness support, disability services or help for specific family issues. Workers at the gateway are trained to assist a person in a holistic way so that, if someone has a more complex need that requires a number of supports, they can be given a tailored service response.

A woman came in to drop off some information for her housing application. While she was there, she mentioned to a worker that she was now looking for a job. She said she had been out of the workforce for some time due to ill health. She was then able to talk to someone about the women's return to work grants program and about her return to work plans. She was successful in getting a grant and has been able to start a certificate IV level training course.

I am confident that under the human services blueprint we will see many more examples that show that we are moving towards a truly inclusive human services system, one which supports inclusions across the city. It will be a system that works because people will be at the centre of service provision. It will work because services and supports are joined up and are united in their efforts to bring better outcomes for individuals, for the system and ultimately for our community.

The government is also applying these lessons to further develop a holistic and evidence-based response to domestic violence. To date, the ACT government have

allocated additional funding of \$300,000 towards establishing an ACT domestic violence data framework, extra funding for women's safety grants and for the Domestic Violence Prevention Council. We have also proposed reforms to laws and changes to the victims of crime financial assistance scheme so that women have financial support to assist them to leave a violent situation and to stay away for the long term.

As you would be aware, an extraordinary meeting of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council was held in early April to bring together more than 55 senior people, including police, services and support front-line workers, section leaders, ACT government decision-makers and members of the Legislative Assembly. Importantly, the voices of women who have experienced domestic violence and their involvement with services and the court system were heard at this meeting.

The issues raised at the meeting related to a whole-of-community and whole-of-government approach to responding to domestic violence. Such an approach means we must support victims throughout the processes and progress community education about gender equity and respect as the foundation for preventing violence. We must continue reform in the justice system and increase awareness and collaboration across services and supports that are often the first places to identify violence in a family.

These issues are generally consistent with those identified previously by the Domestic Violence Prevention Council for priority action. The government will continue to work with the council and the community so that women and children are safe in our community, especially in their own homes.

We know the best way of providing help and support is to do this alongside a person, and with those who care and advocate for them. It is also about building a person's capacity so that they can take charge of their circumstances and about providing space for their voice in decisions that affect them—and help to do this if they cannot do it alone. Importantly, it is about placing the person at the centre. Effective support means providing access to services that are joined up, that work collaboratively with each other and with the person. Put simply, services are in a person's life when they are needed and they are in the driver's seat.

Across government we are seeing progress on the agenda of social inclusion and equality. We have a solid base to build on. We have formed a subcommittee of cabinet that will work with experts and community members to develop holistic responses to complex problems, which will ask what we can do across government, with an emphasis on assessing how mainstream services can better reach out to our communities and meet complex needs.

We know there is more to do to address barriers so that genuine inclusion of all can be achieved. I am talking here about barriers that are structural, such as having little or no access to transport, housing and employment. We know these barriers can be cultural in that people are excluded on the things that mark them out as somehow different; for example, their cultural background, gender, income, sexuality, age, disability, education or simply where they live. These characteristics and how they are perceived by others can shape a person's chances in life.

This government plays a role in doing what must be done so that all Canberrans can live a good life in this great city. We can support people who are experiencing social exclusion by listening and by valuing their experiences, and we can let this help shape our responses to exclusion. Our actions already show we have a clear purpose and shared objectives across government and with our community sector partners. We know our actions are grounded in an evidence-based response, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that inclusion is also about working together to remove barriers to inclusion.

Individuals must feel a sense of ownership and relationship to the things that are shaping our communities, and social inclusion is one of these things. Each of us must be vigilant about the things that push people out of communities, foster marginalisation and result in people having little or no support to change their world. Each of us can take actions, be they small or large, which collectively reflect the kind of society we want for ourselves and for future generations.

I want to assure Canberrans that social inclusion and equality is part of business, that it is a focus of this government and that we will strive to meet every Canberran where they are and help them get to where they want to be. I invite everyone to be part of delivering on this commitment.

I present the following paper:

Progress statement on social inclusion—Ministerial statement, 12 May 2015.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (11.01): I am pleased to speak in support of Minister Berry's statement on the government's progress to strengthen social inclusion and equality in the territory. I have made it very clear that social inclusion is essential to ensuring that our city remains a welcoming, supportive, vibrant and cohesive place to live. Each and every Canberran must be a valued and supported part of our community. To ensure these words and this sentiment really mean something, all of our residents must be able to fully connect with support services, community associations and positive friendship groups to allow them to reach their full potential. Canberra must continue to support all of its citizens, no matter their country of birth, the colour of their skin, their sexuality, their age or whether they live with a disability.

This is a belief I share with every member of this government, and none more so than Minister Berry. Since I appointed Minister Berry as minister assisting me on social inclusion and equality she has enthusiastically progressed the government's social inclusion agenda alongside her range of complementary ministerial responsibilities in housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, community services, multicultural affairs and women.

Social inclusion is not an add-on or an afterthought to the regular business of government; it is at the heart of what we are trying to achieve. In my first speech to the Assembly as Chief Minister, in February this year, I outlined my priorities for the government. As I said then, we live in a prosperous city, and it is our responsibility to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be a contributing and valued member of our community. We must build on the strong base that Minister Berry has outlined in her statement today.

We have brought forward reforms that mean the territory is leading the country in many different areas, such as legislative reform through the Human Rights Act and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act; public housing renewal so that vulnerable people in our society can live with dignity in accommodation that is up to modern living standards and suits their particular needs; the ongoing rollout of the national disability insurance scheme, a distinctively Labor initiative that will ensure those living with a disability and their families and carers get the care and support they need; and implementing true community-based health care so that people with complex health needs are able to easily access treatment and preventative health support.

But, as always, there is more to do. My particular focus for the government in the next year is on practical measures, such as public housing renewal, to ensure we meet the needs of our tenants as best we can. Our city has a long and proud tradition of providing public housing that is part of and strengthens our wider local community. Given this long history, many of our homes are ageing and represent the standards of an earlier time.

So much flows from suitable and dignified accommodation—it is easier for kids to be prepared for school, it is easier for parents to seek or maintain employment, it is easier for individuals to make friends and form resilient communities. The cost of living is lower and environmental impact is reduced. That is why, over the next five years, the government will replace 1,288 of Canberra's oldest, least efficient and, frankly, unsuitable homes with modern, efficient and comfortable dwellings. We will build this new housing right across our city to allow better integration into the local community. Much of this housing will be supportive housing, where the government and community organisations can deliver a range of services to tenants—things like Meals on Wheels and community nursing for our ageing tenants and those living with a disability.

Another practical step towards greater social inclusion is the rollout of the national disability insurance scheme. We are, as a jurisdiction, proudly leading the way as the only trial site that covers an entire jurisdiction. As Minister Berry noted, this will mean a doubling of investment in the disability sector by the end of this decade. But beyond the dollars and cents, the scheme is about showing those living with a disability that they are essential members of the community and we will do what we can to ensure they can reach their full potential. That was the federal Labor government's mission when it developed and commenced the rollout of the NDIS, and it remains our mission now.

I also want to touch on Minister Berry's focus on reducing domestic violence in our community. I cannot think of many other issues that have had such a damaging effect on inclusion. Victims of violence can never feel safe and are often forced to flee their local community and support networks in order to escape the violence. It dislocates children from their friends and their schools. In extreme cases, it deprives young children of their mothers, as we have seen in recent tragedies in our city and around our country.

From grassroots funding support through to the highest levels of government, we are taking practical steps to fight this scourge of violence in the home. We are listening to those on the front line and acting accordingly by, for example, reforming our victims of crime assistance scheme to reduce trauma and provide better support services. That is why countering domestic violence was the first task I assigned to the newly formed cabinet subcommittee on social inclusion. More generally, this dedicated cabinet subcommittee is also proving to be a strong forum for the exchange of ideas, providing more accountability on priority projects and allowing direct ministerial input into the early stage of the policy development cycle.

My commitment to place social inclusion at the core of my government's work will build on Labor's impressive record in government and, importantly, also drive the new reforms we need in this decade for the benefit of the entire Canberra community. I commend Minister Berry for her leadership in this important policy priority for the territory government and for the people of Canberra.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Roads and Parking, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (11.09): I thank my colleague Ms Berry for providing an update to the Assembly on the ACT government's progress on social inclusion. This government has led from the front and been proactive in tackling inequality and disadvantage in our community. This is something we can only do by incorporating the key principles of social inclusion into everything we do as a government, whether that be in the services we deliver, the laws we make or the practices we adopt. All these things must be done to enhance the lives of people who, for whatever reason, find themselves at the edges of our community.

Ms Berry said in her statement that good urban planning builds communities, connects our citizens and helps to bring about a sense of identity and belonging. As Minister for Planning, I would like to outline the ways in which the government is building communities in the ACT. This is a priority for the work of the government's planning portfolio. Planning for Canberra needs to ensure a future city that is exciting, prosperous and livable for the whole community. Planning also needs to provide benefits to support the way communities live, work, travel and connect.

The ACT planning portfolio is involved in a number of projects that are focused on building communities, including the statement of planning intent, city plan implementation, master plans, public transport and active travel, the healthy weight initiative and active living program, and community and recreational facilities. Planning is essentially about people and communities. A connected and inclusive city provides people with a greater sense of identity and belonging. As our city grows

towards a population of 500,000 over the next 20 years, it is becoming increasingly important for us to address the challenges presented by creating livable, resilient and connected communities that are inclusive for all Canberrans.

The places we live, work and play are important influences on how we move around our city, our social connections and our sense of belonging in the community. People are connected in cities socially, economically, culturally and physically. Social connection needs to be considered in planning for our city at every level—from the overall shape of the city and the region to the level of neighbourhoods, streets and communications within and between individual buildings and their occupants. The changing demographics of the ACT will require significant shifts in planning policies to enable a choice of housing and to allow people to age in place in the neighbourhoods where they are socially connected and familiar with local facilities and services.

We need not only to ensure that our city is people friendly but also to specifically consider child and age-friendly planning policies. As Minister for Planning I am keen to ensure there is housing choice for our mature city and a range of housing options are able to be delivered. In this regard, the Environment and Planning Directorate are continuing to work to review policies and to ensure the territory plan and its codes can facilitate housing affordability, urban consolidation and ultimately sustainability.

Planning has a defining role in helping to shape Canberra as a healthy and safe city, as part of a connected city. Good urban planning can shape our neighbourhoods to create high quality public realm and spaces and encourage active travel for everyone by walking, cycling and public transport. This in turn has benefits for quality of life, including physical and mental health. A number of planning projects are currently in progress which focus on building inclusive communities. The consultation I announced in February on the statement of planning intent has already provided me with opportunities to engage with the Canberra community and key stakeholders to find out about their aspirations for the planning of our city.

I am asking Canberrans to help me determine the planning priorities the government should focus on over the next three to five years. It is very important to me that this statement reflects the community's options as Canberra continues to mature and grow as a major city. That is why I have held a number of stakeholder workshops with peak industry, community groups, research bodies and government agencies to listen to community ideas. The statement of planning intent will be an important document for Canberra. It will build on current ACT government policies and strategies and recognise the main contemporary challenges for our city. The statement will be taken into account by the Environment and Planning Directorate in performing its planning duties.

In preparing the new statement there is an opportunity to underscore what has been achieved to date and to highlight planning priorities to maintain momentum and shared commitment to a vibrant and socially inclusive city. The new suburb of Crace in Gungahlin demonstrates successfully the role of planning in building an active, healthy and inclusive community. A neighbourhood design with active streets, well-connected paths, open spaces and community facilities has been at the forefront of planning.

The social infrastructure in Crace is complemented by a diverse range of housing options for young and old. A denser urban core next to local shops and restaurants showcases well-designed townhouses, apartments and a retirement village in addition to suburban homes. The planning and designing of Crace supports various community activities and lifestyles and results in a lively local shop and public space area. Crace is a great example of a space where community and recreation facilities are provided for the benefit of everyone in the community.

As Minister for Children and Young People I recognise that social inclusion is equally important for the youngest members of our community. That is why I launched, in January, a step up for our kids, a new approach to out of home care for some of Canberra's most vulnerable children. This is a major piece of work, but its aim is simple: to give children and young people in care better lives. Children who have been a part of the care system often fall behind their contemporaries in educational attainment and employment opportunities. In the ACT we want to do all we can to dismantle these barriers by making sure that children and young people in care have every opportunity to be part of a stable, loving home in which they can be nurtured and eventually flourish as adults who can fully participate in our community. Social inclusion lies at the heart of this government, and I commend Ms Berry for her statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Statute Law Amendment Bill 2015

Debate resumed from 19 March 2015, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.16): The opposition will be supporting the Statute Law Amendment Bill 2015, colloquially known as the SLAB bill. Typically, the provisions of SLAB bills are contained in four schedules.

Schedule 1 makes minor, non-controversial amendments initiated by government agencies. This schedule amends one act. The Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Act 2008 is amended to enable the appointment of a “public servant” rather than the director-general as the compulsory third-party regulator. Before the Treasury and Chief Minister's directorates were merged, this was the Treasury director-general, or under treasurer, who had a working knowledge of CTP matters.

The attorney's tabling speech indicates that the minister would appoint a public servant with appropriate knowledge and experience as the CTP regulator. However, the act does not articulate the qualification requirements for appointment. In addition, under the Financial Management Act 1996, the position is “a corporation” and not an individual such as a commissioner.

Given the significant importance of this role, I was concerned that the power to appoint a “public servant” may be too broad, particularly given the absence of some

legislative guidance on the qualifications required for such an appointment. I also wondered why the director-general could not be appointed when powers of delegation are in place and when the director-general could call on expert advice when required.

I have made two sets of inquiries. The first was at the attorney's invitation, in his presentation speech, to approach the PCO. Upon inquiring with the PCO, they have said that it is standard drafting practice. When asked why the under treasurer could not be appointed through legislation, they responded that the under treasurer is not generally a recognised position when it comes to this kind of legislative drafting.

The matter was also raised with the attorney's office and he has provided a comprehensive response. If anybody wishes to have a copy of that, I can provide it to them. His response has satisfied me to the point where I am comfortable with supporting the legislation.

Schedule 2 makes minor, non-controversial amendments to the Legislation Act 2001 initiated by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. In this schedule four sections of the Legislation Act 2001 are amended in the same way, simply omitting the gazette as an example of a place where parliamentary counsel can notify legislation when it is impractical to do so in the legislation register. It is redundant because the gazette itself is now published in the legislation register.

Schedule 3 carries a range of minor technical amendments that are initiated by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office and which are non-controversial. They involve the correction of minor errors, updating language, improving syntax, minor consequential amendments and other minor changes. This bill amends 55 acts and regulations.

The SLAB also includes provision for a schedule 4, to make routine repeals, but no legislation is repealed in this bill. That is not to say that it should not be and that there will not be more coming. I certainly welcome the reduction in unneeded and duplicated legislation or regulation, and I commend PCO for their efforts in tidying up the legislation that has been presented today. These are good steps, and I look forward to seeing, hopefully, more initiatives containing a schedule 4, repealing legislation that is unnecessary. Well done to the PCO for their work, and I look forward to supporting this legislation.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.21): This bill makes minor and technical amendments to a range of ACT acts and regulations. The amendments are non-controversial, and on behalf of the Greens I am happy to support the bill.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Health, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (11.21), in reply: Madam Deputy Speaker, may I say that it is good to see you back in the chair after your absence last week.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR CORBELL: This bill carries on with the technical amendments program that continues to develop a simpler, more coherent and accessible statute book for the

territory through minor legislation changes. This is, as always, an efficient mechanism to take care of non-controversial, minor or technical amendments to a range of territory legislation while conserving resources that would otherwise be needed if they were dealt with individually. Each individual amendment is minor, but when viewed collectively they make an important contribution to improving the operation of the affected legislation and the statute book overall.

Reflecting on a couple of the changes, the Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Act is amended in schedule 1 to enable the minister to appoint a public servant with appropriate knowledge and experience as the CTP regulator. Currently, under section 14(2) of the act, the CTP regulator is the director-general administering the act. When section 14(2) was first enacted, the directorate administering the act was the Treasury. Accordingly, the Director-General of Treasury was the CTP regulator. However, the Treasury and Chief Minister directorates were merged in 2012. Consequently, the CTP regulator is now the Director-General of the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. Although functions are delegated to Treasury officials, the director-general of this directorate remains fully accountable for the administration of the act.

