



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

3 JUNE 2015

www.hansard.act.gov.au

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Wednesday, 3 June 2015

The Assembly met at 10 am.

(Quorum formed.)

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

Petition

*The following petition was lodged for presentation, by **Mr Doszpot**, from 62 residents:*

Planning—Campbell service station—petition No 8-15

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that:

The Campbell Service Station site has been vacant for more than six years. Since early 2014, the site has become overgrown with weeds, is a dumping ground for rubbish and is a hazard to public safety with gates hanging off hinges and uneven surfaces of broken concrete and dirt;

Several requests to the Minister for Planning to have the site cleaned up revealed unless a site is covered at least 30 per cent by rubbish, then no action will be taken by the ACT government. This is unacceptable to us.

The Campbell Service Station site continues to be unsightly, insecure and unsafe, requiring immediate rectification.

After a prolonged period of neglect and dilapidation, the Campbell Service Station site requires redevelopment as a matter of urgency.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to take immediate action to require the lessee of the Campbell Service Station site to:

- make the site safe and secure by re-attaching the gates and maintaining the fencing as promised in November 2014;
- keep the site safe and secure through regular inspection and repairs;
- clean the site up and keep it clean; and
- bring forward a Development Application for the site as a matter of urgency

The Clerk having announced that the terms of the petition would be recorded in Hansard and a copy referred to the appropriate minister for response pursuant to standing order 100, the petition was received.

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo), by leave: The petition tabled today comes from 832 concerned Campbell residents. The petition itself has 62 signatures in the correct format and an additional 770 signatures. And irrespective of their signatory status, 832 Campbell residents are calling on this Assembly to take action after more than eight years of the former Campbell service station site lingering as an eyesore for the residents of the suburb. I would also like to welcome the many members of the Campbell Neighbourhood Watch and the Campbell community who are here for the presentation of their petition this morning.

During this time, over the last few years, many of my constituents have approached me to seek information about when the site would be redeveloped and what would be built in its place. Numerous representations have been made to the various ministers for planning over the course of the last few years and still the site remains in limbo.

The site is in a prominent position at the entry to the Campbell shops. Previously it was a Shell service station that included a Kmart tyre and auto port and was a business that was well patronised in the area. The service station sustained some damage during a hailstorm on 27 February 2007 and never reopened, since which time the site has remained vacant.

Since 2009 the residents of Campbell have repeatedly attempted to determine plans for the site through the applicable government agencies, including the ACT Planning and Land Authority, ACTPLA, and the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, ESDD. In June 2013 the residents were told that site remediation was underway and would be subject to the Environment Protection Authority's decision. In a letter from the then Minister for Planning, Mr Corbell, he advised that the work for validation of the site, which presumably involved clearing tanks and contaminated soils, was likely to be completed in 2014. It is now a year later and the site is still an eyesore for the community.

In another representation, to Minister Gentleman in October 2014, after staff from the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate inspected the site in March last year, a constituent was advised that Mr Corbell, in his role as Minister for Planning, decided that unless a site was more than 30 per cent covered in rubbish no action could be taken. Therefore officials did not consider that the state of the site warranted formal action to force the lessee to take responsibility.

This site has over time become an unsightly blot on the landscape in Campbell. It has become overgrown with vegetation and is a dumping ground for rubbish, not to mention the state of disrepair the infrastructure has fallen into, with broken concrete and gates hanging off their hinges, posing a significant hazard to the safety of the public. Children walk to school past this derelict site every day and the community must continue to watch as it falls further into ruin.

Campbell residents continue to be extremely disappointed that this situation has been allowed to continue and that this prominent site is permitted to remain an eyesore. Residents feel that the rights of the lessee are given far greater weight than their expectations for a well-maintained and attractive central hub in their suburb.

Campbell rates are already high and continue to rise by 10 per cent per year. However, the reasonable needs of Campbell residents continue to be ignored by this government. Residents of Campbell want the government to take positive action to remedy the situation.

These issues have been disregarded for a prolonged period, and Campbell residents are requesting the Assembly take immediate action and compel the lessee of the Campbell service station site to make the site safe and secure by reattaching the gates and maintaining the fencing, as promised in November 2014; keep the site safe through regular inspection and repairs; clean the site up and keep it clean; and bring forward a development application for the site as a matter of urgency.

I commend the petition to the Assembly and I would like to table an out-of-order petition with the other 770 signatures. I present the following paper:

Petition which does not conform with the standing orders—Campbell—Service station site—Mr Doszpot (770 signatures).

Budget—priorities

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (10.07): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes the:

- (a) ACT budget is for Canberra, the world's most liveable city;
- (b) budget demonstrates the contrast in the values between the ACT government and the commonwealth with continued investment in:
 - (i) health for Canberra, despite the commonwealth reneging on funding commitments;
 - (ii) education for Canberra, despite the commonwealth reneging on funding commitments;
 - (iii) urban renewal for Canberra, demonstrating the pride we feel in our community; and
 - (iv) addressing social inclusion and inequality for Canberra;
- (c) ACT budget delivers a strong economy as well as prudent financial management in response to a range of shocks to the ACT community including addressing the legacy of Mr Fluffy Loose-fill Asbestos;
- (d) slowing of job cuts in the Australian public service and the continued resilience of the private sector provides a sound base for a positive economic outlook;

- (e) ACT government's investment across Canberra, in our suburban shops, our streets and parks; and
 - (f) ACT budget continues to grow and diversify the economy; and
- (2) calls on the ACT government to continue:
- (a) to provide high quality health and education services to the community;
 - (b) renewal of our suburbs and town centres;
 - (c) to ensure that Canberra's renewal and growth is inclusive; and
 - (d) to support the increasingly diverse ACT economy with sound and productive investment.

I am proud of the initiatives in this ACT Labor government budget investing in our people, our suburbs and maintaining a dynamic economy in Canberra. This government's priorities outlined in this motion are health, education, suburban renewal and addressing social inclusion and inequality in Canberra. This is a prudent ACT budget, addressing the needs of our community and taking in our stride challenges such as the federal Liberal government's cuts. We also need to deal once and for all with the legacy of Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos throughout our suburbs. We have been through the worst of the cuts to the Australian public service. Our diversified economy has weathered the storm and the economic outlook is good.

I am sure that other government members will tell you more of this budget's vision for Canberra and give you a detailed, granular breakdown of the diverse initiatives in a range of portfolios. While many initiatives such as cutting stamp duty, urban renewal, investment in transport and overall increases to health and education spending, for example, benefit all Canberrans, I will concentrate on the good news of particular interest to Belconnen residents in my electorate.

We are spending almost a third of our ACT budget, \$1.5 billion, on health. A sizeable share of that budget is going to upgrading Calvary hospital and to building the second public hospital in Belconnen at the University of Canberra. The University of Canberra public hospital will be a purpose-built facility offering rehabilitation and mental health care services, as well as providing training and research opportunities. Construction will commence early next year. This budget also includes provision for 400 parking spaces for the hospital on the university grounds.

Meanwhile, going along Belconnen Way through Bruce it is hard to miss the towering construction crane on the site for the new five-storey Calvary hospital car park. It will have 704 spaces, an overall increase of 515 car spaces for Calvary. This budget invests \$12.4 million for Calvary hospital services, including \$5.6 million for a complete refurbishment and new equipment for the operating theatres; \$3.1 million for development at Calvary hospital to enable 12 new acute beds; and \$3.7 million for new imaging services, including a second CT scanner.

The Belconnen nurse-led walk-in centre has proved itself over the last year and the Belconnen community health centre opened a couple of years ago. These are recent but not new budget initiatives. However, they are part of this government's significant investment in health infrastructure in Belconnen over recent years, in addition to the new measures for Belconnen announced in this budget. They not only add to the health of our community but are significant economic drivers, providing employment, skilled careers and training in our local Belconnen economy.

In education this budget's highlight is the bright future for Belconnen High School. The ACT government is investing over \$17 million in this year's budget for a major refurbishment of the school, including an external outdoor learning area and a new school administration area. The refurbishment has been strongly influenced by detailed consultation with the school community, teachers and parents. Extra funding is included in the outyears for operation of the new campus, taking the spend up to \$18.4 million. Detailed design work on the school will commence immediately, with construction and refurbishment expected to commence in February 2016 and completion by late 2017. The recent demolition of a wing at the rear of the school has cleared the way for the new work and a renewed Belconnen High School.

Belconnen primary schools will also be part of the program to upgrade to computers and wi-fi infrastructure. Upgrades to the Bruce campus of CIT costing \$1.7 million are also included in this budget.

In the last sittings I outlined some of the ongoing roads and traffic upgrades and maintenance in Belconnen keeping our community moving freely. This budget includes \$2.5 million over two years for feasibility and design studies for six intersections and access routes across Canberra. In Belconnen these are for traffic signals in Weetangera, at the intersection of Belconnen Way and Springvale Drive; in Evatt, at the intersection of Kuringa Drive and Owen Dixon Drive; and in Dunlop, at the intersection of Lance Hill Avenue and Ginninderra Drive.

As part of keeping Canberrans healthy and active, this budget also includes funding of \$100,000 for a feasibility study into improved footpath and cycling connections within Belconnen town centre and another \$100,000 for a study of connections between west Belconnen, Belconnen town centre and other town centres.

Kaleen will be part of a \$500,000 program of creating age-friendly suburbs, making it easier for senior Canberrans to get around. Over two years the project will include a feasibility study, then detailed designs and construction of age-friendly facilities in Kaleen and in the Tuggeranong Valley. There will be new footpaths, widened footpaths, community paths, traffic islands, refuge spots, wheelchair ramps and other best practice age-friendly infrastructure installed.

In addition, \$495,000 in this budget is to continue the flexible transport bus service across the town centres for people with a disability and for seniors. Pensioners and concession cardholders will also continue to enjoy the bulky waste collection, with \$400,000 allocated in this budget for that service.

The government has also allocated over \$268 million for police and emergency services in this budget to keep our community safe. Construction of the new Aranda fire and ambulance station is well underway. It will give the community in east Belconnen faster response times in an emergency. The Aranda station will complement the west Belconnen fire and ambulance station completed a few years ago. It will bring the latest facilities into operation and will provide a modern safety net over Belconnen.

Belconnen is generously blessed by public parks and green belts that give us space to wander and enjoy. They also require a lot of maintenance and mowing to keep them enjoyable, presentable and fire free, especially in spring. In fact, we have 1,273 hectares or 12.7 square kilometres of land broken up into small reserves, verges and patches that we regularly mow. That is over a quarter of Canberra's urban open space. We are boosting the maintenance in these areas, with extra funding for more mowing, more cleaning, more weeding and more care. Our constituents have spoken and we have listened.

There is \$8 million over the four years in the budget for more frequent mowing across Canberra's 4½ thousand hectares of urban open space, weed control on major routes and maintenance of trees and shrubs, maintenance of Lake Ginninderra and other waterways and graffiti removal and prevention measures, and \$200,000 is allocated for minor safety upgrades at playgrounds across Canberra, including the 145 playgrounds in Belconnen.

The Canberra community is also responsible for maintaining our environment, and this government's commitment to a sustainable future is second to none. We can be justifiably proud of our substantial investments in renewable energy and reducing our carbon footprint. I am sure Minister Corbell will expand further on this theme and the big picture this morning. Citizen scientists, volunteers and schoolchildren also play an important part in monitoring and maintaining our environment.

One of the great local programs, the ACT and region frogwatch, has been doing great work monitoring and restoring frog habitats throughout Canberra. Their tadpole kits for schoolkids engage a new generation in caring for the environment whilst learning valuable scientific lessons. I met with the frogwatch and the Ginninderra catchment group last year, along with other Ginninderra MLAs, about the threat to their work from the slashing of federal government funding. Their funding from the federal national Landcare program was another victim of federal cutbacks and is due to cease on 31 December this year.

Their program involves over 12,500 volunteers. Over the last 12 years they have performed around 4,000 frog monitoring surveys at over 500 sites. They have recorded new species such as the green and golden bell frog and the Rocky River frog. Given the great community engagement of frogwatch and their contribution to our environment's biodiversity, I am pleased to say the ACT government will be able to step in with funding to support their great work. The ACT government has identified \$66,000 for the frogwatch program to continue the annual frog census across the ACT, spread over the next few years, up to the submission of the 2017 annual census report. This is a great community initiative in our locality that I am proud of and which we can support while they in turn support our community and our environment.

There are a range of other great programs that you will hear about in this budget, tackling issues both large and small. There are programs to overcome disadvantage, programs to invest in our children's future, programs to invest in our city's livability and initiatives to enrich and inspire our community.

Government is about making choices, being able to keep many balls in the air at the same time and balancing a whole range of competing needs. I pay tribute to all those who have played a part in crafting this budget, a responsible budget of Labor values, meeting the needs of our suburban community and facing up to the challenges we face even as the federal Liberal government pulls away support in an arbitrary fashion.

Belconnen is in great shape but there is more to do. There is a small plaque in the Aranda playing fields marking Aranda as the first suburban development in the Belconnen district. It reads:

This tablet marks the inauguration of development of the district of Belconnen by the Minister of State for the Interior The Honourable J. D. Anthony, M.P.
23 June 1966.

I look forward to celebrating the 50th birthday of Belconnen in just over a year.

This motion calls on the ACT government to continue its good work providing high quality health and education services, renewing our suburbs and town centres, ensuring that Canberra's renewal and growth is inclusive, and supporting the increasingly diverse ACT community with sound and productive investment. I commend the motion and the budget to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events) (10.20): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in support of Dr Bourke's motion. This government, through the budget I delivered yesterday, is ensuring that Canberra remains the most liveable city in the world. As I said in this place yesterday, my highest priority, and that of the government, is to make sure that our economy grows and creates the jobs and opportunities that Canberrans need to reach their full potential. A growing economy means that the government can deliver the services Canberrans depend on and maintain the Canberra way of life that we are all so proud of.

This budget delivers, Madam Speaker. It delivers growth, it delivers jobs, it delivers confidence, and it delivers the services and infrastructure Canberra needs. It is also responsible. It actively and responsibly addresses the series of shocks that have hit our city over the past 18 months, and the success of the government's approach is evident. This budget maintains the government's record support for essential health services, despite hundreds of millions of dollars being ripped out of the system by the federal Liberal government.

The budget delivers jobs and fosters diversification of our economy in response to the federal Liberal government casually ripping out 5,500 jobs from the ACT economy. It responds to the Mr Fluffy crisis, ending the legacy of loose-fill asbestos once and for all, whilst making sure that those people affected are put first.

Dr Bourke's motion calls on the government to focus on four key issues for Canberrans. I am pleased to report that these reflect the core priorities of the government and the 2015 budget. In terms of high quality health care and education, I am proud that the ACT government's investment in these areas in this budget are both record amounts. In the coming year the government will fund \$1.5 billion in health investment and \$1.1 billion in investment in our education system. This will ensure that Canberrans continue to enjoy world-class health and education services.

In terms of the renewal of our suburbs and town centres, Dr Bourke has already explained in some detail how this budget will work on the ground in his electorate. I am delighted that he has shown how our investment will help revitalise the Belconnen area.

I said yesterday that this new role I have as Chief Minister and Treasurer means that I am effectively the mayor of Canberra as well as being responsible for major budgetary decisions. I am proud to be investing in municipal services—in roads, in playgrounds and in parks. Our city should look its best to reflect the pride that Canberra residents share in our city. This is important for our day-to-day enjoyment of our local areas. Parks and open spaces should be neat and tidy. The grass should be mowed regularly, main roads free of weeds and litter taken out of our lakes. This is a collective responsibility, government and community working together to build the sort of city we want for the future.

In terms of our renewal and growth, we will always have a focus on ensuring social inclusion and equality, that all of our residents are looked after no matter their background or their circumstance. This goes to the core of the values that those on this side of the chamber hold. Social inclusion is a bedrock of how we approach our community and our economy. We are standing behind those dealing with the scourge of domestic violence in our community, providing more support for those that are experiencing violence.

The budget contains more than \$150 million for public housing renewal to provide modern homes for our tenants. It contains a big boost to counter and respond to domestic violence. It is about helping people get the right help at the right time for as long as they need it.

Turning to the economy, it is becoming stronger and more resilient as our deliberate efforts in partnership with the Canberra business community are bearing fruit. We have 25,000 businesses in the territory, local firms that are succeeding locally, nationally and on the international stage—local firms that are innovating and growing.

We are building on the already considerable strengths in key sectors of our economy. In areas like higher education, high-skilled service exports and technological innovation, we are encouraging investment into our economy, sourced locally, nationally and internationally.

Before turning to some of these business matters in detail, first and foremost the priority for the government is to support growth. An economy in which businesses,

households, residents and consumers all have confidence is the best way to encourage growth in an economy. That is exactly what this government have done through our infrastructure program in the past and will do in the future through our support for the private sector, through our investment in front-line services and our investment in productive, long-term and transformational projects for our city.

I would like to touch on a few examples of these this morning, examples that support the economy and support local businesses and that encourage new investment. Infrastructure investment plays a key role in promoting macro-economic stability and growth. Whilst the ACT is unable to control expenditure decisions by the commonwealth government, we are able to ensure that we maintain our own strong level of investment in infrastructure. Transforming our city through major infrastructure projects and capital works generates jobs and stimulates the territory economy. It has certainly helped in the last few years to reduce the impact of the commonwealth budget's contraction.

Capital investment outlined in the budget yesterday over the coming four years is \$2.8 billion. This is a record level of infrastructure investment for the territory. We are making decisions now that set this city up for coming generations to ensure that we take a different path from Sydney, that we do not end up congested and unliveable like that city has become.

We are investing now in the transport infrastructure for the future. Our capital contribution to the capital metro project, funded in part by the sale of ACTTAB, in part by the sale of surplus property and land and in part by a contribution from the Abbott government through the asset recycling initiative, shows that we are taking seriously the task of tackling traffic congestion faced by Canberra residents, particularly those who live in the outer suburbs, over the coming decades.

This 2015-16 ACT budget also delivers \$11.75 million in new funding to support the government's business development strategy, which was very warmly received by the Canberra Business Chamber on its release last week, and again at the budget breakfast this morning. This continues to support the growth of the Canberra economy and the creation of new jobs. Included in this strategy is \$6 million invested in programs and initiatives to accelerate business innovation, trade and investment, a big boost to our tourism economy—\$4.35 million, \$1.4 million of which is to build on the successful first phase of the Brand Canberra project.

The government is also seeking to help local businesses and residents benefit from administrative and technological initiatives to make it easier and quicker to do business with government. I have talked about this a lot in this place, because it is important for the day-to-day operation of Canberra businesses, Canberra event organisers, Canberra community organisations and individuals.

Access Canberra, which brings together seven ACT government agencies to deliver shopfront and regulatory services through a single point, in very practical terms means that local businesses, event organisers, community organisations and individuals spend less time dealing with ACT government agencies and more time on their projects, on their businesses and on the things that they are so passionately undertaking

To see the underlying strength of our economy, you do not just have to take my word for it, Madam Speaker. Members need only look to the recent announcement by QantasLink to base their significant engineering works here in Canberra, the imminent arrival of IKEA, the interest shown in our PPP projects by major Australian and international firms and the interest in land sales shown not only locally but also nationally and internationally to add to the housing supply in Canberra.

Through this budget the territory government is supporting our community, supporting our economy but most importantly planning for the long term. We are all proud of Canberra and this budget builds on that pride.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (10.30): I will pick up where the Chief Minister left off—talking about planning for the long term. Let's see the planning for how the government are going to afford what they intend to do as they constantly put their hands into the pockets of the ordinary citizens of the ACT. Dr Bourke said, "Yes, this is a Labor budget." Well, in that regard he is right—high debt, high deficits and higher taxes. That is Labor's tradition, that is Labor's legacy, and we see that tradition continued in this budget. This budget is set on one track, and that is the track of light rail. They cut 60 hospital beds from the subacute facility, but they are going to have light rail. They cannot afford to fund 60 more beds because Mr Rattenbury is in charge, demanding that the light rail be built. The Labor Party is acquiescing, saying that we shall have light rail at the cost of hospital beds. Have no doubt: this is a one-track government.

In many ways this is a budget attempting to clean up the mess Labor has created. This is Mr Barr cleaning up the mess of Ms Gallagher and Mr Stanhope before her—ministers, Chief Ministers and Treasurers he supported. Mr Barr is part of the mess they are cleaning up, as is Mr Corbell. Others have joined the train later on, but they are all on the same train; they are all on this one track because that is all they have. It is a shame that 60 hospital beds are going so we can fund the light rail. That is what it is about. Sixty hospital beds have been cut from the health system so Mr Corbell can have his train. Have no doubt about it: that train will cost taxpayers for a long, long time to come.

We need to look at some of the premises behind that. Yesterday Mr Gentleman was saying we could end up like LA. Imagine LA traffic on Northbourne Avenue and the streets of Canberra. There are almost 20 million people in greater LA. Are you suggesting the ACT will one day have 20 million people? That is delusional. Let us go to the analysis that we will look like Sydney. Sydney is expected to top five million people this year. Our estimates talk about Canberra being 500,000 by 2030—a tenth of Sydney—and yet there is the spectrum. All those cars coming down Northbourne Avenue because those opposite are trying to create the illusion that this is necessary to justify what they have done because they have got the process backwards. They have picked the route, they have picked the style and now it is all about justification.

As I said, this is a one-track budget, and that track includes the inexorable process of tripling people's rates, increasing car rego, increasing parking fines and the

government happily putting its fingers into people's pockets by increasing parking and traffic infringements which are going up by large number in this year's budget. That simply shows this is a government that has run out of ideas and has one-track vision. The government does not know what to do to improve the quality of life for people in the ACT.

One just needs to go through the numbers: payroll tax up 12 per cent, general rates up 11 per cent, land tax up six per cent, conveyancing—the mysteriously disappearing tax—is going up another four per cent and it goes up in the out years, and the lease variation charge up 15 per cent. There were those in the property industry who thought there might be some concessions given the slowness, particularly in Civic, and we have seen a number of groups—the Property Council and CBD Ltd—come out this morning saying this is not a budget for Civic. Everybody seems to agree that something has to happen for Civic, but this budget does not do it because light rail is sucking the life out of Civic.

You would remember, Madam Speaker, what happened when Mr Corbell was in charge of Gungahlin Drive—the six-year \$55 million project that took longer than 10 years to deliver. Mr Corbell said in 2001, “On time, on budget.” Well, it was not on time and it was not on budget. It ended up being four times what was originally estimated, because this government cannot deliver capital works.

We had Mr Barr saying yesterday that the \$375 million is in the outyears—it is not in this budget and will come later—but Mr Corbell was on the radio this morning saying there is provision for it in this budget. Which is it, gentlemen? It seems you cannot get your story straight, and that is because this government are fixated on this rail instead of fixated on fixing things. They just resort to greater taxes. The lease variation charge is expected to pick up 15 per cent because the remissions have gone. Many in the property industry thought there might be another package, particularly to help Civic, but apparently not. The emergency and fire services levy is increased by 25 per cent. You would have thought if your rates were increasing to cover standard municipal services like roads, rates, rubbish and ambulance and fire services that you had already paid enough. But, no: “We’ll slug them again. We’ll put another 25 per cent on the fire and emergency services levy.”

Then you go to the fees and charges: drivers licences are going up five per cent. The take from the taxi licensing is going up 17 per cent, but that is because it dipped so much this year because people are handing in their licences. The government expects it to come back next year, but we will see. Other fees: regulatory services up seven per cent, water abstraction charge up seven per cent, parking fees up 11 per cent. I understand Kate Lundy texted or tweeted this morning about this being an anti-car budget, but that does not worry this government because they are obsessed with these things and they will do whatever they want.

Other charges go up: traffic infringement fines 16 per cent, parking fines 29 per cent, other fines 116 per cent. This is a punitive government rather than a government that works towards improving people's lifestyle by addressing it. People are speeding and people are incorrectly parking. What about the education programs? No, this is a punitive government all to fund their single track, and that is the problem with this

government. This government does not have a genuine vision. If you were looking for a theme in this budget, up, up, up is the only thing that emerges. The debt is up, the deficit is up and fees and charges are up. That is this government to a T.

We heard a great speech from Dr Bourke. There was lots of talk about frogs. Frogs are worth while—frog sympathy being an indicator for the environment and all that sort of thing. But there was not much Dr Bourke could find to speak about. We had the old thing about the federal government cutting public service jobs, the Liberals have cut the jobs. Once and for all, 14,473 jobs in those cuts are Kevin Rudd's cuts. If this lot opposite had put as much effort into hauling their Labor colleagues into line as they do in proffering the Abbott government as the excuse for their failings, this city might well have been a little bit better off. I remind the Chief Minister what Robert Macklin said about stop bleating—you knew it was coming, you saw it was coming and basically you did nothing. That is just so true of this government.

It is interesting that the Treasurer has finally found the suburbs. Canberra has suburbs. He is now the mayor! Is this a reflection of his resentment of Mr Rattenbury? Traditionally the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services and before that the Minister for Urban Services was on the capital cities lord mayors council. That minister did the municipal stuff so he was the mayor. But no, Mr Barr does not like sharing; Mr Barr wants to be the Chief Minister and the mayor. I do not know how far he has gone from his Treasurer's office to find the suburbs, but he has now found the suburbs, and he is shocked. He is shocked at the state of the mowing, he is shocked at the state of the suburbs, he is shocked at the state of the shopping centres, and he is going to fix it. Yet he is the Treasurer. This is his fourth budget and he has been a member of the cabinet that oversaw the cuts that saw that decay occur. They did not keep abreast of what was going on in the suburbs. Indeed, when he became Chief Minister he said he would finally get out from behind his Treasurer's desk and go and talk to people. Fancy having to go out there and talk to the serfs and the peasants. No doubt he will be getting a set of mayoral robes made—there might be a nice little chain to go around it as well—and he can pretend to be the mayor.

It is interesting that the only significant announcement the Chief Minister could make in this budget is that he wants to be the mayor. Perhaps it is a reflection of the tension inside cabinet, but instead of concentrating on the long-term future for Canberra, their only long-term view now seems to be the single rail line. There are a number of plans. City to the lake is getting a little bit of money, but they seem to have abandoned that pretty much. It was another fine idea. There is the city plan, but both the Property Council and CBD Ltd see nothing in this budget for the CBD, except extra parking fees. The excuse is, "People have to understand that we have high quality services." People know they have high quality services. "People have to understand that they need to pay for high quality services." People already do; they pay through their noses with their taxes. In many cases we are the highest taxing jurisdiction in the country. They are already there, Chief Minister and Treasurer; they already know because it is coming out of their pockets already.

It will continue to come out of their pockets as we move inexorably to the tripling of rates in 11.6 years, according to Mr Quinlan on the model you have chosen. We can see it already with the rates increases. He was quite coy yesterday on the radio, "Oh, it

won't be 10 per cent this year." No, it is nine per cent. Yes, you are right: nine is not 10 per cent, but there will be years of 10 per cent increases and further increases in the outyears. People see their rates bills every quarter and they ask what they are getting for them.

We see the cuts to the first home owners grant. A government that talks about housing affordability and getting people into their own houses is now going to cut the grant from \$12,500 to \$10,000 to \$7,000. If you paid the extra rates and you thought, "That'll be okay because there is the first home owners grant to help the kids into their own home," that has gone too.

What have we got? We have got debt and we have got deficits. It is quite funny; there are standard pages in the budget I always go through, and one of them is the chapter on debt and borrowings. The debt is going up. It apparently dips in the 2018-19 year, but we will see whether that holds. We will see what happens, because I suspect that might be the year in which \$375 million has to be found. But there has always been a little chart in that chapter which shows the debt as a graphic. Guess what? The little chart is gone. That is economic reform for you: "We'll just take the chart out which so starkly shows what the debt is doing. We'll get rid of it."

There is a table worth looking at—table 8.3.3 on page 265. Because of their debt, because of their deficits, we are paying a lot more interest. In the government total borrowings, the expense on interest for 2014-15 is \$157 million; in 2015-16, the coming year, the interest is \$200 million; in 2016-17 the estimate is \$217 million; in 2017-18 it is \$233 million; and in 2018-19 it dips slightly to \$231 million. But we will see what happens there, because there is no way these people can wean themselves off their debt. In the next four years there is \$880-odd million worth of interest that is being paid to cover the debt, \$880 million that could have gone on other services and better spending.

It is unfortunate that we are paying that level of debt, but that is what you have when the government cannot manage its finances, cannot manage its budget, cannot live within its means. It just continues to spend. The biggest item of spending we face over 25 years is, of course, the light rail, and it is the hidden cost of light rail. There is an extra \$51 million in the budget this year for light rail, but how much of the TAMS budget will be light rail? How much work has to be done in preparation? We do not get that cost. The government will not tell the full story on the cost of light rail because I suspect it is very, very embarrassing. Mr Corbell has an opportunity to jump up in this debate. He and Mr Rattenbury can outline how much of the spending in their departments is attributable to light rail before we get to the start line, before we sign any big contracts, before we make that commitment.