As I indicated in my introductory speech, this is not entirely satisfactory, given that the insurance policy is the responsibility of the Treasurer, and the act and compulsory third-party insurance policy and arrangements are the responsibility of the under treasurer, as head of agency, rather than the director-general of the directorate. This amendment will therefore better align administrative arrangement responsibilities and enhance administrative efficiencies.

Schedule 2 of the bill amends sections 28, 61, 65A and 69 of the Legislation Act 2001 by omitting redundant references to the ACT gazette. These sections contain examples that refer to the gazette as a place that parliamentary counsel considers appropriate for notifying various matters if it is not practical to do so in the legislation register—matters such as the notification of laws and legislative instruments that have been made, or the disallowance or amendment of subordinate laws or disallowable instruments by a resolution of the Assembly. These examples are redundant because the gazette is now published in the legislation register.

Finally, there are a range of technical amendments of legislation in schedule 3 to correct minor errors, update language, improve syntax and omit redundant provisions. These are an important part of the government's ongoing technical amendments program, and I thank members for their support of the bill.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Health—funding

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Health, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (11.24): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the delivery of well-funded health services has real, positive impacts on the lives of ACT residents;
- (b) the ACT Government delivers a world-class health care system and continues to prioritise the improvement of this system;
- (c) since 2001, the ACT Government increased expenditure on health services by 195 percent, from \$472 million to \$1.393 billion in the current financial year;
- (d) the 2014–2015 Commonwealth Budget unilaterally walked away from the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA);
- (e) in the first four years following NHRA arrangements ceasing in 2017-2018, the ACT will lose more than \$154 million in public hospital support from the Commonwealth;
- (f) the Commonwealth's unilateral decision to move away from activity-based funding (ABF) to a reintroduced form of Special Purpose Payment (SPP) arrangements from 2017-2018 will have a major impact on the ACT budget; and
- (g) moving from ABF to SPP arrangements will not reflect the high level of complex health service provision undertaken in the ACT as a result of an ageing population, an increase in complex chronic conditions and complex service provision provided to cross-border patients seeking treatment in the ACT; and

(2) calls on the Commonwealth Government to reinstate funding amounts equivalent to that as was agreed to under the National Health Reform Agreement.

Last week this place discussed as a matter of public importance the importance of a well-funded health system. During that debate, the government put forward a broad range of reasons that support the need to ensure that governments fund health services for a growing community. We made the point last week that a well-funded health system results in a healthier community and a more productive economy. We also noted the importance that Australians and Canberrans place on their ability to access health services in an equitable manner.

Australians value their public hospital and health system. In survey after survey, they rank access to high quality health services at the top of the list of issues that are

important to them. They also regularly support increased investment in health services by governments.

This Labor government supports universal access to health services. We accept that any of us could need access to complex health care and that that need should not send us broke. We have spoken many times about the decisions of successive governments here in the ACT to establish services to ensure Canberrans can access the health care they need close to home. However, we have also spoken about the sorts of cuts to hospital funding to be put in place by the commonwealth over the next 10 years and how this may force us to rethink the levels of services that are able to be provided.

Last week Dr Bourke and I spoke about the benefits of adequate investment in health services. We did not just speak about more funding for health; we spoke about the tangible benefits of a government that places the health system as its highest priority. We spoke about new services, new infrastructure and, most importantly, additional staff within our public hospital and health system, which this Labor government has funded to ensure that our community has access to the services that it needs to access high quality and accessible health services.

Regrettably, those on the other side of this place, as usual, came up with nothing. The Leader of the Opposition's contribution to that debate was not only devoid of any vision or policies of his own; he got a lot of things just plain wrong. The Leader of the Opposition has done nothing to develop a coherent approach to the delivery of health services in the ACT over the past 2½ years. Now it is time for him to put some credible policies on the table.

Last week the Leader of the Opposition talked about the costs of our hospitals. He used a report from the National Health Performance Authority to note that our public hospitals have higher costs per patient than others. He did not say anything, though, about the differences in health systems across Australia that mean that the ACT stands out. The ACT has only two large hospitals. We do not have smaller or, as yet, subacute facilities that enable more activity to be counted against total hospital expenditure. And we do not have those common small hospitals in other jurisdictions that provide low level care, which also enables a larger spread of costs against a larger number of facilities.

But even ignoring what Mr Hanson said in his criticism, he has not come clean about where he will cut costs. A major part of the variation between the ACT and other jurisdictions is the average number and average salaries of our doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. The most recent publication from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that our doctors and nurses earn more on average than their interstate counterparts.

The question for the Liberal opposition is: will they be standing up today reiterating their concerns about costs and telling our doctors and nurses that they are coming after their pay packets? Will the Leader of the Opposition reduce access to elective surgery or emergency department care? Will he limit access to community mental health services? What about our community nursing services? Is this on the list of Mr Hanson's areas for so-called efficiency?

The question really is: where does he think there are inefficiencies, and how would he fix them? Our support services across ACT Health provide our clinical workforce with the level of service they need to be able to focus on the most important part of our health system—the patients and consumers who use our services. What additional administrative work will Mr Hanson ask our doctors and nurses to take on to cover for his so-called aim for efficiency?

Another major reason for our higher average costs is the decisions made by governments to provide high cost but low volume services. I ask the opposition: if they were elected next year, what services would they cut? Will there be an end to heart bypass surgery services? What about our neonatal intensive care services? Or maybe the Liberals think that, when it comes to efficiency, people needing bone marrow transplants need to travel to Sydney.

It is easy to throw pot-shots from the other side of the chamber, but if the Leader of the Opposition is genuinely concerned about the costs and efficiency of our health service, he needs to say where he is going to find those efficiencies. Will he side with his colleagues federally, or will he get on board with his Liberal colleagues in the states?

As I stated last week, the New South Wales government is also demanding that the commonwealth reverse its hospital funding cuts. The Premier, Mr Baird, said:

... what happened last federal budget is not sustainable ... the commonwealth ... said 'we are going to allocate a large part of the future growth in health costs from ourselves to the state governments'.

But this is what is not sustainable. Mr Baird said:

The states do not have the capacity to meet those health costs on their own. The commonwealth has a critical role to play.

He said:

It's not sustainable, to pass that health cost, which is the biggest cost to every state budget, down—that is the number one issue, we need to ensure the federal government deals with.

This is coming from the Liberal Premier of the largest state in the commonwealth. The future impact of the commonwealth's position in terms of public hospital funding is either major cuts to other areas of government or a very poorly resourced public hospital sector.

Last Thursday, the opposition leader made note of the AMA's recent comments about our public hospital system. But he conveniently missed the main thrust of the AMA's position. The AMA President, Associate Professor Brian Owler, said, when commenting on changes to the commonwealth's cuts to state and territory public hospital funding:

This will lock in a totally inadequate base from which to index future funding for public hospitals.

Associate Professor Owler went on:

Unfortunately, instead of putting the public hospital sector on a sustainable footing for the future, the Federal Government has retreated from its responsibilities in regards to public hospital funding arrangements with the States—

That is, with the states and territories. The AMA are not renowned for being a trenchant critic of conservative governments. Yet their take on the commonwealth's position in relation to reducing the growth in public hospital funding will establish a "perfect storm", with the states and territories "facing a huge black hole in public hospital funding after a succession of commonwealth cuts". That is really the question before us today, and that is what is at stake—a massive black hole of cuts in our public hospital and health services. It is a direct attack on the public hospital system here in the ACT and it will make it very difficult for the government in the ACT to manage future growth.

The commonwealth have made no secret, regrettably, of their determination to cut their funding to jurisdictions for public hospital services. Their decision last year to end the current public hospital funding system and revert to a population-based method of funding health services will, on their own figures in their own budget, reduce commonwealth funding for public hospital services by \$57 billion over 10 years.

Members opposite can state all they like that commonwealth funding for public hospitals will continue to increase. However, what they cannot deny is that the former Minister for Health, Minister Dutton, wrote to the then Chief Minister on 15 May last year. In that letter, he advised that the commonwealth budget included several changes in health of interest to the ACT. One of the matters he referred to was that commonwealth funding for hospitals will still increase over the forward estimates, albeit at a slower rate. Another reform he referred to was that the Australian government had decided not to proceed with the previous government's funding guarantees.

This means that commonwealth funding for public hospitals in the ACT will drop by as much as \$700 million over the decade from 2017-18—\$700 million less as a result of the federal Liberal government's cuts in their budget to funding for ACT health services. That figure is based on an estimate of what the ACT would receive if we continued to be funded on an activity basis and an estimate of funding growth based on population growth and inflation.

This funding model that simply reflects population changes will not support services that need to change to meet these growing challenges. There is no escaping from the reality that an approach based on changes in population is less equitable than a model that is based on activities and the occasions of care provided. That is because of a simple fact. Over the next 15 years, the number of people in the ACT aged 75 years or

more is estimated to double. As people get older, they need more care—and they need more complex care and more occasions of care. No population-based funding model will address that.

In contrast, this Labor government has invested in more health services. Since 2001, we have increased expenditure by 195 per cent, to a budget of \$1.3 billion annually. This increase in funding has enabled us to build a clinical workforce that meets the needs of our community. Over the period from 2001 to 2012, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's figures show we have added more than 500 doctors and over 1,200 more nurses to our healthcare system. Most of the costs in our health system are staff costs, the costs of the highly trained professionals who have made a career of supporting our community. It is this investment in growing our skilled health workforce that this government is most proud of.

We have also focused on improving capacity. While we have done more than anyone else to add to the public hospital bed stock—with us nudging 1,100 beds next year compared to just 670 when we were first elected—we are also fully aware of the need to make sure we manage demand. There is good evidence that many services can be provided outside a hospital environment. That is better for patients and better for our hospital system.

If we are to continue this work that gives our community not just more but better and more targeted services, we need to know that the commonwealth are a partner. So we need to see the commonwealth government come to the table. We need them to turn their position around. They need to make a commitment to stop the cuts to our public hospital and healthcare services. They need to reverse the position that does not guarantee funding for growth in activity in our public hospital services.

A well-funded health system provides care to people at the right time. A poorly resourced health sector leads to delays in access to treatment and care. This can have a major impact on our health and on economic productivity.

We need the commonwealth government to come to the table. \$700 million less over the next decade in our public hospital and health systems cannot be sustained. It cannot be sustained by any ACT government budget. Whilst, as a jurisdiction, we have invested over \$800 million over the past four to six years in improving public health infrastructure—whether it is new maternity service facilities, new cancer treatment facilities, new community health facilities, walk-in centres or expansions of our emergency department—we still need the commitment of the commonwealth.

The purpose of this motion today is to say that, on the eve of the federal budget, the commonwealth must act to reverse their cuts, totalling \$700 million over 10 years, to our public hospital and health services. They need to take their hands off our public hospitals. They need to come back to the table and be a partner in supporting growth and funding in public health services, because that is what the people of Canberra expect. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.40): I will start where the minister finished off—what is the purpose of this motion today? Clearly, the purpose

of this motion is to try and distract from the fact that this minister, this government, has cut 60 beds from the plan for the University of Canberra hospital. It is this government that is cutting health. It is this government that is cutting hospital beds. What it is trying to do today is run a scare campaign, trying to lay the blame anywhere else.

We want to see good levels of health funding coming in to the ACT. There is no doubt about that. We want to see as much money coming in to the ACT as we can get. But when this government receives money it then has to allocate its priorities. And it is clear that what this government is doing under the health minister is cutting hospital beds to fund light rail. That is what is happening, and that is what he is trying to excuse.

Mr Corbell said health funding should be a government's highest priority, and I agree. But it is clear that under this minister it is not. It is clear that while this minister is blaming the federal government for the loss of money that was never allocated in the budget, by saying that it should restore funding that was never allocated in a budget, concurrently he is cutting hospital beds.

His speech was obviously written a couple of days ago or he has failed to read the *Canberra Times* this morning when he refers to the Liberal Party's policy on health. We announced the other day that we will not be cutting beds from the University of Canberra hospital. We will be guaranteeing and going ahead with what was always planned and what was always promised by this government.

Let me go to that point, Madam Deputy Speaker, because you know this well, and I will be quoting you. Back in 2010-11 and before, there was a botched attempt by this government to take over Calvary. That fell apart. That has been well litigated. The government then came up with a range of options about what might proceed, and that was referred by me in this place to an inquiry by the health committee. The health committee looked at these options and we got some really good ideas coming forward. It was a broadly bipartisan committee. That committee said that we would have a look at all of the options. The government then came up with some suggestions. We basically worked together in a reasonably good spirit of bipartisanship and came up with a number of options that were looked at.

One of them, option E, was part of a government discussion paper which I have here before me. You will remember this, Madam Deputy Speaker: "ACT public hospital services: delivery of additional hospital beds—options analysis". For the north side, it was 200 beds. That was for the new subacute hospital and it was in the government's document—200 beds.

The committee reported on that and recommended that it was the way to go. The government agreed in its response to the committee. So everybody was saying there should be a 200-bed north side hospital. We then had *The new north Canberra hospital: report on site selection* from the government. Page 4 states that it will have 200 beds, and that is what was discussed. That is where this originated. That was supported by the Greens. For Mr Rattenbury's education, Ms Bresnan was a keen supporter of it. It was one of those rare moments when we all agreed in this place that this was the way to go—200 beds at the University of Canberra hospital.

What did people say about this? Everybody thought that it was 200 beds. Mr John Watkins, a former Labor Deputy Premier of New South Wales and the Chair of Little Company of Mary Health Care, said he had been written to by the government. He said: “We agree in principle to what they’ve proposed and now we just have a few details to tidy up.” The Little Company of Mary stated:

Funding for the deal will be announced in the ACT Budget ... providing several hundred million dollars for a 200 bed upgrade to Calvary and the building of a new 200 bed sub-acute hospital somewhere in the city’s north.

So that is what the Little Company of Mary thought. What did Ms Gallagher say? What was Ms Gallagher saying about this when I asked her about it? This is from *Hansard* in 2011:

Ms Gallagher: Yes, non-acute; so it is subacute and it may have a few little other things with it.

Mr HANSON: And that is still in the ballpark of 200 beds?

Ms Gallagher: Yes.

“Yes,” she said. The *Canberra Times*, in repeated reporting, said:

Ms Gallagher said the Bruce site had topped the list on a number of criteria to house the hospital which is planned to have ... 200 beds.

An ABC news story stated that “the hospital would include 200 beds for subacute treatment”. Mr Grant Carey-Ide, the executive director, service and capital planning for this government, was the man in the Health Directorate charged with building hospitals. He was the bloke who was responsible for that. And what did he say? He said: “It is proposed that it will have up to 200 beds.”

Who else have we heard from? Look at this one. This is interesting. This is the newsletter that comes out, *Our City, Our Community*. It is a lovely document, Madam Deputy Speaker, and it has a very nice picture of the former Chief Minister on it, and a message from her. It has lots of information about things. It refers to “expanding health and hospital services in the ACT”. It states:

The new University of Canberra Public Hospital will provide up to 200 beds for sub-acute services ...

So even the government is saying it in their newsletters—or was that a lie? Is that not true? Was that a deliberate attempt to mislead the population? Madam Deputy Speaker, when you spoke in the Assembly in 2014, just last year, and you said that it was going to have 200 beds, you were not misleading the Assembly, were you? Back then I am sure that you were telling the truth. Madam Deputy Speaker, you said:

That is why the building of the University of Canberra public hospital is very important to the people of the ACT and is keenly awaited by the people of Ginninderra—

I am sure it is, Madam Deputy Speaker—

as we were talking about before. As members are aware, last year the government invested \$8.3 million to complete planning and forward design of the new hospital, which, as you all know, when completed will mean an extra 200 beds plus aged care, mental health and subacute services.

That is what you said, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am sure you were telling the truth when you said that. We have had members of the government, a former Chief Minister, officials, newsletters, a bipartisan committee report, option papers—everybody and every document—coming into this place, going out in to the community, all of the media, and everybody saying “200 beds”.

What has happened? What has happened is that this government has cut it to 140 and the minister is out there saying, “It’s 140 plus these other things that we will pretend to count as beds.” As you have identified, and as others have identified, Madam Deputy Speaker, it was going to be plus aged care, mental health and subacute services. It was always going to have outpatient services. They were always going to exist. Now what we have is a minister who has cut it to 140 beds and who is trying to pretend that those other services, which were always going to be provided, Madam Deputy Speaker, according to you, are now beds. So all of those outpatient services are now beds.

If we look at the smoking gun, the government’s “University of Canberra Public Hospital—design services contract” with Newpolis Pty Ltd, and we look for how many beds it is going to have, if we look at where the rubber actually hits the road, it refers to “a new 140-bed subacute facility”. Everybody has been saying 200, and what we find out when we read the fine print from this minister, when we read the contract, is that it refers to 140. So this minister has the gall to come in here with this motion today and lecture members of this Assembly about health funding and about making health a priority when this minister and this government have been touting 200 beds out in the community, touting 200 beds in the Assembly, and misleading people left, right and centre in our community. Quite clearly, what was going to be 200 beds is now 140 beds.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are two scenarios, I suppose, when you look at this. One is that there were never going to be 200 beds and this has been a big con job. When people like you, Madam Deputy Speaker, were saying there would be an extra 200 beds plus, that was not true, and this has been a big scam and a big deception on the ACT community. That is option 1. I do not actually believe that, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I believe that when you came in here—and I know you well enough, Madam Deputy Speaker—you believed that. I do not think you were trying to scam the community. I do not think you were trying to mislead this place. I do not think you were trying to mislead the good people of Ginninderra. I think you came in here believing it was 200 beds, as I believed it was 200 beds, as the Australian nursing federation believed it was 200 beds, as Mr Rattenbury believed it was 200 beds, as Ms Bresnan believed it was 200 beds. The ABC, the *Canberra Times* and everybody believed it was 200 beds. No; I think it is scenario 2: it was 200 beds and it was always going to be 200 beds, but now it has been cut. It is now 140 beds because this government has cut it.

That is a far more believable scenario, but it is not a better scenario than deceiving the population. To tell them one thing and then do another, to cut hospital beds from the University of Canberra, is a deception. It is a fraud; it is disingenuous.

Dr Bourke: A point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think “fraud” is unparliamentary language and I ask you to make a ruling.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could you withdraw, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: I am happy to withdraw the word “fraud”, Madam Deputy Speaker. The point that I am making—and I will continue saying this, and you will get bored with it and you will get sick of it in this place, I assure you—is to say to this minister, who comes in here sanctimoniously saying he is concerned about what the feds are doing while he is cutting hospital beds, “Between now and the election fulfil your promise. Don’t break your promise. Don’t rip up the plans. Don’t go to the people of Ginninderra. Don’t come into this place. Don’t have committees. Don’t write reports. Don’t make public statements. Don’t release newsletters saying one thing and then do another. Show some honesty. Show some decency. Have some foresight. Don’t just have short-term thinking. Do not cut these beds.”

If there is not money in the budget, if you cannot run a \$770 million deficit or whatever it is going to be—we will find out soon enough—if you cannot fund Mr Fluffy and you cannot fund light rail all at one time, quite clearly this government has to make decisions. As the minister said when he spoke to his motion, the priority for any government should be health. You cannot say that when you are coming into this place and cutting hospital beds.

I say to this minister, and I will be saying it between now and election day, that if you are serious about what you are saying, if the priority is health, cancel your light rail project, defer light rail, do not proceed with light rail whilst you are at the same time cutting hospital beds. If you are going to cut hospital beds, do not come into this place lecturing us about health cuts when you, Mr Corbell, as the minister, are the one cutting beds that have been proposed and planned, and when people like you, Madam Deputy Speaker, have been touting it as happening for the people of Ginninderra when that is no longer the case. I look forward to government members coming in here and retracting their statements on the *Hansard* for fear that they have misled this place.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (11.54): It is good to see that the health minister can get some policy response out of the Leader of the Opposition, even if it is a deranged and misguided rant on an issue that he well knows is entirely off the mark. To quickly and clearly address the main thrust of the opposition leader’s comments, the University of Canberra public hospital will have 215 beds. Let us be clear about that. That issue is resolved. Your entire rant was wrong, irrelevant and missed the point. The point—

Mr Hanson: That’s not true, Mr Barr.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop the clock, please. Mr Hanson, I request that you withdraw the statement that what Mr Barr said was not true.

Mr Hanson: I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Hanson. Mr Barr.

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot, be quiet, please.

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is not a question and answer session. Mr Barr has the floor.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I must say that the voice of reason from the Liberal Party on matters of health funding is the New South Wales Premier, Mike Baird, who said the biggest challenge facing his state and, indeed, the nation was health funding, that what happened in the last federal budget was not sustainable, that the states and territories do not have the capacity to meet the growth in health costs on their own and that the commonwealth has a critical role to play. That is the real issue in health funding. Try as he might, the Leader of the Opposition made no significant observation at all, no contribution on the most substantive issue that every other Liberal leader in this country recognises.

Once again, it falls to those of us who have the task of actually governing rather than just being harping critics on the sideline to take on the federal government on this issue. If there is a unity ticket in Australian politics I am happy to share it with Premier Baird, Premier Andrews, Premier Palaszczuk, Premier Wetherill—even Premier Barnett is on board on this one—Premier Hodgman and Chief Minister Giles in the Northern Territory in saying that what the commonwealth government dished up to the states and territories in its last budget in terms of health funding is unsustainable and it must be addressed.

The Leader of the Opposition may remain in denial—from what we have just heard he is—but that means that the task of tackling the real issues in health funding falls to the grown-ups who are prepared to seriously take on the federal government on this issue. You know an issue is real and serious when you have three Labor premiers and a chief minister aligning with three Liberal premiers and a chief minister to take on a federal government.

If Mr Hanson thinks that Premier Baird is wrong on this issue, let him go out and criticise his New South Wales counterpart. But I agree with Premier Baird—this is the most significant issue facing the nation. Health funding and the lack thereof from the commonwealth government will be the most substantive budget issue facing the states and territories, and the new model that the commonwealth has come up with to fund hospital services will see it reduce its share of expenditure over 10 years from 2017-18 by \$57 billion nationally. Let us be clear what has happened here: in an attempt to

improve the commonwealth's bottom line, it has shifted a significant part of the future growth in health expenditure onto the states and territories.

Minister Corbell has provided significant and alarming information to the Assembly and to the broader community about the impacts of this cost shift and these cuts to the ACT. Effectively, the territory will have to manage a reduction in commonwealth support for public hospital services of \$700 million over 10 years. So there will be \$700 million less coming into the territory to support essential public hospital services. The direct implications of these funding cuts are to healthcare services. It is time the Leader of the Opposition provided some answers about what he is doing to lobby his federal colleagues to stop these cuts.

What they will mean on the ground is a reduction in doctor and nurse numbers, a cessation of health services and the loss of jobs in the health sector. The funding provided by the commonwealth that is in support of public hospital services is spent on people—it pays the salaries of doctors, nurses, allied health staff and the administrative staff who support their important work. Having \$700 million less from the commonwealth flowing into the territory's health budget is an impost on the ACT economy more broadly.

We have been remarkably resilient in the last 18 months of slashing and burning by the commonwealth, but our economy cannot sustain a continuation of this sort of punishment. We need a federal government that understands the benefits to individuals and the community at large from a well-funded health system. Such an understanding is evident in the large number of services that this government provides to our community through our health system.

Besides the funding poured into health services—about \$4 billion of the ACT's \$35 billion gross state product—and nearly \$900 million in infrastructure spending in the coming years, nearly 7,000 people are employed in the ACT health sector. A healthy economy is reliant in large part on the health of its workers. Chronic disease is certainly associated with reduced productivity and reduced workforce participation. That is why we have a very clear focus on preventative health and programs such as the healthy weight initiative that incorporate practical and positive measures to get people's health moving in the right direction, to improve dietary habits, exercise and other personal health measures. These programs are critically important.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates that up to 80 per cent of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes and more than one-third of cancers worldwide could be prevented by eliminating shared modifiable risk factors—tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol. Investment in preventative health is a critical part of improving health outcomes for the community and also improving economic outcomes.

It is well established that preventative and early detection programs make a difference in reducing health costs over time. This means less medical treatment, less time off work, better health outcomes and increased quality of life. ACT Health promotion programs that are targeting children, particularly focusing on instilling healthy behaviours and healthy choices early in life, are where we should be investing, and that is exactly what we are doing.

All of this is at risk due to the federal government's short-sighted cost cutting in health. I will give just one example: over the last 10 months the ACT has virtually doubled the number of public elective surgeries through Canberra Hospital and decreased the number of patients waiting too long for care. This focus may be forced to end if the commonwealth does not change its approach to the funding of health services. Less investment in hospital services will result in longer waiting lists and fewer services. Less investment in health services means a reduced ability to keep employing staff to effectively manage our city's healthcare needs. This has the real potential to negatively impact across outcomes of care—leading again to poorer outcomes for individuals right across our community—and hit our economy.

It is clear that proper investment in healthcare is a major public and economic good. We know this; the community knows this. I am calling on members to support this motion today to send a message to the federal government that we cannot accept their cuts to hospital funding, that we stand in unity with other Australian states and territories—Liberal and Labor premiers and chief ministers—who recognise that this is a major problem. It has to be addressed. It is the fundamental issue at the core of the success of our federation. The federal government have to do better. If those on the other side do not believe me, they should believe Mike Baird. He identifies this as the number one issue facing the nation.

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (12.04): The Chief Minister and the Minister for Health have already covered many of the points that need to be raised on the importance of a well-funded health system. They have made it clear that a well-funded and responsive health system provides benefits to individuals and the community as a whole. It also makes good economic sense. A healthy community with access to the services they need is a productive community. Cutting funds for hospital services and increasing the cost of community-based care reduces the health outcomes of the community, reduces individual health outcomes and hurts our economy.

We know there are areas where we can further improve, and we will continue to work for better access to our public health and hospital services. However, for most services that the community needs, they have timely access. For people with the most dire need, our services are second to none. The commonwealth must recognise the need to continue to fund health services at the levels that support better health outcomes. But for us it is about more than this. There is a considerable social dividend for adequate investment in health services. It is not a coincidence that the countries that have the highest life expectancies are those whose governments recognise the importance of a well-funded and equitable health system.

Within Australia Canberrans top the list in terms of longevity and healthy lifestyles. The ACT continually performs better than the rest of the nation for people admitted to hospitals for conditions that are best managed in a community setting. By investing wisely in a range of health services and supporting services that provide care for people with chronic conditions, we can limit the need for people to be admitted to hospital. None of this happens by chance.

A full range of health services and the public infrastructure to support healthy lifestyles takes a government that is committed to a healthy and wealthy community. It takes vision to understand how such investments have a positive impact on our economy, and it takes a government that has a long-term vision, not one that is held captive by a four-year election cycle. It also takes a government that is ready for the challenges of the future.

Across all aspects of health service delivery we have demonstrated we are working towards our aim of a more equitable and accessible health system. Since coming to office we have almost tripled the amount of funding allocated to health services, from \$472 million in 2001 to \$1.393 billion in this financial year. That level of growth is unmatched in other areas of government. However, challenges still remain. As our population ages, so too will our workforce.

Right now we are in the enviable position of having access to a good supply of highly skilled staff, with large numbers of new recruits available each year to take over from those who retire or move elsewhere. But in the long term the picture is not the same. We know that over the next 10 to 15 years we will have to be more innovative in how we construct and deploy our health workforce to ensure that the community gets the level of care it deserves. We also have to think about new cooperative arrangements, working across clinical disciplines, that will not impact on patient care and help us to provide a sustainable health system in the future.

This is not a cause for panic or off-the-cuff responses; we have time, but we need to do the planning now. That is why our current investment in new services, buildings and technology is important. However, this will require new funding allocations to ensure that our community is not left behind. All of this demonstrates the neglect of the commonwealth government in walking away from its commitments under the national health reform agreement to adequately fund public hospital services into the future. Many figures have been bandied about in relation to the full impact of the commonwealth funding cuts. But however you look at the numbers, they paint a bleak picture for our future public hospital sector.

The minister has already made statements today about the response of organisations like the Australian Medical Association, which has reported the commonwealth public hospital funding position as a perfect storm. In looking at the four years from 2014-15 that were reported in the 2014-15 federal budget papers, the ACT will lose \$190 million in commonwealth financial support for public hospital services over the period to 2017-18. That is \$190 million less over just four years, mainly due to the removal of funding guarantees that were a part of the national health reform agreement for the period to 2016-17 and the revision to a population-based funding model in the 2017-18 financial year.

Based on the figures reflected in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 budgets, together with changes over the 2014-15 financial year in terms of activity projections and the MYEFO outcome, the four-year issue for the ACT is a drop in funding for public hospital services of \$190 million. We talk about this number because the budget provides a four-year picture of funding estimates by government. But the 2014-15

commonwealth budget went much further than that. The commonwealth themselves know that once they revert to a population and indexation-based system to support public hospital services, the commonwealth budget will be \$57 billion better off over a decade, carved out of health funding. As the minister announced last week, our preliminary estimate, based on modelled activity and price growth, would see a \$700 million gap over the decade from 2017-18. We can only close this gap by cutting other services or raising taxes.

But we have a Liberal opposition that says nothing. Even while their interstate colleagues raise major concerns about their ability to manage the savage cuts in commonwealth funding for public hospital services, those opposite say nothing. I ask Mr Hanson and his team to come clean with the people of the ACT and let us know what they are going to do to manage the savage cuts faced across Australia by the commonwealth's decision to slash funding for public hospital services. I implore all members today to join with us and vote to endorse this motion that will send a message to those across the lake that their position on public hospital funding is not good enough. Let us all condemn the commonwealth's position on the funding of public hospital services, and let them know that all ACT parliamentarians, all 17 members, demand a well-funded health and hospital system and that they should reinstate the collaborative approach to hospital funding agreed in 2011.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (12.11): I welcome the opportunity to talk about health funding today because I think this is a question that is of interest not only to all of us in this place but also to our constituents. I guess the question is: why do we need a well-funded health system, as Mr Corbell touches on in the first part of his motion? I think we could frame this discussion another way and still achieve the same outcome by asking: what are the costs to society if we do not fund the health system adequately?

As we all know, the burdens on the health system and the resources needed to support it are increasing. There can be no doubt that the system is struggling to respond to these increased demands in all areas. Community, acute and chronic health statistics regularly show us that these areas are under pressure.

But when the Greens talk to the health system, we are talking to a much bigger picture than just the hospital. We believe it includes mental health and justice health, maternity services and aged care services. We are talking to the full scope of the health system that includes the new ACT primary health network, the home and community care services, the walk-in centres and the outpatient clinics. These are many areas that are not frequently reported on or debated here in the chamber.

All of these pieces of the puzzle need to be considered as parts making up a whole. The coordination between these allied health services is essential to ensure that the finite resources that are available are being used as effectively as possible. This goes even further, in my mind, to the health promotion activities of both the ACT Health branch responsible and the non-government sector, including Sexual Health and Family Planning Australia, the Cancer Council and many others.

What I am getting at is that I believe too often the debates around health funding are targeted at the acute end of presentations. There is in fact a much larger and more

complex system at work out there every day in our city. This is not to skim over the very real issues that are facing the emergency department and the mental health unit in particular. These two areas are quite rightly raised often as needing attention, but I do not believe we can talk to the top of the pyramid without also considering the base.

The ACT Greens believe that fair, equitable and universal access to quality health services is a basic human right. We believe an effective health system must be based on primary health care and preventative health care, including health promotion, disease prevention and early intervention.

It also relates to things outside the health portfolio. Healthy living is a whole-of-government issue and goes to areas in my own portfolios. I am talking about things like physical education in schools, community and amateur sporting competitions, and Canberrans taking advantage of our beautiful natural environment, outdoor fitness facilities and active transport alternatives. The Greens want a whole-of-government approach to achieve improved health outcomes for individuals and communities, because we know this is the only way we can ever truly respond to the social determinants of health and thereby reduce the pressures on acute services.

The social determinants of health are the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, and the systems put in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces: economics; social policies and politics; issues like housing, poverty, access to healthy foods; and many other conditions. But when we look at the health system in this way, we can see how vital it is not only to fund the hospital-based services well but also to ensure that universal access to primary health, such as visiting your local GP, is kept as unfettered as possible. That is why I have taken such a strong view in this place on the issue of the co-payment. It is a classic example. If people avoid going to their GP because of barriers up-front, then the potential for increases in acute service costs down the line is obvious when you think about the health system in its entirety.