We have a budget that lacks any central focus, that lacks any real target and that lacks in so many areas except for being, as Dr Bourke said, a traditional Labor budget. We all know what that means—debt, deficit and higher taxes. With that, I move the amendment circulated in my name:

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

"(1) notes the Government's failure to:

- (a) sustainably manage the ACT Budget resulting in a deficit of approximately \$408 million;
 - (b) manage its spending, resulting in increased taxes, rates and charges on ACT families and businesses;
 - (c) diversify the ACT economy after over 13 years in Government—noting the Chief Minister’s comment that the ACT economy has “turned the corner” in light of the recent Commonwealth Budget;
 - (d) deliver and provide transparency on its capital works spending, preferring to label these projects as NFP (not fit for publication) in its spending schedules; and
 - (e) deliver on its vision of City to the Lake, with its latest initiative at West Basin characterised by Western Australia Labor Senator, Glenn Sterle as “the beginnings of a detention centre”; and
- (2) calls on the Government to detail to the Assembly before the ACT Budget is passed to disclose:
- (a) its deficit reduction strategy;
 - (b) its plan to improve cost of living for ACT families;
 - (c) its plan to reduce operating costs for ACT businesses;
 - (d) when conveyance duty will be fully abolished; and
 - (f) the full cost of the annual availability payment to the Capital Metro project.”.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Health, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (10.45): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this debate this morning, as the motion and the matter for debate is very much focused on priorities, on where this Labor government is investing in the services that Canberrans need.

First and foremost, of course, there is \$1.5 billion in health expenditure in this year’s budget. That is the area of priority and focus. That is where taxpayers’ funds are overwhelmingly being committed, because that is the key priority for our city and our community. This Labor budget delivers \$161 million in new health funding over four years to deliver better support, better services and better equipment for people in our community when it comes to health care.

That, of course, stands in marked contrast to the position of the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party federally has ripped \$228 million away from the ACT government budget in its failure to honour commitments to health and hospital funding. Those are the figures that Treasury have accurately estimated between 2014-15 and 2016-17. Those are the cost implications.

Of course, there is a further \$600 million less in health and hospital funding that we know we are going to lose out on because of the federal Liberal government's failure—the Liberal Party's failure—to honour commitments to properly fund our health and hospital services. So that is where the big dollars are, and that is where the Liberal Party are short changing our community, short changing our hospital services and short changing every single Canberran that is going to need care in our health, hospital and community health facilities over the next decade. That is their legacy.

They have had the gall to stand up and defend it, and they have the gall to say that these cuts have not happened. Well, they have happened. They are in the federal budget, they are in the ACT budget, and it is to the shame of the Liberal Party that they have failed to defend Canberra and stand up for our hospitals and our health system.

In contrast, we are making these critical investments. \$1.5 billion has now been committed by the ACT government budget to health and hospital services. Let me talk about some of the important commitments. There is \$40.6 million being invested directly into acute care services in our public hospitals. That includes funding of over \$5 million to continue the provision of expert emergency specialist care in our emergency departments, and \$23 million for new general hospital beds at the Canberra Hospital and Calvary hospital. There will be 16 new acute care beds delivered in the next 12 months across Calvary public and the Canberra Hospital—12 at the Canberra Hospital and four at Calvary public. In addition, there will be two new intensive care beds.

These are some of the most expensive but most critical acute care services that our public hospital system has to deliver. Keeping people alive when they have suffered serious trauma or very serious illness is a critical function of our public hospital system, and we are expanding the capability of our intensive care unit to deliver that care again at the Canberra Hospital.

We are doing the same for neonatal intensive care. We are a key referral centre, not just for our city but for our region, and we see many sick, premature babies needing expert intensive care support so that they can survive those critical days, weeks and months following early birth. And we are making that investment. An extra neonatal intensive care bed at the Canberra Hospital in the women's and children's area is a very important investment, and that is funded by this budget as well.

We are expanding care for people in our community. More Canberrans will be able to get care in their community through hospital in the home. That is a really important expansion as well. We are continuing to put downward pressure on elective surgery and reducing waiting times for Canberrans when it comes to elective surgery. An extra 500 elective surgery procedures will be funded this year, on top of the 12,000 we already fund. Again, it is funding that speaks to this government's priorities.

We will also be funding significant new initiatives in the area of mental health. I am particularly proud, as health minister, to see one of the largest increases in funding for mental health services that we have seen for many years. \$31.9 million more will go into mental health services in our community, both in the acute care and in the community response.

I know that Ms Fitzharris, for example, will welcome the fact that for the first time we will have a dedicated mental health team based in Gungahlin to meet the needs of people in that growing community. But we are also expanding crisis support right across the city, to make sure that when people are facing crisis as a result of mental illness they are getting better support.

We are also expanding our capability to deal with acute care in areas like the secure mental health unit. So this is an unprecedented level of increase in funding for mental health services—an area grossly neglected, I think historically, but one that this government has committed significant funds to, and we are doing so again in this most recent budget.

I said when I became health minister that I had three key priorities: better service delivery in our hospitals and healthcare sector; a greater focus on mental health; and a really strong focus on keeping our community healthy and active and reducing demand in our public health and hospital system.

We have delivered on all three key areas that I outlined in this year's budget. We are expanding service delivery. There will be more elective surgeries. We are expanding our emergency department, with a 33 per cent increase in beds—21 extra beds in our emergency department at the Canberra Hospital.

There are also very important commitments in health infrastructure spending. This government, since 2009, has spent over \$900 million on health infrastructure upgrades and new builds. And we continue that record this year. This year the budget makes appropriate provision to see construction get underway on the new University of Canberra public hospital, a facility that will deliver dedicated subacute care for the first time in a purpose-built facility that meets the needs of an ageing and growing population.

Keeping Canberrans healthy, providing the care when they need it, improving service delivery, focusing on mental health and keeping people active are some of the key elements of this year's budget, and I am very pleased that Dr Bourke has highlighted the importance of these in his motion.

Of course, Madam Speaker, these are things you will not hear the Liberal Party talk about, because they know that their story is just plain wrong. They can focus on light rail in the obsessive way they do. They are the only ones obsessing about it. When you look at the cost, when you look at the expenditure on light rail in terms of the operations of the Capital Metro Agency in this year's budget, it is less than one per cent of the ACT government budget, but it is all that you will hear them talk about.

What about the over 50 per cent spent on health and education in this year's budget? Let us see where their priorities really are, and let us have a debate about investment in health. I will be very happy to contrast this Labor government's record on investment in health and hospital services with their record, which has continually seen reductions in funding, the most recent, of course, being over \$228 million in the most recent federal budget. (*Time expired.*)

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (10.55): Firstly, I thank my colleague Dr Bourke for bringing forward this important motion this morning. As the Treasurer said yesterday, this budget is a budget for Canberra, and it is also a budget about people and the values we hold as a government. I want particularly to reflect on the parts of Dr Bourke's motion that relate to areas in my portfolio and the key themes of urban renewal, addressing social inclusion and inequity.

The 2015-16 budget will step up for some of Canberra's most vulnerable individuals, with more than \$45 million in funding over four years to support children, young people and their families. Support for vulnerable children and young people is among the centrepieces of the 2015-16 ACT budget, with an additional \$38.9 million over four years to fund the out of home care system and invest in new services and reforms through the implementation of a step up for our kids.

The aim of this initiative is to prevent the need for children and young people to enter out of home care such as foster care or residential care by providing better support for birth parents in retaining the care of their children, improving outcomes for those in care and, wherever possible, placing children and young people from care into permanent alternative families in a timely manner.

A step up for our kids will create a system of protection and care that fosters better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families and carers, as well as making it easier to access the support they need when they need it, and for the duration they need.

The budget provided \$5.3 million to improve our support for vulnerable children and young people through a new information and record-keeping system. This will improve information security and simplify access and reporting for caseworkers. The new system will be the primary client information and record keeping source for child and youth protection services, and enhance the ability of front-line workers to keep children safe. It will have the ability to interact with a step up for our kids by providing a mechanism for information sharing with community agencies and other government agencies so that they can have the information they need to support children and young people.

This budget also set aside \$2.5 million for the Bendora through-care unit at Bimberi to support young people transitioning into the community when they leave detention. This initiative will ensure that staff at Bimberi are able to continue the good work of the transition unit by providing intensive and targeted programs to develop the social and life skills needed for young people when moving from custody to the community. This initiative has been particularly effective at reducing violent incidents within Bimberi, it has assisted in improving educational and health outcomes, reduced offending, and reduced the number of young people who return to custody.

These measures represent a very considerable investment by the ACT government in the lives of our most vulnerable young people, and are important initiatives that will

assist in overcoming disadvantage. I wish to congratulate all of the directorate's hardworking staff on preparing this work and on their dedication to our most vulnerable people.

The ACT's population is projected to reach over 499,000 people by 2032. With this, the demand for urban transport infrastructure is expected to increase significantly. The road network needs to keep up with the pace of population growth, otherwise we risk key transport corridors exceeding capacity.

This would be most evident in Gungahlin, which is one of the regions where higher growth is forecast. The 2015-16 ACT budget responds to these growth forecasts. One of the main road upgrade priorities for the Gungahlin area is the duplication of Gundaroo Drive. Yesterday's budget provides funding of \$31.1 million over two years to duplicate the section of Gundaroo Drive from Gungahlin Drive to the intersection of Mirrabai Drive and Anthony Rolfe Avenue.

The duplication of this section of road will improve safety and relieve congestion in the growing Gungahlin region and has been prioritised on the basis of accident trends and levels of congestion. This upgrade of Gundaroo Drive is key to meeting the road infrastructure needs of the Gungahlin region and will support several other projects identified for the area.

In the third quarter of 2015 work is expected to commence to upgrade the intersection of Gundaroo Drive, Barton Highway and William Slim Drive. The roundabout will be upgraded to incorporate additional lanes and traffic signal control on all four of its approaches. This project will be of particular benefit to Crace residents as it will improve traffic flow along Gundaroo Drive, better enabling them to exit their suburb. It will also improve traffic flow in the afternoon peak for Gungahlin residents returning home from work in Belconnen who currently get banked up on the approach to the roundabout.

The upgrades include the construction of a new shared path bridge, which includes new connections to the existing path that runs alongside Ginninderra Creek adjacent to Giralang. Additional on-road cycle lanes will be provided on the approaches from Gundaroo Drive, William Slim Drive and Barton Highway south to improve the amenity for cyclists at the intersection further on.

Tenders will also be called for a project to widen Gungahlin Drive to three lanes for 1.6 kilometres southbound, from north of Sandford Street through to the Barton Highway. The upgrade will increase capacity on this busy corridor, easing congestion and improving travel movements onto the Barton Highway.

The Horse Park Drive and Anthony Rolfe Avenue intersection will be upgraded to include two through-lanes in each direction on Horse Park Drive to improve traffic flow. Right turn lanes on Horse Park Drive into Throsby and Harrison will also be constructed.

The key project to ease congestion for Tuggeranong is the duplication of Ashley Drive from Erindale Drive to Ellerston Avenue, which received \$24.6 million over

three years in the ACT budget. Works as part of this upgrade will include a new southbound road carriageway between Erindale Drive and Ellerston Avenue; new traffic signals where Ashley Drive intersects with Bugden Avenue, Statton Street and Clift Crescent; duplication of existing underpasses near Statton Street and Bugden Avenue; north and southbound on-road cycle lanes; and additional footpaths to link with existing paths.

Ashley Drive acts as a major thoroughfare for traffic travelling from Tuggeranong suburbs such as Monash, Isabella Plains and Richardson to Woden and to the city, so I am really pleased we will be able to upgrade this second stage of Ashley Drive to a dual carriageway.

The ACT government is committed to providing infrastructure such as on and off-road cycle and pedestrian networks to encourage sustainable transport and thus help reduce the need for vehicle use. After all, around 40 per cent of Canberrans travel less than 10 kilometres to work, which is a distance that most people can easily cycle.

The budget responds to the needs of cyclists. More cyclepaths will be developed in the ACT, with \$1.7 million committed from the ACT budget. This includes funding for the design and construction of new road crossings on Sullivans Creek cyclepath at Masson Street, Condamine Street and Goodwin Street, as well as funding to facilitate the widening of sections of the existing cyclepath from Wattle Street to Barry Drive.

The ACT budget provides for an upgrade of the government's electronic lodgement system for development and building applications by investing \$2.5 million to ensure that the building and construction industry has a world-class system which will provide real-time information about the progress of their applications. It will also provide for improved functionality.

As a small city-state, our focus is always on how we can develop and grow our region. This budget provides an additional \$500,000 over two years for the Canberra urban and regional futures. This will bring the ACT's contribution to this project to \$1 million and will fulfil a commitment that we made at the last election to enable research to find new pathways and strategies for a sustainable future both for our city and for the surrounding region.

Madam Assistant Speaker, as you know, one of this government's priorities is developing a healthy and active community. We all value the beauty and amenity of our city and there is no better way to see that than by walking and cycling. That is why we have committed a further \$340,000 to the Heart Foundation to continue its important work in developing active travel solutions. This will be complemented by the significant investment in infrastructure announced in this budget.

This budget steps up for Canberrans. It invests in services that support our vulnerable young people and it steps up for our road users by investing for the future of road improvements. (*Time expired.*)

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.05): I rise to commend Mr Smyth's amendment to the budget and talk about what really is a budget that takes

the ACT in the wrong direction. Members opposite have talked about the amount of money that is being spent in this budget on health and on education. Certainly we support that. But the reality is that many of those are fixed costs. They are costs that are embedded in our budget. They are, in many ways, not discretionary.

When it comes to a budget, each government has an amount of money that it can expend beyond what is fixed in health, education and so on. From that discretionary spending, you see a government's priorities. What we see clearly from this government is its expenditure on light rail, its plan to embed light rail. There is \$51 million in ongoing expenditure in this budget on top of the many tens of millions that have already been spent in other parts of the budget on capital metro and in TAMS. That is the priority of this government. There is \$374 million referenced in the speech about capital works for capital metro. That is an enormous amount of money.

If we were in a position where we were in surplus, as we were promised—remember that Mr Barr used to talk about surpluses; he used to talk about the merit of surpluses so that governments had the discretion to do things—it might be a different matter. But we are not. In actual fact, with the result for this year and the forecast for the coming year, we have seen a deficit of \$1 billion.

Some of that is because of Mr Fluffy, and we accept that. But that is just the reality. You have to play with the cards that you are dealt; you have to make decisions based on the circumstances you find yourself in. Rather than saying, "What we are going to do is focus on the things that matter for Canberrans out in the suburbs and look after everybody in Canberra," this government is putting all its eggs in one basket in light rail. In the process, to try and pay for it, because of the record debt and record deficit that this government has put this territory in, it is putting up every fee and charge known to man.