I want to make those general observations in framing the debate we are having today, because that bring us to the specifics of Mr Corbell's motion when he talks about the ACT government wanting to deliver a world-class healthcare system. For me that is about talking about the whole system. But then we do get into these very specific issues which are being debated here today.

I note Mr Hanson's comments. He did not actually talk to the motion at all but instead spoke about tomorrow's debate. I guess we will hear it all again tomorrow because he actually did not touch on today's discussion at all. But I am very concerned by the points that Mr Corbell has raised in his motion, because what we need is continuity and certainty when it comes to health funding. We need to be able to plan ahead. Mr Corbell, in his motion, set out, I think, a series of factual points about the national health reform agreement.

Mr Hanson stood up and sort of said, "These things were never allowed for in the budget." But we had a health agreement that set out a future pathway. The bottom line is that that has been undermined—taken away—and this has created a level of uncertainty that is very unhelpful. I think the point for me that I am concerned about

here, and that I want to really home in on today, is this: when we see that sort of uncertainty, it is the preventative health funding that is the first to suffer in that kind of environment.

That sort of uncertainty means that projects about which people think, “Well, they would be beneficial in the long run but we have got this immediate pressure,” are the things that go first. That is why I want to talk about that bigger picture today as well. What I am concerned about is not only the direct impact which Mr Corbell spoke about in his opening remarks and which he set out very clearly in the motion here today but the way that then ripples through the rest of the health system and becomes, I guess, a self-fulfilling cycle. Perhaps “self-fulfilling” is not the word; it becomes a cycle that simply builds upon itself because that preventative funding is not there.

Health can be undermined by this sort of uncertainty and the kinds of pressures we then see through the hospital system, which Mr Corbell’s motion particularly speaks to, simply become further amplified. I will be supporting Mr Corbell’s motion today. I think it is essential that the commonwealth play its part in funding the health system, that it actually retain a level of certainty so that state and territory governments can continue to plan and take the lead in the way that they have to roll out these health system funding processes.

As I say, I will be supporting Mr Corbell’s motion today. I will come to all Mr Hanson’s comments when we actually get to that motion tomorrow. I will make some comments on that then.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.19 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Minister for Education and Training

MR HANSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, I refer to the vote of no confidence in the minister for education by members of the Australian Education Union. The *Canberra Times* reports today:

... the 140 counsellors from 86 public schools and the Canberra Institute of Technology expressed deeper reservations about the minister’s competence and voted not to continue negotiating their agreement with her.

The *Canberra Times* continues:

Glenn Fowler, secretary of the Australian Education Union, which represents more than 3500 teachers, wrote to Mr Barr on Monday, calling on him to remove Ms Burch after two-and-a-half years of “confusion, inaction and poor communication”.

He is reported as describing “a record depreciation in staff morale, as educators continually question the competence of the minister in administering her portfolio” and saying:

There is utter confusion and the minister has taken to speaking in riddles.

Chief Minister, the minister has dismissed this as the unions playing politics 101. Chief Minister, do you have confidence in Ms Burch as the ACT education minister?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Hanson for the question. Yes, Minister Burch is doing a good job as education minister.

Mr Coe: Yes or no.

MR BARR: Having had experience—

Mr Hanson: Come on; say it: yes or no.

MR BARR: Yes. Having spent nearly seven years as education minister and, I think, negotiated four EBAs with the AEU, I am familiar with the occasional use of muscular and alpha male tactics by union leaders in order to advance their case in relation to enterprise bargaining arrangements.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR BARR: This approach by the union is disappointing. However, the government remains committed to working with the union to resolve the outstanding issues, and Minister Burch and I will meet with the union in due course.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, what steps are you taking to address the concerns of record depreciation in staff morale?

MR BARR: I am sticking up for the ACT education system in the face of cuts from Christopher Pyne, Joe Hockey and Tony Abbott—those who would dishonour their commitments to appropriate commonwealth funding for schools in this country. I understand that one of the major areas of concern for the union, and indeed for those who support public education in this country, is the failure of the commonwealth government to commit to an appropriate level of education funding in the long term. And it is not just the ACT government that has—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition! I call you to order.

MR BARR: this view; this is a view shared across the political divide at a state and territory level. The commitments that were given in relation to education funding, that there would be no cuts—that famous SBS television interview on the eve of the last federal election—demonstrated—

Mr Coe: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: A point of order.

Mr Hanson: Can you stop the clock, please, Madam Speaker? I am interested in what he has to say.

MADAM SPEAKER: We can stop the clock.

Mr Coe: The supplementary that Mr Hanson asked was: what steps have you taken to address the concerns of the record depreciation in staff morale? “A record depreciation in staff morale” is a direct quote from the AEU, and we ask that the minister be relevant to that question.

MADAM SPEAKER: I ask the Chief Minister to be mindful of standing order 118(a) when answering the question.

MR BARR: Certainly an impact on staff morale is the failure of the federal government to commit to an appropriate level of funding for education in the longer term. I have absolutely no doubt, and the Leader of the Opposition knows this, about the AEU’s position in relation to long-term commitment to the Gonski funding reforms, and that is something that I will be doing to stick up for the ACT education system.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Chief Minister, what steps are you taking to address the concerns of the AEU about the utter confusion and the minister speaking in riddles?

MR BARR: The minister has been very clear in articulating the government’s position in relation to the enterprise bargaining matters that are before the union. She has been very clear in relation to the government’s position. The pay offer that the government has put forward has, in large part, been accepted by the AEU. There are some areas of disagreement that remain, and the minister and I will work through those issues appropriately with the union over time. That is how we will approach resolving the outstanding matters in relation to the EBA.

I do note that in the correspondence from the union some of the other issues that they raised go to fundamental matters of policy that, in this place, we have a near consensus view on. For example, the union are opposed to the national chaplaincy scheme and they have criticised the minister for allowing that commonwealth funding to flow through to ACT schools. I am sure that Mr Doszpot does not share that view with the Australian Education Union.

So there will be points of difference on policy between the government and the union. On those matters we do not resile from taking a different position from the union. We do believe that non-government schools should operate in the Australian Capital Territory. That is not a view that is universally held within the Australian Education Union. *(Time expired.)*

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call Mr Doszpot, I call the Leader of the Opposition to order and remind him that I have called him to order on a number of occasions. Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Chief Minister, did Minister Burch discuss with you her intention to describe these concerns as “playing politics 101”?

MR BARR: As I indicated in my answer to the Leader of the Opposition’s opening salvo in this particular question, yes, this is an exercise in some use of muscle from the AEU. It is a masculine alpha male type response to an industrial dispute. But it is not uncommon in the context of EBA negotiations. As I say, Madam Speaker—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR BARR: having been involved over the years in a number of EBA negotiations with the AEU, they are not unfamiliar tactics—

Mr Hanson: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson on a point of order. Can we stop the clock, please?

Mr Hanson: What the Chief Minister has intimated with the “alpha male” and other language is unparliamentary. He is accusing Glenn Fowler of bullying and being sexist.

MADAM SPEAKER: Unparliamentary language and epithets refer to the way that we address each other in this place. Of course, the standing orders and the companion do make the point that we need to be careful of the sorts of words that we use in relation to people who do not have the capacity to have a comeback in this place. I would ask members to be mindful of the standing orders and the form and practice in this place and be mindful that they need to be respectful of members of the community in the language that they use. The Chief Minister, on the question.

MR BARR: In relation to enterprise bargaining negotiations, they are often robust. It comes as no surprise to me, as I said, having experienced more than one EBA negotiation with the Australian Education Union over the last decade, that from time to time these issues become more robustly debated. This is one such example. But, to be very clear, the minister and I will meet with the AEU in due course to work through the remaining issues and see an enterprise bargaining agreement successfully struck for ACT teachers for the next four years.

Education—teacher concerns

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the minister for education. Minister, I refer to the historic vote of no confidence in you by members of the Australian Education Union.

In a letter, Mr Fowler of the AEU said that during your time as minister there had been “a record depreciation in staff morale, as educators continually question the competence of the minister in administering her portfolio”. Minister, why have we seen a record depreciation in staff morale as educators continually question your competence in administering your portfolio?

MS BURCH: I am glad you read that letter. I read it with a level of disappointment, because, through the directorate and this government, I have offered teachers a 12 per cent pay rise. I think that, in the current environment broadly with respect to pay negotiations, that is a sound and reasonable offer. I am also on the public record as valuing and respecting the teachers in our schools.

With respect to the notion that there has been depreciation in the level of satisfaction among teachers, if you looked at ETD’s staff satisfaction surveys they would put forward a different picture. Indeed, if you were to go back and refer to Glenn Fowler or the AEU, they would say that in the ACT teachers are happy and confident about working in our system.

As the Chief Minister has alluded to, we are at some point in a very robust discussion around enterprise agreements. I hope that this will not go on for too much longer, because I am on record also as saying that teachers do great work. They deserve to be regarded and respected, to earn a rise of 12 per cent over the life of this agreement, to continue working with the directorate to reduce red tape and non-core duty functions, and to continue to be supported in professional development. That is the offer on the table, and I hope that the leadership of AEU will take that out to its membership and seek their thinking on it.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, how will you be able to regain the confidence of ACT teachers after this historic vote of no confidence in you as minister?

MS BURCH: As I move around the schools I actually get quite a warm welcome, and this issue is not reflected in the conversations that I have with teachers. Even this week there are arrangements being made for me to talk to teachers at schools, to be welcomed, because I have such a high regard and respect for teachers here in the ACT.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, why have we seen weeks of inaction on the urgent request by staff in special schools to have nurses returned to the schools to help deal with the complex medical needs of students?

MS BURCH: You are referring to the HAAS program at Black Mountain School, I am assuming, Mr Wall. I have had conversations with Minister Corbell. The HAAS program is predominantly managed and administered through Health. ETD clearly has a key role to play because it concerns students in our schools.

The principles of HAAS are absolutely sound—that is, a health-led delegation of care. The level of care provided is in response to the complexity of their needs. That is a

sensible way forward. The discussion then goes to what is the level of health activity, nurse activity, and how do you train up the learning support assistants within the schools, whether it is in a special school or across mainstream schools? That conversation continues because the health minister and I are as one in support of the principles of HAAS and making sure that our students get the healthcare support that they need.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, why has it taken you so long to resolve the issue of nurses in schools?

MS BURCH: This is a complex arrangement. We are in the middle of a pilot. Those discussions and those activities have played out. At Black Mountain School the families have a heightened level of concern. So we have put those negotiations and processes on hold and we will go back to Health and Education and make sure we get those systems right.

Hospitals—University of Canberra

MS FITZHARRIS: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on planning underway for Canberra's new public hospital at the University of Canberra?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Fitzharris for her question. The University of Canberra public hospital planning is well underway. This will be a new and innovative approach to health care in our city. It will be, for the first time, a facility entirely focused on subacute care. Of course, that shift to subacute care will help relieve pressure in our acute care hospitals, at the Canberra Hospital and also at Calvary Public Hospital. By having a hospital without intense acute care areas such as surgery, an emergency department and ICU, we can focus on the rehabilitation needs and restoration to day-to-day living that are so important, particularly for a growing and ageing population.

Work is well underway. Expressions of interest closed for the head contractor contract in August last year. Three organisations have now been identified, as a result of that, to participate in the next stage of procurement. A request for tender process was released on 9 April this year. It is scheduled to close in June, and that will be followed by an evaluation period for what will be a design, construct and maintain procurement delivery model.

I am pleased to say that we are also working very hard with the University of Canberra and other stakeholders in relation to the resolution of car parking for the facility to support the requirements of the new University of Canberra public hospital. This will be further considered in the context of the forthcoming capital budget.

The service delivery plan for the University of Canberra public hospital was completed in August 2013. This service delivery plan outlines the function and operational requirements of the hospital and includes the functional brief and the

individual health planning unit briefs for each of the hospital's functional areas. These have also been released for public consultation. That commenced in June 2014 and it closed later that year.

We have also undertaken very extensive consultation with user groups to develop briefs for the additional areas or shared spaces of the facility and those shared with the University of Canberra. A preliminary sketch plan has also been completed. So we are well and truly underway with this very important investment in new healthcare capability for our city and for our community.

It is this Labor government that has made the investment that needs to be made to shift subacute care out of our acute care hospitals, to put it into a purpose-built, dedicated facility at the University of Canberra. In doing so, we are aligning those subacute care models with the outstanding training in nursing and allied health professionals that is delivered by the University of Canberra and leveraging their significant capability in that area to drive improvements in subacute care. So whether it is the aged person who needs rehabilitation following a debilitating illness, whether it is someone who needs hydrotherapy following a motor vehicle accident, whether it is somebody with mental illness who needs dedicated care in a subacute environment to help them manage that illness and return to the community, this is the facility that is going to meet those needs. And it is this Labor government that is investing in that infrastructure for our growing community.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, how has consultation been progressing?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Fitzharris for her supplementary. We have been undertaking community consultation on the reference design for the new University of Canberra public hospital. That was officially kicked off on 16 March this year. The vice-chancellor, Professor Parker, and I were on site to mark the commencement of that consultation process. It closed on 17 April and we have had a very broad range of community suggestions, ideas and comments. In particular, 12 submissions on the design were received. These are being collated into a consultation report and I expect to see the outcomes and detail of that consultation report shortly.

That report will ultimately be provided to the potential contractor consortia for the University of Canberra public hospital project and they will be required to respond to the issues contained in the report as part of the tender process. It will also, of course, be made publicly available on the ACT Health website.

The reference design on which public consultation was sought reflects the preliminary sketch plan requirements. The PSP design commenced, as I mentioned before, in June 2014. Following completion, the PSP was subsequently endorsed by the health infrastructure program strategic committee in February this year.

So we are getting on with the delivery of this very important election commitment to provide a dedicated subacute facility at UC, to do so in collaboration with UC and to make sure we have got the broad range of rehabilitation and subacute care models that we need for our growing and ageing population.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, are you aware of any criticisms of bed numbers at the University of Canberra public hospital? What is the actual situation in relation to planning for beds at the UC public hospital?

MR CORBELL: I thank Dr Bourke for his supplementary. Yes, I am aware of that criticism. Indeed, we have heard that criticism today from the Leader of the Opposition, making the outlandish and factually incorrect claims that he has made about so-called reductions in bed numbers at the University of Canberra public hospital.

The facts are these, Madam Speaker: there will be 250 beds at the University of Canberra public hospital. There will be 140 overnight beds and there will be 75 day beds. We have been very, very clear about that from the beginning. But I think that Mr Hanson is suffering from a memory lapse. On 26 March 2013, in response to a question from Mr Hanson taken on notice by the then minister, the then Minister for Health advised Mr Hanson:

Based on current service planning work for University of Canberra Public Hospital, to build a facility that can take up to 200 beds, there will be capacity for 166 overnight inpatient beds in 2017/18.

He knew back in 2013—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR CORBELL: that there would be fewer than 200 overnight beds. He knew that in 2013—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition.

MR CORBELL: but just in case he missed that, on 26 February last year—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR CORBELL: the Minister for Health again advised this Assembly that there would be 140 overnight inpatient beds and 75 day beds. So one year ago and two years ago in this place—

MADAM SPEAKER: The member's time has expired.

MR CORBELL: on the public record, those were the facts, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The member's time has expired. Please sit down. A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, what benefits has the University of Canberra identified as arising from this facility?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Porter for the supplementary. The University of Canberra have identified a broad range of opportunities that come from this investment. They recognise that a subacute facility that delivers capability for both overnight beds and day beds is the subacute facility that they need for the training of their staff—for the training of nurses, for the training of allied health staff.

What I find remarkable is that on 26 February last year the then minister made very clear in an answer in this place that the hospital will comprise 140 overnight patient beds and 75 day places or 75 day beds. That was a year ago. The University of Canberra knows what the composition was, but where was Mr Hanson a year ago—or in 2013—

Mr Smyth: So where does the 250 come from?

MR CORBELL: when he asked a question on notice and was told—

Mr Smyth: Or are you misleading the Assembly?

MR CORBELL: that there would be a mix of overnight and day beds.

MADAM SPEAKER: Withdraw, Mr Smyth.

Mr Smyth: I withdraw, Madam Speaker, but the minister might like to correct the record. He is now—

MADAM SPEAKER: Withdraw, Mr Smyth.