When you look at the budget—payroll tax up 12 per cent; land tax up nine per cent; conveyancing up four per cent; vehicle rego up six per cent; ambulance levy up eight per cent; LVC up 16 per cent; utilities tax up five per cent; fire and emergency up 25 per cent; total other taxes up nine per cent; taxi licences up 17 per cent; fees for Regulatory Services up seven per cent; and so on—you see that everybody is paying. And particularly they are paying in the suburbs, Madam Assistant Speaker. They are paying to fund this government's obsession with light rail. Be in no doubt about it.

As part of that increase, we are seeing the ongoing tripling of everybody's rates. The government will argue that is not happening, but the reality—look to the *Canberra Times* and the evidence there that shows everybody's rates going up suburb by suburb—is that what you have been seeing over the last few budgets is a 10 per cent increase. This year it is nine, but in many suburbs it is higher than that. If you do that year on year, then in about 11 years your rates have tripled. The revenue has tripled. The government came in promising that that was not going to happen, but we have now seen in the budget papers that that is the case.

The government also said, "We will get rid of stamp duty. We are going to remove stamp duty. That is a burden we are going to remove." But when you look at the budget papers and the amount of money that this government is going to be taking

from stamp duty in this budget over the forward estimates, you see that by the end of these forward estimates this government is going to be taking \$259 million in stamp duty. That is this tax that the government said it was going to remove. Remember back in 2011-12: "We are getting rid of stamp duty." That was the promise. It said, "There will be pain on rates but we are getting rid of stamp duty." What we see is that in actual fact during the budget period stamp duty goes up by \$39 million. So the revenue taken by this government on stamp duty continues to rise. This is a government that said one thing at the last election and is doing entirely another.

The problem is out there in the suburbs for tens of thousands of Canberrans. They feel this pain every year. They have to pay their rates year on year. There are many people out there on fixed incomes—they might be pensioners—or on low incomes who, on top of the licence fees, on top of the rego, on top of every other fee and charge, have rates that are going through the roof. That is simply unfair.

Although the grab of stamp duty is going up from this government, I would make this case about the reduction, if it ever comes in any substantive way, in stamp duty. Firstly, that will have to go onto people's rates; the remaining \$259 million will be paid by people in rates. But the stamp duty is a relatively small portion in terms of the reduction when you purchase a home. That often is paid off over 25 years. People do not buy a home every year, but people pay rates every year. The decision about when people buy a home is not made every year.

The great irony from those opposite is that they say, "We want to help people get into the housing market." So do we. In this budget, they are ripping millions of dollars out of the first home owner concession. They are saying, "We really want to try and help first home owners. We want to help people get into the market. That is part of the objective of removing stamp duty." At the same time, they are ripping millions of dollars out of concessions, out of support for first home owners. It makes an absolute nonsense of much of the government's rhetoric.

When we look across the budget, other than the tens of millions of dollars there for light rail, the cuts for first home owners and the rates, we do see some elements that we support. As I said, we do want to see money to go into health; we do want to see money going into education. But we see this sneaky agenda from the government where the minister coming in here talking about his commitment to health is the same minister that has just cut 60 beds from the University of Canberra hospital and then tried to say, "No, they were never beds; they were exercise equipment. A pool is a bed; a gym bike is a bed." That is the sort of spin that Labor has.

Mr Corbell interjecting—

MR HANSON: Madam Assistant Speaker, he is a bit sensitive over there. Mr Corbell is a bit sensitive.

Another classic is the extra funding for police. The way this works is that you rip \$15 million out of the police capital budget. That is to go. You go and rip \$15 million out. You then put \$2 million or \$3 million back and you say, "Look: extra funding for police." It is a clever way of doing it, isn't it, Madam Assistant Speaker? You rip \$15 million out, put \$3 million back and call that extra funding for police. I can tell

you, having spoken to many police officers about this, that they are not that naive. Police officers are not easily tricked. They understand that when you do your maths, if you take \$15 million out and you put \$3 million back in, that is not increased funding—just like Mr Corbell ripping out 60 beds for exercise bikes and pool equipment.

The commentary on the budget is interesting. There are mixed views. I did enjoy Kate Lundy's tweet. I must say that the tweet we saw from Kate Lundy about this budget was illustrative. For anyone who does not know who Kate Lundy is, let me say that she was a former long-serving ACT senator, an ALP senator. She went out with a tweet. What did it say? It said:

Disappointing budget for motorists as ACT rego fees and pay parking increase.

So there you have it, Madam Assistant Speaker. If you don't believe me about this being a disappointing budget, have a look at who is saying that—Kate Lundy, former senator for the ACT for the Labor Party, who served the Labor Party for 19 years. She has had a look at this budget. She knows the impact that this is going to have on families throughout Canberra—on working mums and dads trying to get to work, trying to look after their kids, trying to pay their way in this city. Kate Lundy will tell you what this budget is; it is a disappointing budget.

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) (11.15): Thanks to Dr Bourke for bringing the motion to the Assembly today. It is a pleasure to join my colleagues in speaking about this government's budget.

It is a real shame that the Canberra Liberals have no imagination when it comes to talking up Canberra and when it comes to a vision for Canberra now and into the future. This budget is a clear statement of our values and our pride in this city, something the Canberra Liberals could learn about and listen to. It is guided by the people who live here and love Canberra as we do—people who love their suburbs and local shops and schools; who believe in fairness and safety in the community and in their homes; and who want their government leading change in our economy and urban environment, not just responding to it. These are the qualities of the most livable city in the world. They exist right across Canberra, and our budget responds to and builds on them. In social inclusion and equality, in domestic violence, in housing and elsewhere, the government is investing in infrastructure and services which Canberrans need.

The ACT's first social inclusion and equality budget statement has been delivered by the Chief Minister and me as the person assisting the Chief Minister in this area. It includes new and continuing initiatives across the government. It takes in all ministers and all directorates. It shows our commitment to tackling exclusion and inequality in our work. It understands that each person is different, and from there it supports initiatives to make a difference in people's lives.

Since becoming minister, I have met many of these people—the housing tenants at Oaks Estate who are doing great work, together with Vinnies, in building a strong community; Muslim women who are able to take swimming lessons through programs which recognise and embrace difference; kids coming through the justice system learning how to cook at Bimberi, and not just how to cook a meal but how to lead a healthy life; and women who have left abusive relationships and come to crisis services, such as Beryl and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service. These are the people I think about when we talk about budgets being about people.

Domestic violence receives vital attention in the government's budget, something the Canberra Liberals have not spent any time talking about in response to this motion today. The response to this issue is not just about money. You cannot achieve generational change in culture simply through spending. That is why, on top of the \$250,000 in additional funding for our crisis response services, the budget focuses on measures to educate kids in our schools and the broader school communities, to get better data and to put the necessary efforts into prevention. I welcome the positive responses from Mirjana Wilson from the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Frances Crimmins from the YWCA reported in the paper today. While we are talking about people's responses to this budget, we should note that they had positive things to say. And we are all in agreement about the response to domestic violence. Our government is already embracing national action which will take this agenda forward.

In the housing portfolio the government is undertaking the biggest renewal of public housing stock since self-government. Let us remember that we have the most housing stock per head of any state or territory. We have some of the most effective homelessness services and, through this, a detailed picture of homelessness in our city. Our decision to replace 1,288 properties with new homes is the right thing to do for equality, for fairness and for inclusion in our community. More than that, this public housing renewal is key to the urban renewal process, as it has been in the past. Some people have fallen into the trap of assuming that they know what public housing tenants want, need or ought to have. I suggest they do as we do, and as we will continue to do—talk with and listen to these people. There is plenty of Canberra and community pride in our public housing tenants, and this budget responds to this.

We have also taken another positive step towards housing affordability, particularly at the lower end of the market. The buyer of a \$300,000 home will save \$2,900 in stamp duty compared to before the introduction of tax reform. The buyer of a \$500,000 home will save \$5,900.

Finally, I want to talk about Belco pride. Like every suburb and town centre, there is great change happening in my community. There is \$18.4 million for Belconnen high; I know from my conversations, talking to the principal and the school community, how far this money will go in modernising this fantastic school. There is extra mowing in every suburb and maintenance at the 27 local shops in Belconnen, each one central to its local community. Many of us are working longer hours, and I know I often use my local shopping centres as a pantry; it is great to see that they will be getting maintenance, probably more maintenance than my own pantry at home.

There is investment in foot and bike paths and maintenance at Lake Ginninderra, where we spend time with barbecues and swimming in summer, kayaking when we get a chance, and dog walking. It is a very popular place for people who live in Belconnen. There are important upgrades at Calvary hospital worth \$12.4 million, particularly around parking. In community services, we continue to provide the chance for those who need a hand or need support to get it. Through the better services pilot initiatives, we will continue with \$1.2 million in west Belconnen and with families around the ACT as we continue to work towards permanent improvements in the way we provide services to our community. These investments are building on past investments in Belconnen which nurture the life and pride of the community.

Our budget does this right across Canberra. Canberra's people and our economy have managed to weather the biggest attacks on our city and our workers from the commonwealth government in nearly 20 years. We have more to be proud of than ever. All members should support this motion.

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (11.22): With my colleagues I thank Dr Bourke for bringing this important motion before the Assembly today, the day after the ACT budget. I am proud to be able to talk about the 2015-16 ACT budget handed down by Chief Minister Andrew Barr yesterday, and Labor's exciting plan to renew and revitalise Canberra.

This is a budget that focuses on the ACT Labor government's priorities. This is a budget that promotes urban and suburban renewal, a budget that promotes investment in schools and hospitals, a budget that enhances Canberra's livability, builds social inclusion and improves our integrated transport network. It is a budget that invests across our city in the services and infrastructure we need and that is underpinned by the values we on this side hold dear—the values that provide everyone the opportunity to reach their potential. This is a Labor budget that puts Canberrans first.

This budget sees the largest amount of spending in health care in ACT history. Despite cuts from the commonwealth government, this ACT Labor government is continuing to invest in health services for Canberra. It is continuing to increase acute services at Calvary and Canberra hospitals, providing 16 extra beds and more medical staff to treat patients. More women's and children's health services are being provided, along with more elective surgery, and improvements in palliative care and mental health services.

The budget continues to invest in health services that meet patients' needs in many ways, through the provision of preventive and local community health centres like the Gungahlin Community Health Centre, which provides a range of services, including maternal and child health, diabetes and mental health services to the local community. As Minister Corbell noted, this budget invests in the first dedicated mental health team at Gungahlin. In the discussion of budgets, detail can often get ignored. Take a moment to think about what this investment will mean for the lives of people in the local area.

We are getting on with the job of building the state-of-the art University of Canberra public hospital, the first facility of its kind in the ACT—a subacute facility that provides an innovative approach to managing health care. This budget also provides a record package of investment to promote renewal in our suburbs and town centres. More is being invested into footpaths and cyclepaths to better connect people to public parks and shops. Common areas are being improved, with \$8 million extra for mowing and weeding and maintenance services, and investment into more playgrounds.

In Gungahlin, the budget has committed to cleaning up both Yerrabi and Gungahlin ponds. Along with this, new outdoor exercise equipment will be installed at Yerrabi park—this is a great initiative—which is so popular already across Canberra. The recent photo competition for the Celebrate Gungahlin festival had a large number of entries depicting Yerrabi Ponds. It reinforced for me the importance this body of water holds for Gungahlin locals. I walk around it regularly, usually in the early mornings, which I do less at this time of the year. I know other locals are a bit hardier than I am. It is used more and more every month and it is great that the water quality will be improved.

In addition, much-needed upgrades for the Gungahlin library will be undertaken. The Gungahlin library loans over 400,000 items a year and is an important part of the town centre.

This budget puts Canberra families and their children first with record investment in schools. Led by Minister Burch, \$1.1 billion is being invested into schools this year. This funding works to address this government's priorities of building a public school system that achieves the best outcomes for Canberra students, a school system that provides the best opportunities for students with special education needs, and a system that supports young Canberrans hoping to undertake vocational and technical training.

I am thrilled that this budget also contains additional funding for schools in north Gungahlin. Currently the ACT budget funds 7,279 students and 650 teachers in eight public schools in the region. New initiatives by this government will also see \$31 million invested in a new P-6 primary school in north Gungahlin to open in 2017 and a feasibility study into a high school in the area.

I know these announcements will be welcomed by Gungahlin families. As a community we know that our local schools are thriving. This investment recognises the growth of our community and this government will continue to invest in new schools in Gungahlin, building on the excellent public schools in the region that have opened in recent years, including Harrison, Franklin, Bonner and Gungahlin College, to name a few. This Labor government knows that investing in a quality education system, in teachers and in school infrastructure and, most importantly, in our children is the most vital tool to make sure that kids get the opportunity to reach their potential.

This budget is also about creating jobs. I am very pleased to see that this ACT Labor government is supporting Canberra businesses. The business development strategy is diversifying and innovating our economy, giving entrepreneurs and innovators an opportunity to get ahead, and giving businesses a chance to reinvest and create more jobs for more Canberrans.

I know there are vibrant small businesses in the Gungahlin region and they will benefit from these investments. But, most significantly, Gungahlin retailers are already benefiting from the opening of Winyu House in the town centre. The town centre is that much livelier and Gungahlin retailers will be the winners, along with ACT government staff who have world-class office accommodation.

Canberra is not just a public service town. Close to 15,000 Canberrans are employed in our tourism sector, which contributes \$1.6 billion to our economy each year. The Barr Labor government is serious about making Canberra a tourist destination. The National Multicultural Festival, the Enlighten festival, the Lights! Canberra! Action! film festival and the Canberra Balloon Spectacular are just some of the attractions that are bringing people to Canberra. The government is investing more than \$10.8 million over four years to further boost our tourism sector.

On transport, this government is taking the future of an integrated public transport system seriously. The government is making a capital contribution of \$375 million for the capital metro light rail project. This contribution is fiscally responsible and funded by the sale of surplus ACT assets and the associated \$60 million contribution from the commonwealth asset recycling initiative. Yes, it is true, the federal Liberal government has given us \$60 million to invest in light rail. Fundamentally, this project will reduce commute times from Gungahlin to Civic and improve connectivity across our city.

A new audit by Infrastructure Australia says that congestion on Canberra roads is tipped to cost us \$700 million by 2031. Combined with delays on Northbourne Avenue, which are projected to rise substantially over the next few years, it is clear we need a better, more integrated public transport network now. Capital metro will deliver this.

As well as light rail, this government is investing in our roads. I received more than 1,000 signatures from Gungahlin residents for the duplication of Gundaroo Drive. I am thrilled to see funding for the duplication of Gundaroo Drive underway in this budget and, importantly, to get the duplication of Horse Park Drive underway as well. These are major projects that I have been out talking with the Gungahlin community about very consistently for the four months I have been in the Assembly. I have been passing on the local community's views to the minister for roads and the Treasurer, and I thank them for listening to the Gungahlin community. These are vital roadways for Gungahlin commuters and their duplication, which will get underway this year, will vastly improve transport in Gungahlin. They are staged, as major projects must be. I will continue to advocate for an integrated transport network—roads, buses, walking and cycling and light rail.

Canberra is one of the most livable cities in the world. It is a city where people can come to work, live, and raise families. This ACT budget recognises this and works to improve Canberra's livability.

The ACT government will be working to combat homelessness and provide more public housing for Canberrans in need. Very importantly, this government takes

domestic violence seriously and will contribute to the national campaign to tackle domestic violence. The government will expand capacity for sexual violence crisis services, provide emotional learning programs for children in our schools, and will provide training for teachers and staff on domestic violence issues.

This budget shows that this government is working to ensure Canberra continues to be the most livable city in the world. The priorities of the Chief Minister and this government are to invest in the future of health and education in our city, to encourage renewal in our suburbs and provide a more integrated transport system.

This is a budget that encourages business investment and economic growth. It is a budget that puts people and jobs at the forefront. Importantly, this is a budget that will enhance livability and social inclusion in Canberra, now and into the future. It is a strong statement of values: inclusion, the chance for everyone to get ahead, investments in health and education, generating jobs through our capital works program, targeted investment in our economy and enabling our private sector to deliver the jobs people need to come to Canberra, to stay in Canberra and live productive lives.

Inclusion and social enterprise were key themes at this morning's Canberra Business Chamber breakfast—from Meyer Vandenberg lawyers, to Glenn Keys, the chair of the chamber, to Susan Helyar. As the Chief Minister said, an inclusive society is the key to our economic success.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.32): I will keep my remarks very brief today as I intend to give my detailed views during my reply speech tomorrow afternoon. Suffice it to say that I will be supporting Dr Bourke's motion today and I will not be supporting Mr Smyth's amendment.

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Racing and Gaming, Minister for Women and Minister for the Arts) (11.33): I thank Dr Bourke for moving this motion today and for highlighting the strengths of the budget delivered by the Chief Minister. This is a strong budget from the Chief Minister and I am proud to be part of the team that he leads. This budget invests in those things that are important, that are there for the long term and that will continue to deliver for this town for generations to come.

In my ministerial portfolios, this budget helps to keep our community safe, to promote a vibrant arts sector, to help give our children and young people the quality education they deserve and to give people with a disability the opportunity to participate in our community that they so richly deserve.

I will start with the disability portfolio. The ACT was the first jurisdiction to sign up to the national disability insurance scheme. We will be the first to have our entire eligible community participating in the NDIS. This budget continues to support the ACT's transition to the NDIS. It also delivers on our election commitment to deliver a new respite property for young people with a disability.

In December last year I was proud to stand alongside Ricky Stuart at Chifley as we turned the first sod on the joint construction of a respite centre for children aged up to 11 years. This is a wonderful resource. It is being built with a \$1 million investment from the ACT government and more than \$400,000 in cash and in-kind support provided through the Ricky Stuart Foundation in partnership with local businesses and local community leaders. The budget builds on that partnership, with the government providing over \$1 million to build a second respite property for young people aged between 12 and 18 years of age, with the Ricky Stuart Foundation providing more funds, both in cash and in in-kind services.

The new respite property will provide happy and modern, safe places for young children and young people with disability to spend their time with friends, an environment that will give their families and carers confidence and peace of mind that their loved one is being looked after while they have time off, get to their other family duties and possibly get a bit of time for themselves. I understand that Ricky Stuart was on radio this morning. I would like to thank him for his kind words and repay the compliment by saying that it has been simply amazing to work with him and with his enthusiasm on this project.

Turning to education, the Labor government knows the power of education to change lives for the better. We know that by having a high quality education system, a system recognised nationally and internationally as one of the best, we provide for the future health and prosperity of Canberra.

In this budget we have invested a record \$1.1 million in education to make sure that almost 70,000 students across all school sectors continue to have the best education in the country. We are investing \$160 million in existing schools and we are providing for new schools in Gungahlin and Molonglo to ensure that our new communities have the facilities they need as they grow.

We will also be spending almost \$40 million to replace and upgrade ICT infrastructure, including expanding the wi-fi capabilities across our primary schools. We have announced \$18.4 million for Belconnen high, delivering on our election commitment to refurbish that school. I was pleased to be at Belconnen high on Monday to talk with David McCarthy, the principal there. He is delighted to have this investment, as I understand the school board is. I was pleased to be joined there by Ms Berry and Dr Bourke.

It is becoming the standard that Education and Training Directorate projects are delivered on time and under budget. The fact that we can deliver our education commitment at Belconnen high—everything the principal has described as what the school community wants—for less than the original estimate should be applauded, because this is what budgets are about: delivering what is needed to make sure that our principals and teachers can get to do what they do best, that is, to provide the very best education.

Domestic violence is an issue that cannot and ought not to be ignored. It is something that has for too long affected too many in our community and we must not remain

silent. Our schools have a crucial role in this task. I am proud to announce that as part of this budget, ACT government schools will be benefited to the tune of \$600,000 to ensure that our government schools have social and emotional learning programs in place that confront these issues.

The programs will be embedded in every part of the children's learning by training our teachers about domestic violence and what they can do to support students in their class. We will also create online resources to give students and members of our school community who may be victims of domestic violence the tools to seek help and support.

I was very pleased to announce also the upgrades for CIT and a new campus and facility for CIT in Tuggeranong. CIT is a fantastic institution. I want to make sure that it continues to deliver the outstanding outcomes that it has a proven history of delivering.

This budget also delivers a program of suburban renewal to ensure that Canberra remains the most livable city in the world. Arts and cultural facilities play a major role in that. The Canberra theatre, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, will benefit from an upgrade to this wonderful facility.

In respect of emergency services, it is important that governments ensure that our community is kept safe. Building on the 2013-14 budget, our hardworking and dedicated emergency services responded to around 56,000 requests for help. The ambulance demand alone has increased by around a third since 2009, with ambulance crews now travelling an extra 500,000 kilometres a year. This budget gives extra funding to ensure that our front-line firefighters, paramedics and police officers are well equipped to keep Canberra safe.

There has been a rise in the fire and emergency service levy, but this is because the commonwealth government refuses to pay the true cost of delivering emergency services to their assets. We are proud of being the national capital but the significant presence of commonwealth government agencies, national institutions and international embassies means that we must be trained and equipped for a range of possibilities. It is time, I believe, that our Liberal colleagues in this place spoke to their federal counterparts to stop this short-changing in the ACT Emergency Services.

In Tuggeranong we see an investment through the new CIT campus. There is a \$6.5 million investment in a specialist centre for science and technology at Caroline Chisholm School. We will see a renew and refresh across Kambah, Erindale and Tuggeranong town centres. We will see more mowing, tree pruning and graffiti removal across our suburbs.

In closing, Mr Hanson drew people's attention to the *Canberra Times* this morning, so I thought I too would finish with some extracts from the *Canberra Times*. I refer to the editorial today and I will read some of it. It states:

... rising rates, and land taxes, are a crucial part of the government's strategy from which it must not shy ... Yet it's worth reminding ourselves why the then

Gallagher government began this process in 2012. Historically, the ACT was particularly dependent upon inefficient taxes, such as stamp duties, to fund its municipal and territory services. The problem with these taxes is their volatility: because they are based on occasional transactions (for example, buying a home), the government never knows how much income it will get. Revenue from these duties can rise and fall dramatically ...

When the government needs the money the most, it is not able to collect it. The editorial continues:

Nor are these kinds of taxes fair. They place the burden of funding public services on an arbitrary group of people (those buying a home) rather than on as wide a section of the community as possible.

This is why former federal Treasury chief Ken Henry, in his comprehensive review in 2010, urged state and territory governments to abandon duties, as well as other inefficient fees such as payroll tax, in favour of a simpler, broader, fairer tax ...

The editorial goes on:

The review noted stamp duties discouraged older people from moving into housing that better suited them.

The great pity is that, five years after the Henry review, the ACT is the only Australian jurisdiction that heeded its advice to any significant extent. But Canberrans are beginning to reap the benefits. The deep deficit reported in this week's budget would have been worse without the tax changes undertaken so far.

The editorial goes on to say:

The other great benefit of abolishing stamp duties in favour of land taxes is its gradual, downward effect on housing prices, opening up a market that has been out of reach of too many Canberra families.

It concludes by saying, "The ACT needs to stay on this course."

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (11.43): Madam Assistant Speaker, I will speak to the amendment and close the debate. Let us be Canberra and not Sydney. Let us be a livable city today and build a livable city for tomorrow—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Lawder): Order!

DR BOURKE: That is what I heard. That is what I heard coming from this side of the house this morning about how our members enjoy the livable features of our city and they enjoy what is most fantastic about where we live here. But what did I hear from the opposition? I heard Mr Hanson arguing against a tax reform which is fair and simple. I can understand the Canberra Liberals being against something that is fair, but simple? Simplicity must be the essence of their understanding of this. We are

going to build a transport infrastructure that we need now. We are not going to wait until our roads are overcrowded and choked bumper to bumper with Mr Coe's Audis. Ms Fitzharris so clearly enunciated the argument as to why we need capital metro, most particularly for her electorate in Gungahlin.

Mr Smyth clearly does not like frogs very much. He wants to deride a wonderful program like frogwatch, which is so well supported by our community. Maybe he just does not understand climate change and does not understand that frog populations are a key indicator of the impact of climate change. Frog populations are a key indicator of the—

Opposition members interjecting—

DR BOURKE: Madam Speaker, a point of order. I am having difficulty speaking as a result of the interruptions from the opposition.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you, Dr Bourke. I will ask members to come to order, although perhaps your objection may have more weight if you had not interjected when Mr Hanson was speaking. You would like to continue, Dr Bourke?

DR BOURKE: Thank you, Madam Assistant Speaker, with pleasure.

Mr Barr interjecting—

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Barr, Dr Bourke has just pointed out that he does not like interjections.

DR BOURKE: I will now turn to some people who have had some very positive things to say about this project. Firstly, Craig Wallace, president of People with Disability Australia, said, "This is a positive and welcome commitment to ongoing work for people with disabilities in the ACT budget." The YWCA of Canberra said, "YWCA Canberra welcomes the ACT government's investment to address violence against women." What did the Youth Coalition have to say? They said, "We welcome the significant investment in out of home care. It is good to see the strategy fully funded."

What did the Victims of Crime Commissioner say? He is "extremely pleased to welcome the domestic violence and restorative budget announcements". And Darlene Cox from the Consumers Health Forum said that the budget was "a very clear commitment to providing health services for Canberra".

And what about the AHA, the Australian Hotels Association ACT? They noted, "The strong support for tourism and hospitality growth in the ACT budget." There is more, Madam Assistant Speaker. UnionsACT secretary Alex Watt, representing over 33,000 working people, said:

Unions ACT applauds the focus by the Treasurer on boosting employment and investing in hospitals and social services.

In the current tough economic times you can really tell a lot about a government by how they treat their workers. The protection of jobs and income should be any government's overwhelming priority.

It is pleasing to see the ACT Labor Government continue to focus on working people and their communities.

This Budget is a good step towards undoing the damage that the Abbott Government has wrecked on Canberra.

Unions recognise that the budget deficit has largely been caused by the Mr Fluffy disaster and the federal government funding cuts. Keeping up investment in public service sector and social services jobs is crucial for working people in Canberra and should receive bipartisan support.

There is more. The Health Care Consumers Association said:

We see a continuation of the modest growth in health funding to advance the ACT Government's plan for our city. The Health budget hits \$1.5 billion, around a third of the total ACT Budget. The Government is very clear about their commitment to providing health services and they are moving in the right direction.

It continues to deliver on the services announced last year, including the continuation of specialists at the Canberra Hospital Emergency Department and increasing outpatient services for women and children and the Centenary Hospital.

Construction of the University of Canberra Public Hospital starts in 2016. This will be a welcome addition to the public hospital system in Canberra. A part of this project is the provision of car parking, often dismissed as a trivial issue.

The Health Care Consumers Association goes on to say:

We are very pleased to see that the arrangements have been finalised and made public for parking at the University of Canberra Public Hospital. During the recent consultation on the Reference Design the car parking was not finalised and raised more than a few eyebrows. It is now known that there will be 400—

Four hundred, Madam Assistant Speaker—

on-site car spaces.

The association also says:

Some of the good news of this budget is the additional funding for Canberra Hospital. There is a clear vision to have Calvary and Canberra Public Hospitals as part of a networked, integrated health system. There is \$5.6 million for the upgrade at the Calvary Public operating theatre and a further \$3.7 million for upgrading of medical imaging equipment.

They go on and on because this is a budget which supports Canberrans; it supports jobs; it supports health; it supports education; and it supports our suburbs. That is what Canberrans want.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Noes 8

Mr Coe
Mr Doszpot
Mrs Dunne
Mr Hanson

Ms Lawder
Mr Smyth
Mr Wall

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Dr Bourke
Ms Burch

Mr Corbell
Ms Fitzharris
Mr Gentleman
Mr Rattenbury

Question so resolved in the negative.

Motion agreed to.

Transport—infrastructure

MR COE (Ginninderra) (11.54): I happily move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes the need to invest in pedestrian, cycling, bus and road infrastructure across Canberra; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
 - (a) provide funding for the duplication of Gundaroo Drive from Mirrabai Drive to the Barton Highway;
 - (b) provide funding for a flyover at the Barton Highway roundabout;
 - (c) cancel its proposed light rail project; and
 - (d) redirect the \$51.8 million in funding for light rail to the ACTION bus network so it can provide better services and better infrastructure for all Canberrans.

Today I rise to call on the ACT government to finally adopt a sensible approach to transport here in the territory. On Monday the opposition announced a number of policies designed to improve transport here in the territory. This includes the addition of 50 new buses to our roads, including drivers, as well as the duplication of Gundaroo Drive from Mirrabai Drive all the way through to the Barton Highway, in addition to a flyover at the Barton Highway intersection with Gundaroo Drive and William Slim Drive. I am proud to announce the first part of our comprehensive

transport plan for Canberra. It is the first stage of a prudent and reasonable transport policy which will provide public transport services and quicker travel times for all Canberrans.