Mr Smyth: I withdraw.

MR CORBELL: The facts are, Madam Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition has been caught out, because he knew, and was told in answer to a question on notice on 2013—and he knew from the answer given by the Minister for Health in this place in February last year—that the 200 beds would be a mix of overnight beds and day beds. He has ignored that. He has grossly ignored that. He is fabricating a claim that he knows to be untrue—

MADAM SPEAKER: Withdraw.

MR CORBELL: I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

Mr Hanson: Because it's a lie, isn't it? Because it's a lie.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! Sit down; I do not need your assistance, thank you, Dr Bourke. Firstly, it is not parliamentary to make an assertion that someone has told a lie; so, Mr Hanson, withdraw.

Mr Hanson: I withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: I also just put on the record my disapproval of people who knowingly and with full forethought make unparliamentary statements and withdraw in the next breath so that they can get it on the record. That is not parliamentary and I will look at other ways of dealing with that.

Education—capital works program

MR COE: My question is to the minister for education. Minister, what is the approval process for engaging tradespeople for minor capital works in ACT public schools? Further to this, who is responsible for ensuring that the works are carried out according to specifications?

MS BURCH: That would depend on the work that is being undertaken. Either it would be supported through a central function of ETD or it would be administered by the local school.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, what process is required for principals to notify your directorate of minor capital works being undertaken at their schools?

MS BURCH: Again, that would depend on the type of work. But if Mr Coe is after more detail, I am quite happy to get some advice and bring back something to the Assembly.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, is anyone in your directorate required to inspect minor capital works at schools once they are completed to see if they are fit for purpose?

MS BURCH: That would depend on the type of work. You could replace a tap or you could replace a window and they would be different responses, I am sure.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what is the process for asset acceptance and what is the process for registering capital works as assets?

MS BURCH: As I am coming back with some other detail, I will add that to it.

Canberra Hospital—emergency department

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, on 13 April the *Canberra Times* reported that in the Canberra Hospital emergency department “bed shortages at the hospital meant some patients had to be treated in hallways”. Minister, in Australia’s most expensive hospital to run, why have patients in the TCH ED been treated in hallways?

MR CORBELL: There is no doubt that our emergency department is under significant pressure, and when the emergency department gets busy, our emergency department staff take the appropriate steps to make sure people get the care that they need in as timely a fashion as possible. The government is working very hard to provide further support to our emergency department physicians, nurses and other staff.

In particular, to that end, it is well worth confirming that we are currently embarking on a project to expand the emergency department at the Canberra Hospital. Work has started on that project. The expansion will provide for 21 additional beds in the emergency department. That includes nine more acute beds for patients with severe conditions, three more beds or cubicles for patients with less severe problems, three more beds in the emergency management unit, which provides care for short-term patients, two more paediatric beds, two more resuscitation bays, a new mental health assessment unit, which I believe is critically needed, and three more ambulance bays.

This is a very significant investment. It increases the capacity of our emergency department effectively by a third. It has been warmly welcomed by the ED staff—doctors, nurses and other allied health staff. It is a very important project, and that is how we are supporting the work of our doctors and nurses at the Canberra Hospital to meet the ever-increasing demand they see presenting through the doors of the emergency department.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how many TCH ED patients have been treated in hallways?

MR CORBELL: All patients at the emergency department are treated appropriately and with a very high level of care. When the emergency department gets busy all available spaces are utilised.

Mr Hanson: On a point of order, on relevance.

MADAM SPEAKER: On a point of order. Could you stop the clock, please.

Mr Hanson: The minister may be getting to it, but the question was very specific about how many patients have been treated in hallways—not what the nature of that care was but how many have been treated in hallways. I would ask the minister to provide a specific number or maybe come back to this place with that number.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think 19 seconds is not an unreasonable amount of time for the minister to work up to it, but I will remind him of the provisions of standing order 118(a) that he be concise and directly relevant to the subject matter of the question. I call the Minister for Health, on the question.

MR CORBELL: All patients, regardless of where they are treated, receive a very high level of care. The opposition can try to portray this level of care as substandard, but the fact is that all of the instances of care are of a very high quality and when the emergency department gets busy all available spaces are utilised.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, will the subacute hospital, when up and running, assist in relieving stress on the public emergency department?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Porter for her supplementary. It is no doubt the case that indirectly it will. Indirectly it will because one of the key issues associated with delay in the emergency department is the challenge of transferring people who have already been treated in the ED through into the main hospital. The lack of availability of beds because of demands in other parts of the hospital system leads to those blockages in the ED.

The investment in the University of Canberra public hospital as a subacute hospital will deliver capacity to shift some of that demand out of wards within the Canberra Hospital and Calvary public and allow greater utilisation of those beds for patients, including patients who come through the emergency department. So there is no doubt that it will make an important contribution. That is why we are growing investment in our health system. That is why we are investing in better cancer treatment facilities, in better maternity treatment facilities, in better community health facilities and in better psychiatric and mental health facilities.

These are the investments of a Labor government committed to investing in better health infrastructure and better health care. The expansion of the emergency department at Canberra Hospital, increasing the number of beds by almost a third, is another demonstration of that very strong commitment to make sure that health care is there when Canberrans need it.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, will cutting 60 beds from the planned subacute hospital have a long-term impact on finding acute beds for ED patients at TCH?

MR CORBELL: I think the Leader of the Opposition is just a bit slow, because he knows that the context of his question is completely false.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, is it unparliamentary to call somebody "slow"? I seek your guidance on that.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think that we cannot be too precious. Standing orders 54 and 55 talk about offensive words, improper motives and personal reflections. I really think that “slow” may not be the nicest thing but I am very reluctant to rule everything unparliamentary because we will end up with some extremely anodyne debate and you will not like it. I remind people that they should be mindful of their words and it is a great skill of a debater to be able to say these things in a way that does not attract points of order. But I will let that one go.

MR CORBELL: The context of his question really highlights to me that perhaps he is a bit slow, because in February—

MADAM SPEAKER: Do not press your luck, Mr Corbell.

MR CORBELL: last year the then minister told this place that the University of Canberra public hospital would comprise 140 overnight in-patient beds and 75 day places. That was a year ago and the Leader of the Opposition has said nothing about it. Further, in answer to a question taken during the annual reports committee process, which is dated 26 March 2013, he was told that there would be 166 overnight in-patient beds out of approximately 200 beds. *(Time expired.)*

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition and Mr Smyth, come to order.

Schools—Coombs primary school

MS PORTER: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Minister, in November last year you turned the first sod for construction of the new Coombs school. Can you provide an update to the Assembly on the progress of construction?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Porter for her question. I am very pleased to be able to update this Assembly on progress with the delivery of the new school at Coombs in the Molonglo valley. I think it demonstrates the commitment that this government has in investing in public education across our city.

As I have previously informed this Assembly, Coombs primary school will be the first school in the new Molonglo valley development. It will cater for around 720 preschool and primary school students and will open for the next school year. Construction funding of \$47.25 million was provided in the 2013-14 budget, which honoured the election commitment made by the government to build the Coombs primary school.

Coombs primary school will comprise seven buildings, including four buildings providing learning spaces for preschool to year 6 students. The school will also have a multipurpose resource centre, a school administration building and a larger school gymnasium and canteen building, as well as outdoor learning and play areas. Out-of-hours school facilities will also be available for use by the community.

As the first community facility provided in the area, the school will also support the growing local community. Residents will be able to access a range of community use facilities, including the hall and gymnasium, meeting spaces within the school and the playing field.

I went there yesterday and had a look at the construction. I can report that the progress is excellent and work is on track for the school to take students at the beginning of the next school year. All the school buildings are now standing and the internal fit-out has commenced. The buildings that I saw yesterday were the three buildings for years 1 to 6, which have already had the roof and external brickwork completed; the preschool and kindergarten building, which also has the roof and external brickwork; and the hall and gymnasium and canteen, where the building frame is completed and works are underway on the external brickwork.

The builder has begun the external areas and the new school is definitely taking shape. There are close to 100 workers on site each day, completing a variety of tasks and working towards the school being ready to take students at the beginning of the next school year.

Last month the Coombs primary school website went live. This site provides updates on the construction of the project and priority placement and enrolment information. I look forward to the first day of the new school next year.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, what has community reaction been to this new facility, and how are enrolments progressing for the new school?

MS BURCH: There is a strong interest, and the sense of excitement about the opening of the Coombs primary school is certainly gaining pace. The directorate has received a number of inquiries about enrolments for next year and had received over 40 applications as of 7 May across all year levels. The school will open, as I said, in 2016, as a preschool to year 6. Enrolments opened on 28 April and are being accepted for all levels.

The Education and Training Directorate are currently undertaking a selection process for the appointment of the Coombs primary school principal. It is expected that the principal will take up the appointment at the commencement of term 3, assisted by highly qualified and dedicated teaching staff. The Coombs primary school will provide a range of flexible learning environments.

I am sure that this learning experience will be strengthened through the ACT public school policies of active engagement with parents and carers in local communities. ETD have spoken to a representative from the residents advisory group and other members of the local Coombs-Wright community and are expected to attend a community meeting to be held in October of this year. We also expect that the newly appointed principal and a number of other ETD officials will attend that community meeting.

As I said, the beginning of the school year is always exciting, but the beginning of a new school has that extra level of engagement.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, how does the new school incorporate best practice in construction and procurement for major school works in the ACT?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Fitzharris for her question. The Coombs primary school is being delivered using a design-construct-maintain construction methodology. This is the first time that this has been used on a public school project. The process has introduced design and construction innovations and includes a maintenance component to the project.

This means that the construction contractor has a longer term interest in the quality of the building. The procurement process has resulted in a lower cost solution. Initial project savings have been in the order of \$1.2 million. The fact that the builder was involved in the design phase of the project has allowed their experiences in building schools and other major facilities to be brought into the project.

This approach has resulted in the following design and construction innovations: simplification and consolidation of the building and landscape design; the use of a lightweight steel frame for construction; an improved heating and ventilation system; and the integration of external walkway structures to the building lines.

In a first for an ACT public school, the contractor will also maintain the facilities for a period of five years, with an option of a further three years. This cooperative working relationship between the construction contractor and the territory agencies has ensured that this project will be delivered on time, under budget and to a high quality.

The procurement process and the construction delivery methodology used for Coombs have delivered a value-for-money outcome for the territory. Whilst it is still being constructed, the walk-through yesterday showed that this will be a quality school and a school that will have strong interest from the local, and growing, community.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, why is it important that the ACT government continues to invest in new schools and in the maintenance of existing schools?

MS BURCH: I thank Dr Bourke for his interest. Schools are central to local communities, not only providing the opportunities for our children to learn and grow but providing valuable spaces for residents to meet, play sports and undertake other recreational pursuits.

As new suburbs are developed, schools are usually the first major community infrastructure and therefore become vital to connecting families and creating connected and healthy communities. Our new schools also provide 21st century learning environments.

As schools age, investments in capital upgrades ensure that the learning spaces for our children allow modern teaching practices to be applied. Canberra's public schooling system has long set the national standard for providing high quality education. As the latest addition to the system, Coombs primary will provide a positive, contemporary learning environment staffed with highly qualified and dedicated teachers and staff.

All public schools value and encourage engagement by parents, carers and community members. One of the anchor policies, parental engagement, sees that schools are indeed connected to communities, families and carers and to organisations that make up our local community. Not only are we building new schools in areas where they are needed but we are continuing to invest in school upgrades and maintenance to ensure that existing schools are also looked after and provide a quality learning environment.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—security breaches

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Justice. Minister, why was a prisoner at the Alexander Maconochie Centre able to update his social media accounts from his prison cell between 10 April and 1 May of this year?

MR RATTENBURY: It appears that contraband did get into the jail. I think we have been perfectly up-front in admitting that there are problems with contraband getting into the jail from time to time. Equally, I have been very clear that Corrective Services staff in the ACT are working very hard to deter and prevent contraband getting into the jail. There are a range of measures in place to do that, from both physical security searches through to intelligence-led operations.

Corrective Services have been quite successful in intercepting a range of contraband coming into the jail in recent times, but there are other times when contraband does succeed in getting into the jail and this appears to be one of those cases.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, why have prisoners at the AMC been able to update their social media pages, post videos of prison fights and even run drug rings using smuggled phones at the prison?

MR RATTENBURY: Largely it is the same answer that I just gave. With improving technology, it is possible to have a mobile phone device that can upload these sorts of images. Corrective Services continues to work hard to prevent this sort of contraband getting into the jail, but it is an issue that jails are facing across the country. I saw some media comments from Mr Wall being dismissive of this, but it is quite clear—and we have seen it even at the Goulburn supermax jail, where there are reports of prisoners having access to mobile phones—that these are challenges that prison authorities face across this country. That is why I am working with corrective services ministers from around the country to try and identify technological solutions to enhance the security measures that are already in place.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, why have you failed to commission a security review at the AMC, despite repeated security breaches?

MR RATTENBURY: I do not need a security review to tell me that prisoners will seek to smuggle contraband into the jail. That story is as old as jails themselves. But what I am focused on is continuing to improve the security measures we have in place, to do our best to keep contraband out of the jail.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: What work is being done to ensure these same problems do not manifest in the new extension?

MR RATTENBURY: In some ways the new extension does not change things because the new extension is within the perimeter. So the job we have is the same job, whether there is an extension or not, which is to work through a range of measures, both physical searches and intelligence-led work, to continue to try and keep ahead of those who will seek to smuggle contraband into the jail. And I can assure the house that ACT Corrective Services does successfully intercept a range of contraband that is sought to be smuggled into the jail. We have seen recent examples and we will continue to put measures in place to improve that.

Roads—active transport

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Minister for Roads and Parking. Minister, how important is it for the government to facilitate walking and cycling in the ACT?

MADAM SPEAKER: Let me seek some clarification. Is the Minister for Roads and Parking responsible for walking and cycling?

Mr Gentleman: Active transport, yes.

MADAM SPEAKER: Just for my clarification, the Minister for Roads and Parking is responsible for something other than roads and parking?

Mr Gentleman: Yes, Madam Speaker. I am responsible for active transport.

MADAM SPEAKER: Okay. The title does not quite encompass that. I am just getting used to the administrative arrangements. I do apologise to the house. The Minister for Roads and Parking.

MR GENTLEMAN: It is important for this government to facilitate the vision for active travel, and as the minister responsible for active travel I thank Dr Bourke for his question. We need to respond to the needs of the community to access work and services. It is a key priority for this government. Active travel, walking and cycling, is vital to an integrated transport network. It is very important to this government to help reduce the loads on the existing transport network, improve overweight and obesity levels and reduce our environmental footprint.

Not only is it good for our health, environment and wellbeing; it is good for government. Even walking to the shops or bus stop offers benefits to health, social interactions, congestion levels and community wellbeing, all of which are important outcomes for our community. Active travel helps prevent lifestyle-related conditions such as depression, obesity, diabetes and heart disease. The consequent gains in health and welfare lessen demand on the public healthcare system and allow people to live more active and healthier lives, which are all positive outcomes from this strategy.

Improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure can widen the catchments of our public transport services and therefore provide more efficient services. They also build demand for public transport and support the case for further investment. Traffic congestion in urban areas, and the consequent economic cost, is a central reason for considering other transport modes. By 2020 traffic congestion is estimated to cost \$20 billion across Australia. Shifting to more walking or riding, particularly for short journeys during peak periods, greatly improves the function of transport systems and provides other benefits such as increases in local business activity and social capital. Depending on the location and time of day, walking and cycling can reduce traffic congestion costs by around 21c for every kilometre walked or cycled.

Walking and cycling are low cost and environmentally friendly. They place minimal pressure on natural or economic resources. These activities consume no fossil fuels, take up a minimum of space and impose little impact on other users. The more trips taken by walking and cycling, the more we reduce our environmental footprint. It also reduces the need to invest in energy-intensive infrastructure and helps government meet its environmental goals around emissions reduction, which not only provides local benefits but also helps to contribute to Australia's efforts to reduce emissions, to the benefit of people everywhere. The ACT's efforts in this area are particularly important at the moment, given the stance of the federal coalition government on the issue of emissions reductions.

Active travel also delivers on other key government policies which benefit our and future generations. Such policies include transport for Canberra, the ACT planning strategy, the ACT climate change strategy, towards zero growth, and the healthy weight action plan. Good provision for walking and cycling is a feature of the world's best cities. Canberra's design, particularly its wide vistas and avenues, is well equipped to provide ample opportunities for walking and cycling.