My motion today reflects the policies that we announced on Monday. The motion calls on the ACT government to cancel their hugely expensive capital metro light rail project and redirect this funding for the agency to provide better public transport services for all Canberrans. It also calls on the ACT government to duplicate Gundaroo Drive from Mirrabai Drive all the way to the Barton Highway as well as building the much-needed flyover.

Unfortunately, this is a motion that I do not think will succeed in the chamber due to the Greens' and Labor's form when it comes to transport decisions. The ACT Labor-Greens government is committed to a big spending light rail project at the expense of 97 or 98 per cent of Canberrans. They do not want to hear about cost-effective transport reform. They just want to talk about their tram, which provides less reach and less frequency than the current 200 series buses.

Sadly, the ACT government is one step closer to light rail with the budget handed down yesterday. The budget further solidifies the ACT government's commitment to light rail, with \$51.8 million to be spent on the Capital Metro Agency over the next four years. Further to this we have heard the government, including Ms Fitzharris this morning, talk about \$375 million in capital which I am at a loss to find in the budget papers. In fact, it is simply not in the budget papers. Nowhere in the outyears is there any mention of \$375 million for capital. So what the government is talking about remains a mystery to all.

As I have said many times before, capital metro is a poor investment for Canberra. Capital metro will cost at least \$783 million to build but will only carry about one per cent of Canberrans to work or school. Critically, most Gungahlin residents, who are the perceived beneficiaries of this project, will actually be worse off as a result of light rail. The capital metro full business case highlights that no buses will run from Gungahlin suburbs to the city as a result of light rail. This will mean the cancellation of numerous routes and many people will be left with worse transport links than before.

The motion I put forward today provides the backbone for a better and quicker public transport network for all Canberrans, including Gungahlin residents, whilst also beginning to upgrade the much-needed territory roads that need improvement.

This budget was an opportune time to see whether we can afford light rail. With a predicted deficit this financial year of \$597 million and \$408 million in the next financial year, headline figures show that we simply cannot afford light rail. Quite simply, we should not be purchasing an \$800 million tram when the ACT government is running up a billion dollars worth of deficits in the next two years alone.

Budget time also gives us an opportunity to see how viable light rail is going to be into the future. And as we all know, the ACT government will purchase their tram through an availability public-private partnership. This arrangement will see the ACT

government make an availability payment to the successful consortium every year for 20 years or, if you go by the last *CityNews* article, 20 to 25 years. Once again we have shifting goalposts when it comes to this project.

We have heard many people say that the government will not be paying for this upfront. However, again there is talk about a \$375 million capital payment, albeit one that is not included in the budget. Respected economists such as David Hughes believe this availability payment will be somewhere between \$80 million and \$100 million. The ACT government will reduce this figure with a capital contribution, according to some of their rhetoric. A further decrease to the availability payment will come if the government increases the term of the contract from 20 to 25 or even 30 years, or pays an additional lump sum. Regardless, if the government does extend the line to Russell, the cost will surely exceed \$1 billion—all this, and still less than the catchment zone of the route 200 bus.

If we assume an availability payment of \$75 million per year then how does this government propose to fund light rail going into the future? Whether it is \$75 million, \$80 million, \$100 million or even more, that is a huge amount of money that we and our children will be paying for many years to come. Of course, there is little, if any, saving to be found in the ACTION bus network. Buses will still be required for school services and for the vast majority of Canberra. As I highlighted earlier, buses will also be required to transport people to and from Gungahlin town centre, for people forced to transfer.

How do we support light rail? Do we increase our deficit to \$672 million? Do we take away bus services? Do we stall on building new, essential roads? Do our rates go up by 12, 15 or even 18 per cent? Do our parking rates increase by 10 or 15 per cent? Do we cut even more beds from the UC public hospital or do we reduce spending in other areas of health? Do we have overcrowded classrooms? Do we have poorly maintained sporting fields? Do we have poorly maintained roads, footpaths and cyclepaths? Or do we take away even more people from the police force?

This is a very real opportunity cost of a very real scenario, in the event that this government goes ahead with light rail in full. These are unfortunate decisions that a future ACT government will have to make because of decisions that are being made here and now by this government.

This year the ACT government will spend \$16 million on the Capital Metro Agency. Whilst this is a small sum compared to the total availability payment, it still acts as a significant burden on this year's budget, especially when you consider the opportunity cost of that \$16 million.

For starters, could not this money have been spent on actually completing the duplication of Ashley Drive rather than once again building half a road? Whilst I commend the government for getting on with part of this road duplication, I am confused about why the government did not go ahead with the full duplication to Johnson Drive. That involves taking the duplication to Johnson Drive an extra 500 metres or so from Ellerston Avenue.

Duplicating Ashley Drive to Johnson Drive was an election commitment of ACT Labor in 2012. The ACT government also publicly released drawings indicating duplication to Johnson Drive, as well as promoting the duplication to Johnson Drive at a meeting with the Tuggeranong Community Council.

To compound matters, in a typical way the duplication of Ashley Drive is running over budget and over time, despite part of the road not even being done. ACT Labor promised this road would be completed by the end of the 2015-16 financial year at a cost of \$19.6 million. Instead, the Chief Minister and the Minister for Roads and Parking announced only last week that the duplication will commence shortly, with the duplication not set to be completed until 2018, some two years after it was supposed to be completed, and at a cost of \$24.6 million, some \$5 million more than was promised.

To summarise, Tuggeranong residents will now pay more for a duplication that will not actually be a full duplication. It sounds familiar, and I am sure Mrs Dunne, my colleague, would see the resemblance of this to another road serving the northern suburbs, a road which I will come to very briefly. That is yet another parallel in Gungahlin from this government.

Gundaroo Drive is another vital road for Canberra, and especially those in Gungahlin. Again I am pleased to see that this road is at least on the government's radar. However, as revealed yesterday, the ACT government will only commit to duplicating Gundaroo Drive from Gungahlin Drive to Mitchell Drive. Once again, the ACT government is only building half the road.

I look forward to the reaction of residents and voters of Gungahlin when they are told, "Actually, we are not doing the duplication of Gundaroo Drive south of Gungahlin Drive through to the Barton Highway." I look forward to seeing the response of people in Palmerston, Crace, Nicholls and elsewhere in Gungahlin when they are told, "Actually, the government do not think it is a priority. We would rather go ahead with light rail."

People are paying more for their parking, more for their fees and charges, more for their rates, more in every form of taxation, it seems, to get half a road in Tuggeranong and not even a quarter of a road in Gungahlin. As my motion today states, I call on the ACT government to commit to a further full duplication of Gundaroo Drive from Mirrabai Drive all the way through to the Barton Highway. This duplication is required.

The ACT government acknowledge this, which is why they completed a detailed design drawing for the duplication in October 2013. However, 20 months later the ACT government cannot find the budget and simply do not prioritise it amongst everything else they are doing.

The final part of my motion calls on the ACT government to build a flyover of the Barton Highway intersection. This Barton Highway flyover is another vital piece of infrastructure that Canberrans will need now and going into the future. It is widely acknowledged that this flyover is a long-term solution, and that is why we should build it now. It is essential infrastructure.

More people will benefit from this flyover than will benefit from light rail. Far more people go through that intersection than are projected to go on light rail. Yet this government still does not prioritise it. Not only that, it would be at a fraction of the cost of light rail.

Everything comes back to light rail in the territory, because that is the government's number one priority. With the money committed by the ACT government to fund light rail over the last two years we could have completed the duplication of Ashley Drive and Gundaroo Drive. We could be in a position to begin work on the Barton Highway flyover and to begin to look at other roads across Canberra which need duplication or safety improvements in order to reduce travel times for the majority of Canberrans who use their car.

Let us not forget that the government plan to signalise the roundabout at the Barton Highway, Gundaroo Drive and William Slim Drive intersection. Their own analysis, their own report, says this will lead to 316-second delays in 2021. People are going to be waiting on the Barton Highway for five minutes to get through that intersection as a result of what they are proposing here today. They are going to be spending a fortune to force people to wait 316 seconds to cross that intersection. If you times that by the thousands of people that are going through that intersection, the cost to our economy is absolutely enormous.

Of course we should be in the position to provide better investment in the public transport network as well, and that is why the Canberra Liberals firmly believe that we should be investing wisely in and better utilising the resources within ACTION. We firmly believe that we need to provide more direct and more frequent services from the suburbs to the Canberra town centres, the city, Russell and the parliamentary triangle. Bus infrastructure can and should be upgraded too. We will look at ways to improve the real-time system, as well as purchasing new buses and employing more drivers to help move Canberrans in an efficient way with a catchment that will include all of Canberra, not just the two or three per cent that are serviced by light rail.

ACTION was once a leader in public transport in Australia. It can and should be improved. Its problems should not be thrown in the too-hard basket while we blindly hope that light rail will increase public transport usage in Canberra. ACTION services the vast majority of Canberrans, not just the three per cent of Canberrans who will be lucky enough to live within walking distance of a light rail tram stop. We need to invest in a service that invests in all of Canberra and all of Canberrans, not just a few.

I call on the Assembly today to support the opposition's reasonable approach to transport improvements and transport investment, which will serve all Canberrans.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (12.10): I welcome the opportunity to speak to the motion moved by Mr Coe and to highlight the ongoing investment this government has made in recent years in active travel, public transport and road infrastructure.

The government is committed to building an integrated transport network. This integrated approach will see the delivery of road infrastructure which includes the requirements for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, commercial traffic and other road users as the norm. This is important as we develop a more sustainable city into the future.

The budget tabled yesterday highlighted the government's funding commitments to improve active travel, with over \$23 million provided in 2015-16. Prioritising walking and cycling is key to Canberra's transport future, and the government's new active travel office will oversee implementation of new infrastructure and improvements to help people no matter how they get around.

While recognising the importance of expanding active travel and the links to public transport networks to manage the increased demands, maintenance of the existing networks is also important, with over \$3 million expended each year for this purpose. The new funding initiatives in yesterday's budget include \$250,000 to fund the design of an upgrade for new and existing shared paths and cycle infrastructure in and around the Woden town centre; \$600,000 to construct new shared walking and cycling paths through Bowen Park, connecting to the Kingston foreshore and making it easier to ride a loop around Lake Burley Griffin; \$1.5 million to facilitate the final design and construction of new road crossings on the busy Sullivans Creek cyclepath, with crossings to be constructed at Masson Street, Condamine Street and Goodwin Street; \$200,000 for the design of stage 1 of the Molonglo cycle highway from the city to Acacia Inlet, a parliamentary agreement item; \$150,000 towards design improvements to increase ease of cycling and walking to and from the Kingston group centre; and \$100,000 committed to Belconnen, west Belconnen and Tuggeranong feasibility studies to identify local walking and cycling path connections.

The budget measures announced yesterday are building better roads for Canberra, delivering more than \$90 million for new roads and spending on new roads infrastructure, in addition to the ongoing road sealing and maintenance program. The \$90 million invested in roads in this budget will also create jobs and stimulate the economy.

The \$24.6 million upgrade of Ashley Drive announced in yesterday's budget will cater to all modes of transport, with north and southbound on-road cycle lanes, additional footpaths to link with existing off-road paths and the duplication of existing underpasses near Statton Street and Bugden Avenue. This is another investment in our plan to build an integrated transport network focused on roads, public transport and active travel to deliver greater walking and cycling connections, all of which will connect people, transport hubs, town centres and other communities.

A six-week community consultation was held late last year and over 150 pieces of feedback were received. A number of themes from the feedback have been included in the upgrade, such as a pedestrian bridge over Monks Creek, connecting Monash with the facilities along Ashley Drive, and noise walls extended to the eastern side of Ashley Drive near Gowrie.

A number of other improvements will be investigated to complement the duplication. They include improvements to address the queuing from the Isabella Drive roundabout in the morning peak, investigation of use of ramp metering traffic signals, and new traffic signals where Ashley Drive intersects with Bugden Avenue, Statton Street and Clift Crescent to improve the efficiency and safety of these intersections.

The upgrades to Gundaroo Drive and the signalisation of the Barton Highway roundabout, totalling \$41.2 million, will provide significant relief regarding the traffic congestion which occurs along Gundaroo Drive. This will be of particular importance to residents of Crace who are trying to exit the suburb through Abena Avenue, as this issue stems from the congestion at the Barton Highway roundabout.

I did hear that the Liberals were not happy with these significant investments, but the difference between us and the Liberals is that we base our funding on the building and designing of roads based on engineering studies, and on modelling of how to reduce congestion on our roads. In other words, unlike the Liberals, our announcements are based on facts. The fact is that undertaking stage 2 of the Gundaroo Drive duplication now, as proposed by the Canberra Liberals, is counterproductive until you fix the bottleneck at the Barton Highway roundabout. And that is exactly what we are going to do.

The signalisation of the Barton Highway roundabout is a real commitment to reduce congestion in Gungahlin. It is realistic, as opposed to the Canberra Liberals' announcement to provide a flyover at a cost of \$35 million, which falls \$20 million short of any proper funding commitment.

But that is not all. The ACT government is investing in the renewal of several roads around Gungahlin. A 1.6-kilometre section of Gungahlin Drive from north of Sandford Street to the Barton Highway, which will be widened to three lanes on the southbound section, and an additional signalised left-turn lane, will be provided from Well Station Drive onto Gungahlin Drive. The Horse Park Drive and Anthony Rolfe Avenue intersection will be upgraded to improve safety and traffic flow and provide better access to nearby suburbs, including Harrison and Gungahlin, as well as the new suburb of Throsby.

Minor works will be undertaken at the intersection of Gundaroo Drive, Candlebark Close and Nudurr Drive to improve safety. The roundabout will be modified to provide exclusive turning lanes. This will remove the opportunity for vehicles to overtake and speed through the roundabout, reducing the risk of crashes. A similar modification has been successfully undertaken at the roundabout at Gundaroo Drive and Abena Avenue.

Public transport is an integral part of any sustainable and equitable city-wide transport network. The fervent and unreasonable opposition by the Canberra Liberals to the introduction of light rail as a mode of high-speed trunk public transport shows their lack of true commitment to rapid and accessible public transport.

I will acknowledge that, while Mr Coe and the Canberra Liberals have moved on from an Audi-filled Gungahlin, they still lack the vision to produce an effective plan for public transport in the territory. The announcement of the Liberals' transport plan shows us this. The Liberals' half-baked transport plan is just that. You cannot speed up bus services down Northbourne Avenue without affecting existing traffic. Just because you call a bus a super bus does not give it supernatural powers. It is unable to fly over Northbourne Avenue.

Do they propose to put tarmac down the centre of Northbourne? I know the Canberra community would be opposed to this and I can pretty safely assume that the National Capital Authority would be opposed too. If this is not their plan, do they plan to dedicate one lane of Northbourne Avenue to buses only, exacerbating the already congested situation which occurs along the corridor each morning peak? I do not think the Canberra community would appreciate that measure either.