Government has a major role to play in realising these opportunities and encouraging active travel in our city. By prioritising active travel initiatives, the government can make healthy lifestyle choices easier, enhance social interactions and build further patronage of public transport, leading to wins all round.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call Dr Bourke for his supplementary question, let me say that it is possible, Dr Bourke, that your question would have been better directed to Mr Gentleman as the Minister for Planning, because the administrative orders have him, as the Minister for Planning, responsible for active transport—not as the Minister for Roads and Parking. That is why I was confused. Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you tell us more about what the government is doing to encourage walking and cycling to and from work within the territory.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister for Planning.

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Dr Bourke for his supplementary. The government has a major role to play in encouraging active travel to work in Canberra. We are doing this through investing in walking and cycling infrastructure facilities, signage and lighting to improve connections between work and home and promoting walking and cycling as an attractive alternative to cars. This also has the added benefit of contributing to reducing congestion on roads, improving health and wellbeing through exercise and reducing our environmental footprint.

Canberra has some of the highest walking and cycling rates of Australian cities. The rate of cycling to work in Canberra has tripled in the past 35 years, to a high of 2.8 per cent by 2011. This represents the highest growth of any major city and is well above the national average growth rate. In addition, more than 8,100 people walk to work every day in the ACT, which is 4.9 per cent of Canberra's journey-to-work mode share.

The ACT's soon to be released active travel framework will aim to increase the mode share of work trips by walking and cycling. It outlines four key strategies to realise this goal: plan, deliver, encourage and manage. Each of these strategies has a series of principles and actions that have been identified to promote active travel. Priority actions identified through the active travel framework include pedestrian-friendly streets, improvements to end-of-journey infrastructure and improved connectivity between major corridors and activity centres.

The framework highlights that commuter cycling trips utilise on-road cycling facilities more than the recreational cyclists do. In order to encourage active travel on the journey to work, the government is investing in infrastructure that provides for safer on-road journeys, improved ease and efficiency of intermodal connections such as bike and ride, as well as adequate facilities at end-of-journey and transfer locations.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, can you update the Assembly on the Bunda Street shareway and how this particular piece of infrastructure will encourage walking and cycling?

MR GENTLEMAN: With the Bunda Street shareway opened to the public last week, it is a very appropriate time to discuss infrastructure projects that will help people walk and cycle more often. The Bunda Street shareway is all about creating an environment that makes healthy lifestyle choices easier. Its features, including a 20-kilometre per hour speed zone, additional kerb ramps and raised roads to the current footpath level, make walking and cycling an easier travel option.

The shareway is the fourth stage of the Civic cycle loop project, which provides 3.2 kilometres of path that loops around the city. Beyond the city centre a network of community paths, segregated cycleways, on-road cycle lanes, good signage and convenient connections are provided.

Community paths in residential areas have been constructed or extended at 10 locations so far this financial year. These include Goyder Street in Narrabundah, Hayley Street in Ainslie, Anketell Street in Greenway and Wheeler Crescent in Wanniasa. Footpaths near schools in Torrens, Campbell and Reid have also been completed and are ready for use on next Friday's Walk Safely to School Day.

For older pedestrians, cyclists and users of mobility devices, we are delivering improved active travel connectivity in Weston and Ainslie. The existing network of on-road cycle lanes will also be expanded, with on-road cycle lanes designed for Macarthur Avenue and Limestone Avenue. A dedicated and separated on-road cycle lane along Phillip Avenue is also planned, which will improve cycling connectivity to a future planned light rail station.

This is just a small example of the many initiatives being undertaken to encourage more people to engage in active travel. Active travel modes are valued and prioritised and will continue to be in future upgrades and works.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, how does the government inform itself of the needs of cyclists and pedestrians?

MR GENTLEMAN: The government uses a variety of ways to understand the needs and behaviours of cyclists and pedestrians. The government monitors ABS census data, local and national user surveys, ministerial requests and Canberra Connect inquiries such as fix my street. The government also prepares master plans for all town centres and most group centres across the ACT.

Currently, a master plan for the city and Northbourne Avenue is being prepared. This is called the city and Northbourne Avenue urban design framework. This document will take into account the views of the community, increasing population density in the inner north and other factors which influence the number of people commuting of a morning and the way in which they do it.

Walking and cycling studies are prepared for each of the master plans to investigate the connections between residential areas, shops, parks and community facilities. These studies outline the major constraints to people walking and cycling between their homes and centres and then on to the workplace. They also highlight the opportunities to improve these connections and encourage active travel across Canberra.

Roads ACT also chairs bimonthly meetings with advocacy groups such as Pedal Power, veterans cycling group and the Heart Foundation via the bicycle advisory group. Roads ACT assesses and prioritises all new requests, including using community path wide systems endorsed by the bicycle advisory group. This system considers factors such as safety, activity between facilities, residential and commercial areas and public transport. It also considers the likely demand and cost of proposals and links to the active travel network.

Remaining informed regarding the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in the territory is the best way to ensure that the government is prepared to facilitate healthier and cleaner forms of transport.

Mr Barr: I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Supplementary answers to questions without notice

Youth—homelessness

MS BERRY: In question time last Thursday I took questions from Ms Lawder and Mr Smyth related to the Youth Emergency Accommodation Network accommodation in Chisholm. In response to those questions, I can inform the Assembly that the Youth Emergency Accommodation Network accommodation is still intended to be provided as crisis accommodation. While accommodation in this facility is provided on an emergency basis, there is no definite time limit a young person can remain in the Youth Emergency Accommodation Network. Young people can remain there while they are being supported to transition to longer term stable accommodation. Data on the monthly turnover is not available for YEAN properties. There are three properties in the YEAN Chisholm cluster, which can accommodate a total of six young people at any one time. Demand for this supported accommodation is like all homelessness services: it is always high.

In relation to whether there is a waiting list, YEAN is one in a suite of services delivered to the young people in the ACT specialist homelessness sector. In the ACT, “first point”, which is managed by Connections ACT, manages all referrals to the homelessness sector as such individual services do not have a waiting list. First point prioritises all requests for assistance and monitors vacancies available in the sector. When a vacancy becomes available at a service, including the YEAN, first point contacts the service user and directs them to the service.

Education—capital works program

MS BURCH: In response to a question around school maintenance, under school-based management processes principals are responsible for any capital works under \$5,000 and ETD require confirmation that works have been completed if identified on the condition audit assessment report.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

Report 12—government response

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (3.33): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 12—*Inquiry into Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Amendment Bill 2014*—Copy of a letter to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, dated 11 May 2015—Government response.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

Following the introduction of the Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Amendment Bill in November last year, the bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for inquiry. The committee's report was tabled in the Assembly last week, on 5 May, and the government has responded to the standing committee's recommendations by adjusting the time frame by which annual reports must be produced from four months to 15 weeks; retaining contract information in annual reports in the form of a printout from the contracts register for the relevant time period; providing technical clarification within the bill regarding arrangements for the tabling of annual reports in an election year; and reversing previously omitted requirements relating to legislation.

In regard to the recommendations the government has not accepted, we are of the view that the benefits derived from the original provisions in the bill outweigh the concerns as identified by the committee. The government response outlines the reasons for those positions in further detail.

I commend the government response to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Papers

Mr Barr presented the following papers:

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

Long-term contracts:

Christopher Wilson, dated 28 April 2015.

Susan Hall, dated 28 April 2015.

Short-term contracts:

David Snowden, dated 30 April 2015.

Emily Springett, dated 23 and 28 April 2015.

Gary Rake, dated 23 and 24 April 2015.

Ian McGlenn, dated 28 and 30 April 2015.

Louise Gilding, dated 21 and 22 April 2015.

Mark Kalleske, dated 28 April 2015.

Nicole Stenlake, dated 22 and 28 April 2015.

Contract variations:

James Roncon, dated 28 and 30 April 2015.

Mark Collis, dated 28 April 2015.

Financial Management Act—instrument Paper and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 16—Instrument directing a transfer of appropriations from the Education and Training Directorate to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, including a statement of reasons, dated 7 May 2015.

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

Leave granted.

MR BARR: As required by the FMA, I am tabling an instrument under section 16. Subsections 16(1) and (2) allow the Treasurer to authorise the transfer of appropriation for a service or function to another entity following a change in responsibility for that service or function. Subsection 16(3) of the act requires that within three sitting days after such an authorisation is given the Treasurer must present a copy of the direction and a statement of reasons to the Assembly.

This afternoon this instrument facilitates the transfer of \$285,000 in the net cost of outputs appropriation and \$3.038 million in the capital injections controlled appropriation from the Education and Training Directorate to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate for the management and responsibility of 30 childcare centres. This transfer is budget neutral.

I commend the instrument to the Assembly.

Financial Management Act—instrument Paper and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 16B—Instrument authorising the rollover of undisbursed appropriation of Housing ACT, including a statement of reasons, dated 6 May 2015.

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

Leave granted.

MR BARR: Section 16B of the FMA allows for appropriations to be preserved from one financial year to the next as outlined in instruments signed by me as Treasurer. As

required by the act, I table a copy of the recent authorisation made to roll over undisbursed appropriation from 2013-14 to 2014-15. This package includes one instrument signed under section 16B. The appropriation being rolled over was not disbursed during the 2013-14 fiscal year but is still required in the 2014-15 fiscal year for the completion of projects identified in the instrument.

The instrument authorises a total of \$726,000 in controlled capital injection appropriations in rollovers for Housing ACT. These rollovers have been made as the appropriation clearly relates to project funds where commitments have been entered into but the related cash has not yet been required or expended during the year of appropriation—for example, capital works projects or initiatives for which the timing of delivery has changed or been delayed; where outstanding contractual or pending claims exist; or where there are delays in implementing budgeted recurrent initiatives. The rollovers of capital injection (controlled) include \$361,000 for expansion of social housing; \$290,000 for housing elderly public housing tenants design; and \$75,000 for housing older people in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community design works.

Specific details regarding these rollovers are included in the instrument. I commend the paper to the Assembly.

Disability and Community Services Commissioner Report—government response

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Developing an ACT crisis response to women with disabilities who experience domestic violence and/or sexual assault—Report of the ACT Disability and Community Services Commissioner—Government response.

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

Leave granted.

MS BERRY: Today I am tabling the ACT government response to the ACT Disability and Community Services Commissioner's report *Developing an ACT crisis response to women with disabilities who experience domestic violence and/or sexual assault*, focusing on gaps in service provision for women with disabilities who experience domestic violence and sexual assault. I would like to thank the commissioner, Ms Mary Durkin, for her valuable role in steering this important piece of work.

Recent tragic events in the ACT have provided us all with a stark reminder of the seriousness and the impact of domestic violence in our community. This reminder has

encouraged governments and the community sector to re-examine their efforts to combat domestic violence action and mitigate its aftermath.

Domestic and family violence not only violates women's and children's right to safety but impacts on their health, their sense of self, their ability to work and their ability to participate in the community. These aspects are compounded for women with disabilities, who are the single largest cohort of women to experience interpersonal violence. As the commissioner notes in her report:

Domestic violence and sexual assault thrive in situations of inequity ... where people are vulnerable and where they are dependent on others.

Women with a disability face personal violence and its impact on a twofold level. We know that violence against women and girls with disabilities is not just a subset of gender-based violence. Gender-based and disability-based violence interact with each other to magnify the impacts. It is therefore imperative that women with a disability who are experiencing domestic violence have easy access to appropriate crisis support services.

The report by the commissioner outlines a crisis service scheme that will provide women with disabilities who are experiencing domestic violence access to appropriate responsive support. The scheme will help women to be safe after domestic violence or sexual assault, whether they choose to remain in their own home, seek shelter with family or friends or require emergency accommodation.

This is a critical addition to the range of crisis responses already in place in the ACT to support women and children who are experiencing domestic violence. We are supporting this scheme because it is absolutely the right and proper thing to do. It is also consistent with our obligations under both the 2010-22 national plan to reduce violence against women and their children and the ACT prevention of violence against women and children strategy 2011-2017. Both the ACT strategy and the national plan have recognised that we must all do more to ensure that service responses for women with a disability who experience domestic violence are readily available, accessible and appropriate.

I have no doubt that you will all, like me, welcome this scheme. I thank the commissioner and all those who worked with her to develop it.

Papers

Ms Burch presented the following papers:

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Court Procedures Act—Court Procedures Amendment Rules 2015 (No 1)—
Subordinate Law SL2015-12 (LR, 28 April 2015).

Dangerous Substances Act—Dangerous Substances (General) Amendment Regulation 2015 (No 2), including a regulatory impact statement—Subordinate Law SL2015-13 (LR, 30 April 2015).

Domestic Animals Act—Domestic Animals (Cat Containment) Declaration 2015 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-58 (LR, 23 April 2015).

Health Act—

Health (Local Hospital Network Council-Chair) Appointment 2015 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-54 (LR, 16 April 2015).

Health (Local Hospital Network Council-Member) Appointment 2015 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-55 (LR, 16 April 2015).

Pest Plants and Animals Act—

Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Plants) Declaration 2015 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-59 (LR, 23 April 2015).

Public Place Names Act—

Public Place Names (Denman Prospect) Determination 2015 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-60 (LR, 23 April 2015).

Public Place Names (Moncrieff) Determination 2015 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-51 (LR, 13 April 2015).

Race and Sports Bookmaking Act—

Race and Sports Bookmaking (Sports Bookmaking Venues) Determination 2015 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-57 (LR, 20 April 2015).

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act—

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Amendment Regulation 2015 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2015-11 (LR, 15 April 2015).

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Regulation 2002—Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) (Defined Rights Conditions) Determination 2015 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-56 (LR, 16 April 2015).

Work Health and Safety Act—

Work Health and Safety (Work Safety Council Employee Representative) Appointment 2015 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-52 (LR, 16 April 2015).

Work Health and Safety (Work Safety Council Employer Representative) Appointment 2015 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2015-53 (LR, 16 April 2015).

Government—fees and charges

Discussion of matter of public importance

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

The importance of low ACT government fees and charges.

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (3.43): I have pleasure in raising this matter of public importance in my name—the importance of low ACT government fees and charges. It is clear that it is becoming more expensive to live in Canberra, and a lot of that expense is due to government charges and fees. According to ACTCOSS, one in every 13 Canberrans is experiencing disadvantage despite living in a region of relative wealth. Key findings are that the territory has one of the highest levels of homelessness in Australia and that inequality is getting worse. Significantly, Canberra's very high cost of living is being driven by the unenviable position of Canberra having Australia's highest capital city rents.

It is obvious that something is going wrong when Canberrans start to pay more but are receiving less. The cost of living pressures being placed on Canberra families are building, and increasing taxes and charges are resulting in the family budget becoming more and more stretched. This means some of the most important issues to people living in Canberra are the fees and charges they will incur when going about their everyday lives—things like rates, parking, registering a vehicle, commercial rates and land taxes, just to name a few—all of which have increased under Labor and all of which are increasing higher than normal CPI.

Whether you are a single person starting a new career and life in Canberra, a student coming to Canberra to undertake tertiary studies, a transferring bureaucrat or teacher, a newly married family person or a retiree, the one uniting issue and major conversation starter is the cost of living in Canberra. For example, utility costs continue to grow. Water and sewerage prices have more than doubled since 2001. Growth in the cost of water and sewerage in the ACT over the last 10 years has exceeded CPI growth by approximately 60 per cent.

The cost of parking has significantly increased in the last couple of years. Last year traffic and parking fines increased by six per cent, and every year after this parking fines will go up by six per cent. In 2014 the government also increased the cost of drivers licences, number plates and parking permits. This would equate to families paying an estimated \$445 more to keep their cars on the road.

What about housing? It is staggering to realise that Canberra's cheapest housing is \$100,000 more expensive than the cheapest homes in any other state or territory in Australia. We should be encouraging people to live in Canberra and providing them with incentives to stay, not taxing families wherever we can. As reported by the ABC, researchers from the University of Canberra's National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, NATSEM, found 14,000 people are experiencing disadvantage in Canberra. Report author Associate Professor Robert Tantun says the city has a very high cost of living, driven by Australia's highest capital city rent. Canberra has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the country, with 1,785 people homeless on census night in 2011. St Vincent de Paul Canberra CEO Paul Trezise says inequality is getting worse.