The Canberra Liberals also cannot keep attempting to spend light rail money on projects which will not achieve the same results. A combination of light rail and bus services is the only way to continue to provide Canberra with a rapid, sustainable public transport network as part of an integrated transport network.

The calls from the Canberra Liberals to cancel the capital metro project show that they are behind the times. The majority of Canberrans support this innovative project and can see the way forward for our growing city. Today in the *Canberra Times* Peter Newman talks about light rail in cities. He says:

A number of articles in the past year have questioned the economics of Canberra's light rail ...

The same scepticism was directed at Perth's rail building in the past and in most light rail projects around the world. Perth's Southern Rail Line was parodied as a complete waste of money as no-one would use it. The line, opened in late 2007, now carries the equivalent of 10 lanes of traffic and its biggest problem is that at peak times you can't get on at many stations.

Perth is a low density, highly car-dependent city, like Canberra. Yet the rail system has dramatically increased patronage from 7 million passengers a year in 1992 to 70 million in 2014 due to new lines going through low density corridors. This was beyond the expectations of everyone but is increasingly seen in other car-dependent cities across the world.

At the same time we have seen land values rise dramatically near Perth stations thus attracting denser development and achieving a more economically efficient city. The city centre has become a thriving business, residential and entertainment centre, no longer called Dullsville. This could not have happened without rail bringing 100,000 pedestrians a day through the central station, who do not need damaging and expensive parking.

As you can see, Mr Assistant Speaker, there are many that support light rail in congested cities.

To sum up, this government is committed to providing an integrated transport network for Canberra and is doing so effectively. The government is investing in active travel, public transport and our road network to get the best results from each section of the network.

Capital metro and the subsequent light rail investment that will happen in the future will provide an innovative and exceptional addition to public transport and an integrated transport network across Canberra. It is for this reason that I will be voting against this motion, which shows Mr Coe and the Canberra Liberals' lack of vision for transport in this city.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Justice, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Transport Reform) (12.21): I always welcome the opportunity to talk about transport policy and the future of transport in our city.

I am pleased that the Canberra Liberals are showing an interest in what appears to be a more expansive transport policy than their traditional focus. The motion actually refers to cycling, buses and pedestrians, as well as the road infrastructure that has traditionally dominated their thinking. It proposes putting \$50 million into buses. I will come back to that because that money is taken from other forms of public transport, namely light rail, but at least it is a recognition of the importance of public transport. As far as I can see, that is largely a first, particularly from Mr Coe. I will not labour the point by going into the vast catalogue of negative and dismissive arguments that the Liberal Party have made against public transport for all these years. Certainly, they are on the public record and I think they are well understood.

At that very basic level of recognising sustainable transport, this motion is a positive thing. Perhaps there is a begrudging acceptance after all these years that public transport needs a greater focus if Canberra is to be a successful and livable city in the future. Unfortunately, that is really the extent of my support for this motion, and I cannot and will not be supporting the actual detail today.

At its core, of course, is the request to cancel the light rail project. Here I have a fundamental disagreement, as I have stated in this place before, because I know that light rail will bring fantastic benefits to our city and our citizens. This cannot be denied; the benefits are clinically and conservatively documented in the capital metro business case.

Beyond this, though, light rail is a smart, strategic project for the future of our city. As Mr Gentleman noted, Professor Peter Newman made some excellent points about this in a comment piece in today's *Canberra Times*. Professor Newman is a highly respected expert in planning and sustainability. He argues that light rail paves the way for the development of a knowledge economy city—exactly what Canberra needs, given our lack of industry and our opportunities in areas like research and technology. We are primed to be a knowledge economy city, and Professor Newman has spelled out exactly how light rail would contribute to that change in and expansion of Canberra.

Professor Newman points out that rebuilding and renewing the city around rail is now globally accepted as a major competitive advantage for city economies. He points out several good examples, especially Perth, and notes:

Cars and buses are now only supplementary to the knowledge economy centres that are so critical for all cities.

Professor Newman says:

This is why light rail is being chosen as the preferred new infrastructure investment in US cities. Between 1993 and 2013 the public transport system in US cities grew by 23 per cent and car use actually declined. Heavy rail grew 68 per cent, light rail 190 per cent and buses declined 3 per cent. Planners and politicians now build light rail to improve their urban walkability as the top six most walkable cities in the US have 38 per cent higher GDP per capita. Denver is building light rail to retain their young, educated workforce.

Professor Newman concludes by making a point that I strongly agree with. He says:

Canberra's light rail is part of its strategic future to be a nationally significant knowledge economy city where the best of people-intensive urbanism can happen along one corridor, extending out at later dates, whilst maintaining its generally suburban character elsewhere. This is good economic policy and good urban policy.

I would be very interested to hear the Liberal Party's view of these arguments. Perhaps they do not agree that light rail will help Canberra to grow a knowledge economy and put us in a favourable economic position for the future. I would be particularly interested to hear Mr Smyth's views on that. Many times he has commented on the need to diversify this city's economy; here we are seeking to do it and his party is trenchantly opposing it. But perhaps this vision of a knowledge economy is not one that they share. Perhaps they are not interested in this idea of a knowledge economy, of walkability, density or urban sustainability. It would be good to hear the alternative vision.

If that is not the vision, what is the alternative vision? Is it endless urban sprawl? Is it more roads? Is it putting people further and further out, where their transport costs will be even higher? Let us have a talk about the cost of living and what it means to situate somebody even further from the key employment nodes.

I strongly support investment in buses. They will be a key part of our transport future, linking into light rail corridors and ensuring that Canberrans get the advantages that come from each of the different modes of transport. However, I do not support cancelling the capital metro project and putting the money into buses instead.

By shunning light rail, the Liberal Party will throw away all of the advantages it brings to the city. These are the advantages I have mentioned many times already—things such as transport corridor development, renewable energy opportunities and high quality public transport vehicles that are separated from traffic.

Buses simply cannot provide these advantages in the same way that light rail can. Look at the Northbourne Avenue corridor, for example. Traffic on Northbourne Avenue is currently exceeding capacity and it is one of the most congested roads in the ACT. Modelling shows that, by 2031, a trip in peak congestion between Gungahlin and the city is expected to take 50 minutes or more. This compares to a journey time of around 25 minutes for light rail. There is great value in the reliability of light rail, which will avoid traffic by travelling on its own central median alignment. Buses cannot achieve this. The best transport future for Canberra is one that makes use of both buses and light rail, as both have a role in our future.

The same traffic issues are likely to impact on the Liberals' proposal for super express buses in peak hours. We already run Xpresso services in peak hours, of course. I will be interested to see the advantages that come from adding the superlative "super" to the title. The point, though, is that whether a bus is called "express" or "super express", it will still sit in the peak hour traffic.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MR RATTENBURY: This is the point. I hear Mr Coe interjecting. When he comes back to speak, he might explain to us the difference between a "super express" and an "express" and how it is going to get around the existing peak hour traffic. Buses can only avoid traffic with new infrastructure such as priority lanes.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MR RATTENBURY: Mr Coe will get his chance in a minute rather than shouting over the top of me. They can only avoid traffic with new infrastructure such as priority lanes, but I note that these were not funded in the Liberal Party plan announced this week.

Light rail benefits from separation. It will have its own right of way; it will have priority at lights; it will be consistent and reliable. I hear our opposition colleagues often complain about the on-time running statistics of the ACTION bus network. They are improving. Guess what the biggest factor is in on-time running? It is traffic. Buses caught in traffic, traffic accidents, traffic jams—all of this leads to inconsistent travel times.

There are several other problems the Liberal Party will want to fix for their new bus policy. Bus depots are currently full, so they will need to build new depot storage for the increased bus fleet. A new bus depot, depending on where you build it, will cost between \$25 million and \$40 million. We need to think about where that sits in the costings of their transport plan.

On the other hand, light rail will free up considerable bus capacity which could move elsewhere in the network. Effectively, this provides new bus services without buying new buses, depots or drivers.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MR RATTENBURY: Once again, Mr Coe cannot wait for his opportunity. He needs to shout across the chamber when someone starts questioning the flimsy details of his policy.

We should remember that the \$50 million of capital metro funding that the Liberal Party would transfer to buses and drivers is only a few years of funding. Bus network funding needs to be recurrent; otherwise it will just be cut in a couple of years. I would like the Liberal Party to commit to continuing the extra \$50 million for network services beyond the life of the Capital Metro Agency and then explain how that is different from the availability payment that is proposed.

What I invite Mr Coe to do, and I will be happy to give him the leave, is to table the full costings and details of his proposal. He has talked about leasing the buses rather than purchasing them, because presumably he wants to keep the up-front capital cost off the budget books in some way. Let us see costing details for the benefits of leasing versus purchasing and look at the long-term availability on that. Or, if he is leasing them, is it because it is actually only the short term and he intends to get rid of them after a couple of years? I have talked on this issue of where they will be stored. I would be quite happy to give leave for Mr Coe to table a full set of costings in this place today to back up the flimsy press release that was issued on Monday without any sort of detail. Compare that to the fact that the government has put the full business case for capital metro on the table.

I notice that there is still no policy from the Liberal Party on dealing more broadly with congestion issues in places like Northbourne Avenue, and there is no corridor-based rapid transit mode. If they refuse to accept light rail, will the Liberal Party's alternative be to commit to bus rapid transit? I look forward to seeing that policy, if it is provided. It is, however, an inferior solution to light rail. Light rail brings considerably more benefits than bus rapid transit and it avoids several problems. The Liberal Party will also need to explain several details of this policy, such as where the buses will run, whether they will pave the entire median strip of Northbourne Avenue for the buses to travel on and, if so, what will happen to the trees on the median strip.

Perhaps the most pertinent point of all this is that the money that the Liberal Party would apparently take from capital metro and put into other initiatives will not actually exist. They will be spending that money, possibly hundreds of millions of dollars, on absolutely nothing as they pay penalties for the light rail contract that they promise to tear up. This is an attitude that is universally condemned. It is condemned by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, by companies in the business of delivering infrastructure and even by the federal Liberal government. Our local Liberals are prepared to spend all of that money on nothing. Perhaps they could cost this as an election policy: "If elected, the Canberra Liberals will throw a whole lot of money, your tax dollars, down the drain in exchange for nothing. Vote 1 Canberra Liberals." I think that is going to be a winner of a policy!

The more I hear our Liberal Party colleagues talk about transport and their vision for Canberra, the more I realise that light rail is anathema to that vision. Light rail will prepare the city for the future and will make Canberra more livable and vibrant, more

resilient to challenges, less car dominated, and more environmentally friendly. As I have pointed out before, the report last year from the Economist Intelligence Unit highlighted that eight of the top 10 most livable cities in the world have light rail networks. If we want to stay livable, we need to adapt to growth and change or our livability will trickle away.

Light rail represents change. Our city will change with light rail in a way that allows us to adapt to future challenges, like our growing population. Fundamentally, I think it might be this idea of change that makes the Liberal Party most indignant. Their vision seems to be a static one: keep Canberra exactly as it is and continue with car dominance, road building, sprawl and congestion regardless of the fact that this will undoubtedly diminish Canberrans' quality of life over time.

The reality is that it is foolish and myopic to try and stay in a static bubble. We either change and adapt to ensure that we remain socially, economically and environmentally successful or the world will change around us and Canberra will suffer.

Debate interrupted in accordance with standing order 74 and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour.

Sitting suspended from 12.33 to 2.30 pm.

Answer to question on notice Question No 412

MR CORBELL: Madam Speaker, I seek your indulgence to correct an answer that I provided to a question on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Corbell.

MR CORBELL: It has been brought to my attention that an answer provided to Mr Hanson to question on notice 412 contains three errors in relation to bed numbers for the years 2007-08 and 2009-10. The ACT Health Directorate have advised me that ACT Health's 2013-14 annual report and the December 2014 quarterly report bed numbers are correct and match the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's national publications. The figures which are incorrect are those which were in the answer to the question on notice. These figures relate to bed numbers for the 2009-10 financial year, where the correct number is 907, not 912; 2008-09, where the correct number is 875, not 876; and 2007-08, where the correct number is 851, not 830. I apologise for this error on the part of my directorate and I will be providing an amended response to the question on notice as quickly as possible.

Questions without notice

MADAM SPEAKER: I notice I did not get the mail about the dress code for ladies in the chamber today, but we will fix that on future occasions. It is a note of levity; it is not a criticism. Ms Lawder and Ms Fitzharris are wearing the same thing. I call the Leader of the Opposition on a question without notice.

Budget—ACT Policing

MR HANSON: My question is to the minister for police. Minister, in the budget you announced an additional \$3 million for police over the forward estimates. However, the government stripped \$15 million out of the police budget in 2013. Overall, this is a \$12 million cut to police. Minister, will you restore the full \$15 million that has been stripped from the police budget?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Hanson for his question. He is referring to the general savings measures that have been applied to ACT Policing over the last number of years. They have found those general savings measures. In my ongoing discussions with the Chief Police Officer he is confident that those savings measures will be met in the years remaining in that agreement. Just at lunchtime I signed the purchase agreement with the Chief Police Officer and Commissioner Andrew Colvin. He again was asked that question.

Mr Hanson: On a point of order, I ask the minister to be directly relevant. The question is whether the minister will restore the funding. Yes or no will suffice.

MADAM SPEAKER: You might think that yes or no suffices, Mr Hanson, but the standing orders do not require the minister to be that concise. But she does have to be directly relevant.

MS BURCH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was going on to say that today we signed the purchase agreement for 2015-16. That purchase agreement will see a purchase of 932 FTEs. Last year we purchased 932 FTEs.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, what will be the impact of the net \$12 million reduction in police funding?

MS BURCH: As I have said here, and as the Chief Police Officer has said, yes he is meeting the general savings measures and he is meeting them in a smart way by looking at how different models of response can continue to meet the community's needs.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, how many jobs have been lost or are still to be lost as a result of these cuts?

MS BURCH: I refer to part of my first answer, where I said that the purchase agreement for this year is maintaining the same level of full-time equivalents as the last purchase agreement. But if you look at the annual reports, you will see we have usually operated above what is in the purchase agreements. The Chief Police Officer is very clear on his responsibility to meet the general savings measures. He has met them to date and he is confident he will meet them in the future.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, why did you announce this \$12 million net cut as a funding increase for ACT Policing?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Wall for his question. The general saving measures have been in place for a number of years. Recently we have gone through the exercise of looking at what are the enabling costs of ACT Policing. We have come to the end of that. That will provide an extra \$365,000 each year, if I am correct, in addition to the base of ACT Policing.