As we have said, not taxing families wherever we can is what we should be looking at. But I guess it is no real surprise to many of us who still remember former Labor Treasurer Ted Quinlan's famous quote—squeeze them till they bleed but not until

they die. Our current Chief Minister and Treasurer was working for then Minister Hargreaves at that time, and he obviously learned a few interesting tactics that he has not forgotten, because our taxes and our rates are all going up. Mr Quinlan's quote will come back to haunt Mr Barr a little, as it does Ted Quinlan.

Rental properties have also not missed the hit in increasing government fees and charges. Renters ultimately pay the increasing cost of rates and land tax, which raked in nearly \$80 million for the government in the 2013-2014 financial year, and the LVC is strangling entry of new residential developments close to the city and town centres.

These extra fees and charges are not going back to the people of Canberra but, rather, are funding the government's extravagant light rail plans. The territory's budget is over \$700 million in deficit, and with the plans for light rail, that is set to increase dramatically. Yet Mr Barr still thinks we can afford light rail. Many in the community are becoming more and more sceptical about and frightened of this blind vision to have light rail probably 30 years earlier than Canberra should have it. The priority of this government is causing people a lot of concern.

The result for Canberrans is that these fees and charges will not be reduced by a government that continues to spend and tax the community to fund its expensive dreams. It is clear that lowering people's cost of living is not at the forefront of this government's mind. The importance of low government fees and charges imposed on Canberrans is something the Canberra Liberals strongly believe in. We continue to regularly speak about the cost of living pressures facing families in Canberra, but it seems to fall on deaf ears.

As I have said before, increasing fees and charges are affecting real people in the Canberra community. I know this from my own experiences with constituents in my seat of Molonglo. A lot of my constituents live in areas deemed to be above average in earning capacity, and there are obviously people who fall into this category. But a large and growing number of people are seriously affected by the increasing cost of living pressures from living in these areas. They are elderly pensioners who have lived in these areas all their lives. They bought houses 40, 50 years ago and now, in their twilight years, they face the prospect of having to sell their homes as they simply cannot afford the ever-increasing fees and charges placed on them by this government, especially the rates increases.

At a time when people should be enjoying their retirement years, they face uncertainty, fear and upheaval in their lives, especially with rates. These can now total thousands a year. I have met with many of these people throughout my time in office, and the message from these people and the Canberra community is a message that is lost on this government and this crossbench. They refuse to listen to the community that the people of Canberra are facing pressures they have never faced before. After nearly 16 years of a Labor government, they are starting to see the folly of the partnership that has been formed and that is more intent on delivering an ideological solution through the light rail than looking at the real needs of the Canberra community.

Not only is it important to reduce fees and charges on the cost of living but it is also important to reduce them on small business. Small business plays an important role in

the ACT landscape, providing jobs and essential services. It is the obligation of the government to ensure that extra fees and charges are not overwhelming for small and micro business owners. Recently a constituent approached me about the impact of the increase of rates on his business in Fyshwick. Between 2009 and 2013 his rates were \$6,000 to \$7,000 a quarter. In 2015 they are now \$9,227 a quarter. Minister Barr, in two years that business has received a 35 per cent rate increase. Does this concern you at all? Or are you so fixated on this vision of yours—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Dr Bourke): Mr Doszpot, address your comments to the chair, please.

MR DOSZPOT: Through you, Mr Assistant Speaker, I wonder if Mr Barr is so fixated on his ideological vision and that of his colleague the crossbench member that he cannot see the damage being done to the community. How can businesses survive if they have 35 per cent rate increases? It just is not possible. For a small business employing 15 people, this is a massive increase in government charges. These charges cannot be passed on to consumers but have to be absorbed by the business.

In closing, it is clear to everyone in our community that reducing government fees and charges should be at the forefront of this government's agenda. It is an issue that is affecting real people in the Canberra community, and the current government should be focused on reducing this burden, not on an unaffordable light rail project which places even further strains on an already stretched budget in the ACT. This matter of public importance is timely, and I urge the government to listen to the community about the importance of low ACT government fees and charges.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (3.55): I welcome the opportunity to have this discussion today. Mr Doszpot has raised some interesting questions. I certainly agree with him that it is important to ensure that government fees and charges are affordable and that they do not preclude people who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable due to being on low incomes from using the services that attract fees and from being able to meet their other cost of living expenses. However, I am not sure I agree with the basic premise of Mr Doszpot's topic—that is, it is straight-out important to have low fees and charges. We need to have a discussion about the level of services we want to provide in the community and then how government delivers them. That is the question in my mind.

The ACT has very good services in many regards if you think about our roads, our education system and those sorts of things. That is the discussion we need to have. It is not about straight-out low fees and charges; it is about the level of fees and charges we need to sustain the level of services we want to provide in this city.

If I think about the federal context, where these sorts of issues are being thrashed out as well, we have seen the federal coalition government talk about a budget crisis. That language has softened a little as they have also come to the reality of trying to be a government and deal with the many pressures on government budgets, but I draw on the comment my federal colleagues have made, which is that you also need to look at the revenue side of the equation and how much revenue you are willing to raise in order to fund a level of services for the community.

That is a mature and important debate to have, but it is not one the Canberra Liberals seem to be capable of having. It is all about government waste and the like when they frame it. Of course, if they got into government, it would be a very different discussion.

It is very simplistic to come in here and take the approach Mr Doszpot has sought to propagate today. I think there is a more important discussion we can have with the community, and it is about priorities. That is a fair enough debate to have. Yes, those on this side of the chamber have chosen to prioritise public transport because we believe this city needs to deal with its traffic issues as the city grows. This city is growing to a projected population of 500,000 people by 2030. That is within the ACT borders. Then we must add all the others in the region that come into Canberra and use our infrastructure. If we do not do something about that, we will face a whole series of other pressures. We will have to spend money on significant road upgrades. You cannot widen Northbourne Avenue any further without starting to have a serious impact of either taking the edges out or starting to cut into the median strip anyway.

Mr Doszpot: And 400 trees, of course.

MR RATTENBURY: What would Mr Doszpot's solution be? Put a fourth lane in each direction on Northbourne Avenue. Where does he think the trees will go if he decides to put a fourth lane on Northbourne Avenue? You cannot have it both ways, Mr Doszpot; you have to have a solution one way or the other to the growing population of this city. That is what this government is doing—the Labor Party and the Greens are taking a forward-thinking perspective that says as this city's population grows we need to deal with that.

Mr Doszpot put forward this matter of fees and charges, and I thought he was literally going to talk about fees and charges, but he wanted to have a whole discussion about the cost of living. I have cited this figure in this place before, but if we can build a coherent, effective public transport system where people in this city perhaps only need one car instead of two cars per household, NRMA studies show that will be a cost of living saving of \$10,000 to \$11,000 a year. The cost of a second car for the average household with repayments on the car loan, rego, petrol, insurance and all those sorts of things is assessed by the NRMA as being \$10,000 or \$11,000.

If we can take away the need to have that second car by providing a good public transport system, people will still have a car they will need to use for some of their journeys, but some of their journeys will be covered by public transport and that is a real cost of living saving. That is not about whether some fee or charge went up by four per cent or 4.5 per cent, as Mr Doszpot was suggesting; it is a very real cost of living saving that can be achieved.

I reject the simplistic analysis put forward today. We need to make sure the right concessions are in place, for example, so that those on lower incomes are supported by the rest of us as a community. I strongly believe in that, and that is why a range of concessions are in place for things like energy, water and sewerage bills. I support those and will continue to support those. Even as we go through the concessions, it is important to stop and look at those concessions and make sure they are targeting the people who really need them.

The basic view Mr Doszpot has put forward today is not one that can be sustained, and it fails to reflect the fact that we have to deliver important services to our community. In order to achieve that, a government needs to take a certain amount of revenue.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (4.01): It is always interesting that the Chief Minister does not get up to speak in these debates until everybody else has finished. It clearly indicates some of his problems and the pressure he is feeling regarding his policies.

It is interesting that Mr Rattenbury made the comment about priorities. What we now have is a clear indication of the Labor Party and the Greens' priorities—that is, a light rail system over and above hospital beds. It is a clear statement, and we had the fumbling from Mr Corbell today. He used all sorts of numbers—140, 166, 200, 215, almost 200, 250. So it is very hard to know what the government's priority is in regard to hospital beds except for one thing—the train comes first.

I remind members of the last time that this government took such a position, on the Gungahlin Drive extension. It was originally touted at \$55 million and some five or six years of construction. Two hundred million dollars and a decade later, it was the fiasco that Mr Corbell delivered. There was an embarrassing backflip one Tuesday night when the government suddenly decided that the one-lane road that they had built was inadequate, so they doubled it just overnight. We saw it with other things like the Alexander Maconochie Centre, which of course the government is now enlarging, because despite Mr Corbell's claims that it was good for 20 to 25 years, it was full much earlier than that.

So it is about priorities, Mr Rattenbury. That is why the Canberra Liberals moved the amendment to the Financial Management Act to ensure that the government had a cost of living statement in their budget, so that people actually knew what the impact of the government's fees and charges were on them and their households. In the first year they were well and truly outed when \$640 was added to the family budget, courtesy of the Treasurer. Since then they have had to ameliorate it so that they now present a number of scenarios. But, of course, all of the scenarios show an increase.

It is well and good for Mr Rattenbury to stand here and give us the lecture on green-nomics, but he is part of a government whose priority is train before hospital beds and higher fees and charges for all Canberrans. That is what it is all about, and that is what we are paying for. We are paying for Mr Barr's economic delusion.

We have seen it many times. What we have seen time and again from this Treasurer is extreme partisanship, couched as fiscal policy, supplemented by the Treasurer's touristic comprehension of economics. At the end of the day, what is he waiting for? It is not for the train to arrive; it is for the federal government to get their spending back in sync with his ambitions. We know that from page 42 of budget paper 3 this year, where he says that the deficits are temporary because the commonwealth will start spending again.

There is a good fiscal policy for you: “We are waiting for the feds.” Here is the man who is in control, he has his hand on the levers, and at the end of the day he is waiting for the federal government. It is worth reading the quote:

The temporary deficits over the next three years reflect the Government’s investment in jobs and services.

“The temporary deficits.” We will see about the temporary deficits, because we know it has already blown out with the Mr Fluffy payments, but beyond the Mr Fluffy payments the deficit blew out more because this government cannot control their spending. You have only to look at Mr Barr’s record on economic diversification. I think it is more of an economic diversification fantasy, especially in light of the fact that the last budget had about \$600,000 to directly support local businesses—although he claimed there was a \$4.4 million package, mainly comprising re-branded existing ACT government programs, many of which in fact look like the programs ACT Labor took to the chopping block in 2006.

This government continues to spend more and more, and rack up the debt, without really having any strategy to equate for it. You only need to look at some of the areas that we cover in the fees and charges. Let us go to the commence and complete fees, which have been dreadfully handled, particularly by this Treasurer, who announced one day that they were all gone. The commence and complete fees were gone, but he could not get it through cabinet, did not have the support. Then he did not tell anybody that they were going but said, “We’re going to change some of them,” and that has completely left many developers exposed, without the ability to complete their jobs.

Let us read from “Call to action—a joint industry submission to the ACT government for regulatory and process reform in the best interests of Canberra” dated February 2014, from the Business Council, Consult Australia, the Master Builders, the Planning Institute and the Property Council. They are five organisations with a fair amount of knowledge of what they are talking about. And what do they say about commence and complete? They state:

The anomaly of applying the fees across all sectors was not corrected by government, and following the abolition of land tax and the increase in general rates for the commercial sector the effect has been to increase the fees to an unsustainable level and at a much greater rate than originally contemplated by government.

They did not know what they were doing. The consequence was an enormous burden placed on industry and a slowing down of the economy. The submission continues:

There is significant anecdotal evidence that the purchasers of non-residential land are now factoring in the potential commence and complete fees when purchasing land, with a consequent reduction in prices paid to the LDA, resulting in a reduction in revenue paid to government from dividends from the LDA.

So not only have they stymied industry and those that would buy a commercial or a residential property but they have stymied themselves, because they have cruelled their dividend. It goes on to say:

... a property sector under considerable pressure with financing for projects uncertain and vacancy rates remaining high ...

Industry maintains the position that investors do not buy land simply to incur holding costs and pay rates and taxes on an empty site with no revenue.

Some things have changed since this was written in February 2014 but a lot has not. What do they say about the lease variation charge? “The perfect tax,” as the Treasurer described it in some of the estimates committee hearings, where he said it had no effect. “It has no effect; it doesn’t hurt sellers, doesn’t hurt buyers and doesn’t hurt renters.” What does the “Call to action” document say? It states:

There is mounting evidence that the LVC has become a significant disincentive to development and redeveloping Canberra to the detriment of investment confidence ...

It goes on to say:

The charge adds significant costs to new development which are ultimately passed on to the purchaser—with negative effects on affordability. Contrary to the Territory’s policy to increase urban density, LVC focuses new development into green field areas or vacant sites in established areas where development is more cost-effective.

The Territory’s forecast revenue from the LVC has plummeted—indicating that the volume of redevelopment has dramatically reduced ... in the first year following introduction of LVC the number of development applications processed in the ACT fell by 56 per cent.

This section finishes by saying:

This is already causing projects to be delayed or abandoned putting an end to effective infill redevelopment.

The government say they want 50 per cent of the population living in infill—50 per cent brownfields, 50 per cent greenfields—but then they put this disruptive tax, this higher fee and charge, on to the community. And what do you get? You do not get to achieve your target. You certainly do not get 50 per cent of development in the brownfield sites. In fact you drive it further afield, which puts extra burden on the government to provide infrastructure and, of course, delays the redevelopment of the city.

We only need to look at the last quarter. I note with interest that the Treasurer will be bringing forward the March quarter figures on Thursday. From the December quarter, tabled in this place in February, with respect to the lease variation charge the target for 2013-14 was \$14,203,000. The target for 2014-15 was \$14,580,000. This was

dramatically down from the original estimate, which I think for this year was meant to be something like \$26 million. This is rapidly turning into Mr Barr's mining tax—the tax that was going to fix all woes but in the end delivered nothing.

The budget for the half-year to December was \$7.2 million and what was achieved was \$2.7 million. Again, what we have is a tax that is not working. And it is not working because the government got greedy. They put too high a fee on the redevelopment of these sites and, as a consequence, there is not a crane in the sky at the moment and many of the cranes that were there until recently were in fact on deals that were signed before the changes that became known as the lease variation charge.

This government must have a policy that gets them the revenue that they need, but they should spend that revenue wisely and not on personal fantasies like light rail. They should also make sure that the economy continues to grow so that they can reap the dividend and we can all reap the dividend— (*Time expired.*)

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (4.12): The ACT government is committed to keeping fees and charges as low as possible while also driving down the overall cost of doing business in the territory, as well as delivering a high standard of services to Canberrans. Of course, fees and charges are an important component of that, but the government remains focused on the overall cost of living and the cost of doing business in the territory. That stretches across a range of issues, from water pricing to tax reform.

Despite the fact that the territory has a number of revenue raising limitations in comparison to other jurisdictions, our taxation per capita, as measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, is lower than the national average. The latest available data from the 2012-13 fiscal year shows that ACT taxation per capita was \$3,272 compared to the national average of \$3,377. Our taxation per capita is the third lowest of all states and territories, with only Queensland and South Australia imposing lower levels of tax.

It is important to acknowledge in this debate that the ACT has a number of revenue raising disadvantages. We do not have a mining industry. We do not have a number of industries that attract a certain level of revenue for other jurisdictions. It may have escaped the notice of the shadow treasurer that a significant proportion of our economic activity is generated by commonwealth government expenditure within the territory. Commonwealth employment, which drives much of the territory's expenditure, is of course exempt from payroll tax. This puts the territory at a disadvantage compared to other Australian jurisdictions when the major employer in this city exempts themselves from the taxes that apply to other employers in this city and, indeed, elsewhere in Australia.

This has meant that tax reform is more important in the ACT than it is anywhere else in the country. That is why we have engaged in meaningful and practical tax reform to improve the commercial and personal tax environment in the territory. There are a lot of jurisdictions talking about it. There have been a lot of papers written. We have had academics; we have had Treasury officials. Every federal government in recent times

has commissioned tax reviews. But the ACT is one place in this country where we are actually implementing tax reform. We are abolishing the worst taxes that we levy and moving our tax base to the most efficient base that is available to us as a jurisdiction.

Given the constitutional powers and taxation roles and responsibilities that we have, it makes sense that we raise the revenue we need to raise in the most efficient way possible that is the least distortive on economic decision making. It is a crazy proposition, if you were to start designing a tax system from scratch, that you would utilise the most inefficient forms of revenue raising, which has been the historical precedent in Australian states and territories.

We have targeted the most inefficient taxes that are levied by state and territory governments and we are abolishing them. There is not an alternative position put, other than, one presumes, increasing these inefficient taxes. I imagine that even the shadow treasurer, who has opposed all of these reforms along the way, would not, if he were to assume office, seek to increase these inefficient taxes again. But you never know, and we look forward to a statement one way or the other from the opposition on whether in fact they support increasing tax on insurance and putting stamp duty back up again.

As part of our abolition of all tax on insurance in the ACT, to become the first jurisdiction in Australia to completely abolish all tax on insurance, we have been phasing out that tax over a five-year period. By 1 July 2016 we will become the first jurisdiction in Australia to completely abolish taxation on insurance. That means, for every business in Canberra that has business insurance, they will not be paying a 10 per cent tax on top of that and then 10 per cent GST on top of their premium and the territory tax.

We have abolished commercial land tax. I am sure Mr Doszpot will be delighted to hear that we have entirely abolished commercial land tax. That reform, the abolition of commercial land tax and the abolition of tax on insurance—

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Dr Bourke): Sit down, Mr Barr. Stop the clock.

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot!

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot, you are warned.

MR BARR: Through the abolition of these taxes we are certainly working to improve the efficiency of our tax system and ensuring that we are not utilising revenue lines that create distortions in business decision-making. Why would you put a tax on insurance? We want people to take out insurance. We want businesses to be insured, we want households to be insured and we want people to insure their motor vehicles,

their contents and their buildings. Why would we put a tax on that? So we are getting rid of it, and we are the only jurisdiction in Australia to be getting rid of a tax on insurance.

On stamp duty, already our stamp duty cuts are saving homebuyers in this city thousands of dollars. If you buy a property for \$500,000 you are saving nearly \$5,000 in stamp duty. If the property you are buying costs \$750,000, you are saving more than \$6½ thousand in stamp duty. If you are eligible for one of the other concessions that we are offering, we are giving you a \$20,000 stamp duty discount in many instances in relation to average housing purchases.

Conveyance duty in the ACT is lower than it was, and it is getting lower every year. And every budget I deliver as Treasurer will cut stamp duty. Stamp duty has been identified very clearly as an inefficient, volatile tax that distorts the property market. We are against it. We want to abolish it. We are cutting it every year. Those opposite love stamp duty, love to roll around in it and want to put stamp duty up. They want to squeeze more out of homebuyers. That is their position. They support stamp duty. They support stamp duty going up and up. They want to hit the average Canberra household with a \$25,000 stamp duty bill—no, \$30,000; no \$40,000; \$50,000. As house prices rise in the coming decades, the Canberra Liberals want to squeeze more and more out of first homebuyers, people who downsize and people who might need to buy a bigger house because they have a bigger family. For anyone who ever needs to move house, the Canberra Liberals will have their hands in your pockets, taking stamp duty from you every time you need to move.

Our taxation reform is designed to be revenue neutral, to transition away from the inefficient taxes to a more sustainable and efficient revenue base. It is what every tax review in this nation has recommended, including Joe Hockey's most recent one, the Henry review before that and every other tax review going back in history, looking at the issue of stamp duties levied by state and territory governments. They all recommended moving away from this form of taxation. That is exactly what we are doing.

I know it hurts those opposite that their policy position is so backward and so regressive, but this government will continue to cut stamp duty, to cut insurance tax, to cut payroll tax. We have been doing that in every budget since I have been Treasurer, and we will continue to cut inefficient taxes in order to ensure we have a more sustainable tax system that funds the services this community needs in the most efficient way possible.

Discussion concluded.

Adjournment

Motion (by **Ms Burch**) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Canberra Sand and Gravel earth awards 2015

MR COE (Ginninderra) (4.22): Last Friday night I was pleased to attend the Civil Contractors Federation of the ACT 2015 Canberra Sand and Gravel earth awards. The Civil Contractors Federation is a not-for-profit member-driven employer association designed to promote and protect the interests of civil construction employers. In the ACT the CCF lobbies on behalf of 19 full members and five associate members. It has a close association with the MBA and works with the MBA to provide support and advocacy for the building and construction industry. CCF provides training aimed at bringing young people into the industry and having their skills recognised.

The earth awards are organised by CCF, with assistance from the MBA. The awards are the most prestigious awards in civil infrastructure and acknowledge the best technologies and practices by Australian civil contractors. This year there were 17 different projects entered into four categories. Kirk Coningham, the Executive Director of the MBA and the CEO of CCT ACT, said that the judges were impressed by the calibre of all the entries. The guest speaker at the earth awards was Daniel Keighran VC. Daniel spoke about his experiences growing up in outback Queensland and his Defence Force deployments in Afghanistan, Iraq and East Timor.

I would like to place on the record my congratulations to all the entrants and winners at the earth awards. In the first category, projects up to \$2 million, entrants included Cord Civil for the Woden Green Estate stage 2B pedestrian bridge. The winner was Huon Contractors—National Arboretum Canberra, construction of transfer reservoir and irrigation mainline.

In category 2, projects between \$2 million and \$10 million, the nominees included Guideline ACT for the bulk water off-take; Canberra Contractors, Amaroo Group Centre; Chincivil, Horse Park Drive water quality control pond; Brema Group, ADFA redevelopment; Hawkins Civil, Smith Road bridge; Guideline ACT, Deep Space Station 36, DSS 36; and Huon Contractors, Woden Park redevelopment. The winner was Hawkins Civil and SRG, Scrivener Dam anchor bolt remediation.

The third category was for projects between \$10 million and \$30 million. The nominees included BMD Constructions, Lawson South; Woden Contractors, John Gorton Drive stage 2A; Cord Civil, Molonglo infrastructure 1C Cotter Road and Streeton Drive upgrade; Huon Contractors, Googong neighbourhood 1A stage 3A and 3B1 subdivision; and Woden Contractors, DHA Weston subdivision. The winner was Canberra Contractors, Campbell section 5 and Constitution Avenue.

In category 4, projects over \$30 million and under \$75 million, there was one nominee. So the winner was Guideline ACT for John Gorton Drive. The ACT winners will compete at the national earth awards in Melbourne later in the year.

On several occasions it was noted during the evening that the pipeline for civil work is somewhat lacking in the ACT at the moment. There was a plea to the ACT government, albeit no ACT government MLA was present, to increase the pipeline for this work, especially in the categories that I mentioned.

I would like to thank the sponsors of the ACT earth awards: Canberra Sand and Gravel, Civil Contractors Federation, Civil Construction Hire, ACT Economic Development Directorate, Land Development Agency, Master Builders ACT, Refuelling Solutions and Hays.

I would also like to congratulate the president, Andrew Crompton, for the work he has done. Once again, my congratulations to the entrants and winners and my thanks to all those involved in organising the earth awards.

Karinya House—Mother's Day ball

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Roads and Parking, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (4.26): I am pleased this afternoon to talk about the most enjoyable Karinya House annual Mother's Day ball, which was held last Friday evening at the Woden Southern Cross Club. As many members of this Assembly know, Karinya House is a fantastic community-based organisation that provides much-needed supported accommodation and outreach services to pregnant young people and their families in crisis.

I believe all mothers should have the opportunity to parent their child. For those parents who may be young and needing support to look after their babies, learning how to care for a child in a supported environment such as Karinya House can make all the difference. During the evening we heard a number of powerful personal accounts from young women who had been supported by Karinya House in the past. That help had played a vital part in enabling them to look after their babies through different crisis situations.

That is why I am particularly pleased that the ACT government has recently provided \$2.7 million to Karinya House to develop new facilities and to double its capacity. This will include a mother and baby unit which will provide supervision and support for up to three months to new mothers whose babies might be at risk of entering the care system.

I was pleased to be joined at the ball by a number of my Assembly colleagues: Mrs Dunne, Ms Fitzharris, Mr Rattenbury and Mr Smyth and their partners too, and by around 300 supporters of Karinya House. It was a fun evening, with a host of generously donated prizes and auction items from local businesses and individuals. I would like to thank Marie-Louise Corkhill, director at Karinya House, and her hardworking staff and dedicated board members for arranging such a successful and enjoyable fundraising event.

I would also like to thank Mr Michael Cooney for being such an entertaining master of ceremonies and proficient auctioneer. I wish Karinya House well for the future and look forward to seeing its new development and expanded service progressing over the coming months.

Hawker Primary School—fete

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (4.28): The Hawker Primary School fete was held on 29 March and was a great demonstration of school families working together, with the support of their local community, for better education facilities. The promotional flyer was filled to the brim with activities, stalls, events and visitors. Constable Kenny Koala made an appearance. There was a karate exhibition, a buskers' corner and even a silent auction. You could buy cakes from a cake stall, which were excellent. There was, of course, the standard white elephant stall, and a plant shop, just to mention a few of the myriad attractions provided.

A special feature was a chess challenge in which community members could pit their skills against those of students. There was a basketball shoot-out with the Gunners, and you could even test how fast your baseball pitch was, measured by a radar gun. On top of all that there was an international food stall offering French crepes, fresh juices, barbecue fare and other delights.

The Hawker Primary School has an outstanding record in environmental issues. The award-winning environment program at Hawker school is a central part of the school's identity, culture and values, as well as being a core element of the academic and social development of each student. A special feature of the fete included school-grown vegetables and eggs, as well as recycling bins supported by student recycling rangers. The craft stall focused wherever possible on upcycling, creating beautiful new products from discarded materials.

The fete produced the best ever result, raising over \$30,000. These funds will help the school in their aim for 2015 to make further improvements to their outdoor learning environment and playground, including irrigation improvements in the preschool grounds and roofing the multipurpose court to feed rainwater tanks which will provide water for their new oval and surrounds. The fete was run by the school's P&C, with the assistance of the school. There were two fete coordinators, Emma Dykes and Suzanne Carr, who oversaw the fete. Not only does the local community support the fete but this year it received lots of support from local businesses and local identities, including my colleague Mr Coe, whose marquee was on very visible display during the fete.

A particular highlight was Telstra Tower lighting up in the Hawker school colours of green and gold in celebration of the fantastic Hawker fete. In addition, major sponsorship support came from Ron's Book Shop at Hawker centre, CanPrint, Hoyts Cinemas, Rutherford Johnston Properties, Energy Kippax, Woolworths, Framed Like That, Peter Blackshaw Real Estate and Fiore Garden and Spa, along with Wollongong Surf Leisure Resort, who came up the Great Dividing Range in support of Hawker Primary School fete. If anyone was without sufficient funds, EFTPOS facilities were made available by Bendigo Bank and Canberra ATM.

I would like to thank the many local businesses and people who supported the Hawker fete. It was a wonderful, innovative event, and I congratulate the Hawker Primary School P&C, the fete coordinators and the many parents and other volunteers who pitched in to make Hawker Primary School fete such a great success and who afforded me such a warm welcome on the day.

Hall school museum

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (4.31): I am pleased today to be able to talk about my recent visit to the Hall school museum on behalf of Minister Berry. I was fortunate enough to be a guest at the recent Hall school museum Anzac Day celebrations. The celebrations included a tour of the museum's latest Anzac exhibition, the unveiling of a commemorative plaque and the opportunity to talk to volunteers and visitors. The unveiled plaque identified the men who left the Hall district and surrounds to fight in World War I and who had, for some reason, not been recognised on the original honour boards created after the war that were hung in local schools and the Wattle Park church.

The part of the museum I toured was that of the ANZAC exhibition, *When Hall Answered the Call*. The museum utilised local resources to create an interesting and informative exhibition that put the stories of the Hall men who went to World War I into the context of the wider social issues at the time. These issues included conscription, casualty rates and post-war rehabilitation.

I would like to commend the curator of the exhibition, Allen Mawer, and the honorary curator of the museum, Phil Robson, for their hard work and dedication in putting together such a beautiful display. The morning tea, created largely by women in the Hall community, was quite exceptional.

Whilst on my visit I also witnessed the great social contribution the site makes to Hall and to the international community. Also located in the grounds is storage to support Rotary in their work on the Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children program, otherwise known as ROMAC. I had the opportunity to see some of the fantastic work that they do on behalf of the ACT community. I met a young boy called Reedly and his mother Juliette. Reedly was born with Hirschsprung's disease, which causes chronic bowel blockage. With the assistance of ROMAC, Reedly and Juliette were able to travel to Australia from their home in Vanuatu to have surgery at Canberra Hospital. This surgery saved Reedly's life. While in Canberra, when Reedly was having surgery, their home village was struck by the cyclone that tore through Vanuatu earlier this year. It was wonderful to meet Reedly and his mother and see how their futures have been enriched by Rotary Oceania. I wish Reedly and his family the very best of luck for their future.

I was also able to speak with representatives of the museum about their lease arrangements, and I encouraged them to continue to talk to the ACT government about their needs and to come to an agreement on a lease as soon as possible.

I would like to thank everyone at the Hall school museum for their incredible hospitality as well as commend them on their fantastic exhibition, upkeep of the site and ongoing work with Rotary Oceania. For those interested in visiting the museum, it is open every Thursday from 10 am to 12 pm and on the first Sunday of each month from 12 till 3 pm.

Hospitals—handwashing

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (4.34): Modern infection control started with the story of Dr Ignaz Semmelweis, who in 1847 at Vienna General Hospital dramatically reduced the deaths of mothers after childbirth by simply getting doctors to wash their hands after delivering babies. Nowadays the World Health Organisation recommends five moments for handwashing: before and after touching a patient, before and after a procedure, and after touching the patients' surrounds. However, this most basic of safety procedures is frequently ignored by hospital staff.

Astonishingly, Australian hospital staff only meet the set standards for handwashing 70 per cent of the time. And this is when the staff know they are being checked. Having unwashed hands for 30 per cent of the time seems to be okay for health authorities.

It gets worse still. When observations are broken down by staff category, it is the doctors who fail the most. Some studies have found that doctors in hospitals wash their hands as little as 60 per cent of the time. In contrast, hospital dental clinics record the highest rates of handwashing, with 88.7 per cent compliance, well ahead of emergency departments, neonatal intensive care units and renal units. Dentists could be proud of this achievement, but a failure rate of 11.3 per cent is still not good enough.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that poor hygiene results in a whopping one in 25 patients with hospital-acquired infections. In Australia only the most deadly of hospital-based infections, golden staph, is reported on the MyHospitals website. There are 1.35 staph infections for 10,000 patient bed days for major hospitals across the country. One estimate for hospital-acquired infection in Australia is 180,000 cases per year, causing an extra two million additional days in hospital. Yet some hospital managers still want to debate whether handwashing noncompliance constitutes a patient safety error.

Here in Canberra the story is a little different to the rest of the country. The most recent audit, reported on the MyHospitals website, shows an estimated handwashing rate of 76.4 per cent for the October 2014 quarter at the Canberra Hospital. There were 21 cases of golden staph reported last financial year. Whilst these figures have significantly improved on the 2012-13 financial year levels, there is still much more that needs to be done.

ACT Health has responded to these outcomes by working to educate health professionals that handwashing is just as important in preventing the spread of disease and illness as other hygiene practices. However, the most highly educated of hospital staff—doctors—are the worst offenders. It is the failure of doctors to routinely implement their knowledge which is causing this problem and setting a poor example for other staff.

There are plenty of overseas examples of how to get doctors and other health workers to wash their hands. In 2013 the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles

recorded an organisation-wide handwashing compliance of 98 per cent, a dramatic increase on the 77 per cent rate in 2010. This resulted from the hospital's new policy that hospital-acquired infections should be eliminated, not merely reduced, and by incorporating handwashing compliance into employee performance assessments.

Maybe instead of a punitive approach an opportunity exists to apply the restorative practice philosophy that has worked so well in education and juvenile justice. Restorative practice focuses on using shame, with a continuum of respect and support, to induce behaviour change. We must take action now in our hospitals to further reinforce handwashing procedures.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.38 pm.