Roads—Ashley Drive

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Roads and Parking. Minister, the ACT government last week announced a \$24.6 million duplication of Ashley Drive from Erindale Drive to Ellerston Avenue. This differs from an ACT Labor election commitment in 2012 which promised a duplication costing \$19.6 million running from Erindale Drive through to Johnson Drive. The 2012 election commitment of ACT Labor also promised substantial funding of \$9.2 million for this duplication in the 2014-15 financial year. Minister, why did the ACT government decide to end the duplication of Ashley Drive at Ellerston Avenue, and how much extra would it cost to go through to Johnson Drive?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Lawder for her interest in road duplication in Tuggeranong. The Ashley Drive duplication is a very important piece of work. It is, of course, stage 2 of the Ashley Drive duplication; stage 1 has already been run out, with treatment works around the Erindale centre. The cost of the proposed work from Erindale through to Ellerston Avenue is \$24.6 million. That will cover duplication of the road, which includes a dual carriageway, bridge work, pedestrian work and some pedestrian access that was not originally in the scope of work design for the duplication of Ashley Drive. So there is extra scope in the work, and it will be delivered as we have promised.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what is the reason for the \$5 million blowout in the project cost, despite the duplication being shortened?

MR GENTLEMAN: It is not a blowout. It is a projection of the cost for stage 2. There is an increased scope of works within that stage 2 and it is appropriate that you allocate the funding for that increased scope of works. It came up in consultation with the community on what they wanted to see within the scope of works for stage 2 of Ashley Drive.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how much extra would it have cost to continue from Ellerston Avenue to Johnson Drive?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do not have the details of that projected cost with me at the moment. I can seek some advice on it, but I can advise that the capacity for the road from Ellerston Avenue to Johnson Drive has not yet been reached. There is still quite a bit of capacity in the current road structure to allow traffic to travel quite freely in the mornings and afternoons from the intersection—

Mr Wall interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Wall!

MR GENTLEMAN: of Johnson Drive through to Ellerston Avenue.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how can you not know how much it would have cost for the extra distance from Ellerston to Johnson?

MR GENTLEMAN: As I said in my earlier answer, I do not have the detail in front of me. It is not that we do not know what the cost will be; it is that I do not have the detail in front of me. I will seek that detail from the directorate and come back to Mr Smyth.

Budget—rates

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, in the 2011-12 financial year the ACT government received \$209 million in rates revenue. In 2015-16 the budget projects that the government will receive \$420 million in rates revenue. Why has the revenue from rates already doubled?

MR BARR: The shadow treasurer would be aware that we abolished commercial land tax and rolled a significant component of that revenue into the rates base. So that accounts for a significant proportion of the increase. There are obviously thousands more rateable properties in the territory as our rates base has grown between 2012 and now. Rates have increased by three factors: inflation or the wage price index component; a revenue replacement component associated with the abolition of insurance tax; and a revenue replacement component associated with cutting stamp duties.

We are getting rid of the worst taxes that the territory government levies. We have been cutting stamp duty every year; we have been cutting insurance taxes every year. We have been cutting these taxes every year. The fact is that, as the city economy continues to grow and there are more properties being transacted, a lower tax rate has induced an increase in transactions in some sectors of the market. Surely, even the shadow treasurer can understand that revenues grow in each revenue line each year, unless you are dramatically reducing tax rates. We have done so in relation to insurance taxes.

The path of reduction on stamp duty is more gradual, but I was pleased to be able to report to the community that for a property valued at \$500,000 the stamp duty is now nearly \$6,000 less than it was four years ago. That is a significant cut. It is a significant reduction in what is a barrier to purchasing a home, and it is a significant improvement in affordability.

It was very interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition endorse the government's tax reforms to date on ABC radio this morning when he ruled out reversing them. So having campaigned against them, the proposition was put to the Leader of the Opposition, "Would you increase stamp duty"—

Mr Hanson: I am not quite sure that is what I said.

MR BARR: Well, if you want to increase stamp duty, if that is your policy, and if that is the policy of the shadow treasurer, let us hear it from the Liberal Party. Do you support putting insurance taxes back up? Do you support putting stamp duty back up? That is the policy question that the Leader of the Opposition needs to answer.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, how much have general rates gone up for the average Canberra household in the last four years?

MR BARR: In the first year of tax reform, lower value ACT properties received a rates reduction. Increases have been in the order of 10 per cent and are now reducing—in this year's budget nine per cent and in future years lower. Particularly as insurance tax is abolished, future rate increases will comprise the WPI component and a component to replace stamp duty. Once insurance tax is abolished on 1 July next year, rate increases will be commensurately smaller. It is worth noting that over the history of self-government there have been rate increases every year.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Treasurer, how much has been cut in stamp duty each year in the forward estimates?

MR BARR: The tables on stamp duty reductions are published in the budget, but we have seen the top rate come down from about 7.25 to 5.17 per cent, as I understand it. Some of the other rates have come down—4.5 to four. The bottom rate, I think, is now 1.48 per cent and moving down. So we have cut each of the marginal tax rates. We have also provided significant concessions to those over 60, pensioners and first home buyers, who now only pay \$20 in stamp duty if they are eligible under those various schemes.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: If rates go up at 10 per cent a year, as they do in many suburbs, how long does it take for those rates to triple?

MR BARR: Rates are not going up at 10 per cent a year.

Arts—venues

MR WALL: My question is to the Chief Minister, regarding the Westside pop-up village. This project has been plagued with problems, including delays in construction and suppliers and subcontractors not being paid on time. Malcolm Snow, the head of the NCA, recently described the project as “a damp squib”. Why has the Westside pop-up village become a damp squib?

MR BARR: It has not.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Chief Minister, have all suppliers and subcontractors from the Westside pop-up village been paid what they were owed, and what was the reason for the bills that were not paid on time?

MR BARR: That is a matter for Stromlo Stomping Ground, who have the licence to operate the facility. But my understanding—and this is through the media—is that all subcontractors have been paid bar one, and there is a contract dispute over quality of work in relation to that one outstanding matter.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Chief Minister, what contribution has the delay in opening the pop-up village made to the failure of this project?

MR BARR: None whatsoever. The project is not a failure. It is a success. It has just been written up in the *Australian* newspaper very positively—I certainly draw members’ attention to that very good write-up—and, of course, very pleasingly in the food and wine section of today’s *Canberra Times*.

I understand that there are some critics. There are some people for whom this concept of doing something a little different in this city is—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Coe!

MR BARR: It was an article on street food. It was an article on the growth of the street food vendor industry in the city. The central point here is that this pop-up village is innovative. Small business is supporting it—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR BARR: The business community is supporting it. It is a good project for Canberra. Those opposite are always quick to criticise, but when particular events—

Dr Bourke: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Sorry; there is a point of order, Mr Barr. Stop the clock, please.

Dr Bourke: Madam Speaker, both Mr Coe and Mr Hanson are persistently interrupting Mr Barr while he is speaking, which is disorderly. I draw that to your attention.

MADAM SPEAKER: It has not failed to pass my attention. Mr Barr, on the question.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, in concluding my answer, this is a positive project for Canberra—one that has been well received. More than 25,000 people have attended events at Westside park. Thousands more will attend the many, many events that will be held in the weeks, months and years ahead. It is great to see some innovation, small businesses achieving great success. Surely we should get behind innovative projects for this city, particularly ones that are engaging younger Canberrans.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Chief Minister, as one of the over-50s I pose the question: are the problems with the pop-up village a forerunner of what is to come with the city to the lake project?

MR BARR: I am very pleased at the level of community engagement with the Westside park, noting its target demographic is younger than Mr Doszpot and, indeed, younger than AM radio listeners, generally speaking, and perhaps even the audience of the print edition of the *Canberra Times*. It is okay. In this city we are big enough to have some events and activities that have a demographic target that is somewhat younger than members of this place. That is all right. That is a good thing for Canberra.

Our single largest demographic is people aged between 20 and 24. To have some events and activities, places and spaces in this city that engage that demographic in particular is a good thing for Canberra. It is disappointing that the conservatives in this place once again want to talk down anything innovative. Anything that might be good for young people but supported by young people is talked down by the conservatives on the other side.

Economy—business development strategy

MS FITZHARRIS: My question is to the Minister for Economic Development. Minister, how will the government's renewed business development strategy build on the practical outcomes achieved in the first phase to grow our economy, diversify our private sector and create new jobs?

MR BARR: Last week I unveiled the government's 2015 business development strategy titled "Confident and Business Ready: Building on Our Strengths". I launched this renewed strategy in conjunction with the official opening of the new FEI Australia office in Civic, a business that is a prime example of a world-class technology start-up that has emerged in Canberra.

FEI Australia is an excellent example of how we are diversifying and strengthening our local economy. The company is a spin-off from research at the ANU and the University of New South Wales. It was sold last year to FEI International, returning substantial funding to the ANU and other investors. The Australian operations of FEI have remained in Canberra because of the strong relationship it has with the ANU.

A strong and growing economy is essential for us to meet the needs of the Canberra community now and into the future. Our economy will grow and we will create new jobs by building on our strengths in higher education, our service exports and our technological innovation. We must not go back to too heavy a reliance on the federal government ever again, given how casually federal Liberal governments in particular rip thousands of jobs from the Canberra economy on a whim.

That is why the ACT government, through our renewed business development strategy, are continuing to put in place practical policies that create the right business environment and utilise our city's comparative strengths to accelerate innovation and investment.

We have very good reasons to be confident. The ACT government acted decisively in our recent budget to counter the Abbott government's cuts. I am pleased that we are, as an economy and as a community, turning the corner. Today's national accounts now show that the ACT is the strongest performing economy in Australia, growing at 1.4 per cent in the last quarter.

Through this period of savage commonwealth cuts, the ACT government has worked hard to keep unemployment low, to main a AAA stable credit rating and to attract major new international and national level investment in our economy—companies like IKEA, Qantas and Costco.

The 13 priorities and 42 actions that we will deliver through this renewed strategy are supported by \$11.75 million of funding in this year's budget, and there is significant support for these important steps. This is reflected in the comments of our collaborative stakeholders in the development of this policy. Glenn Keys, the Chair of the Canberra Business Chamber, said:

This strategy will continue to support the growth and diversification of our economy with good initiatives and pragmatic policies.

Dr Sarah Pearson, the CEO of the CBR Innovation Network, said:

This strategy provides a clear pathway to growth and economic diversification based on building an innovative and entrepreneurial culture.

Professor Ian Young, the Vice-Chancellor of the ANU, said:

I welcome the strategy because it recognises the important role of Canberra's higher education and research sector as a driver of economic growth and diversification.

Our renewed business development strategy provides us with a strong platform to continue the growth and diversification of Canberra's economy, in partnership with the business community and the higher education sector in particular.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, how will the renewed business development strategy continue to generate jobs in innovation, research and education?

MR BARR: As part of the first phase of the business development strategy, we established the CBR Innovation Network, in partnership with the research sector, the Canberra business community and the territory government.

The network has established premises in Civic. It has co-located the Entry 29 co-working space and the Griffin accelerator. It is establishing a state-of-the-art high growth business incubator. This network is leading the nation in driving innovation, thanks in large part to its founding members, the ANU, the University of Canberra, NICTA, the CSIRO and the University of New South Wales Canberra. I thank them for their ongoing commitment to this initiative.

Through our renewed business development strategy, we are working in partnership with the innovation network to boost our city's entrepreneurial capability and capacity. We are creating pathways to support start-ups and innovative companies to grow and to access national and international markets and supply chains.

We will also use this opportunity to promote Canberra as Australia's higher education and research capital and work with internationally renowned higher education and research institutions to develop key new capability areas. This includes developments in areas such as the space industry, agriculture and environmental science, sports technology, health innovation, cybersecurity and ICT, and e-government.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how does assisting IKEA and Costco to come to Canberra help innovative businesses prosper in Canberra?

MR BARR: They bring new businesses practices and models to this city, models that are globally successful. They are major anchors and they draw in consumers, not just from this city but from the broader region. These major companies have demonstrated in many cities around the world their capacity not only to innovate within local marketplaces but to bring new, innovative business practices to areas that they locate in. They are significant magnets for surrounding regions, and there is no doubt that in seeking to attract new investment the location of these major multinational companies in this city is important.

We welcome Microsoft's engagement in Canberra. We welcome companies like Lockheed Martin. We welcome a large number of multinationals who have a significant presence in this city. We welcome their contribution and the fact that they also support local employment. We also want to ensure that Canberra consumers are able to access the widest range of consumer goods. The idea that is perpetrated by those opposite that Canberrans should be denied access to the products of these major firms is fundamentally anti-competitive. I am surprised that the party of business is opposed to competition.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, can you tell us more about how the renewed business development strategy will support business investment in future growth areas?

MR BARR: I thank Dr Bourke for the supplementary. Our highest priority here is to make sure that our economy grows and that it creates new jobs and business opportunities. Through our renewed business development strategy, we will continue to support economic activities that offer major growth opportunities for the Canberra economy.

Visitors to our city contribute \$1.6 billion each year to our economy. We have a plan to grow that to \$2.5 billion over the balance of this decade. We will continue to support major events and tourism investment. We will also continue to support advocacy, in partnership with the Canberra International Airport, for direct international flights into our city.

Another growth area is higher education. International and interstate students studying in the ACT already contribute nearly \$900 million per year to our economy and contribute to the creation of 6,100 full-time equivalent jobs. Through study Canberra we will continue to work with our higher education institutions to promote Canberra as an education destination of choice.

Our city also has considerable strengths in the renewable energy industry, spanning education and training, research, financing and operations and asset management. Through our renewable energy industry development strategy, we will accelerate the development of the renewable energy industry in the territory for the benefit of participating businesses, institutions and the broader community.

Schools—Belconnen

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to Minister Burch, in her current role as Minister for Education and Training. Minister, the *Canberra Times* on Monday, 1 June advised you would be announcing a \$17.6 million facelift for Belconnen High School. Apart from the \$8.2 million less in funding, how is this announcement different from the one made by former Chief Minister Katy Gallagher in October 2012, when announcing a \$28 million facelift for Belconnen High School as part of the 2012 election campaign—the same project referenced in the 2013-14 budget and again in the 2014-15 budget?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Doszpot for his question. On Monday I was very pleased to join the principal of Belconnen High School and make the announcement that will see that commitment being honoured. The price is different; make no mistake about that. It is different because we have been working with the school community over the last 18 months to finalise their needs. The principal has said to me that this delivers everything that the school community needs.

What it will see is a complete refurb across all the learning areas. What it will deliver is a new outdoor recreational and learning space. That will be delivered by the end of this calendar year. What it will see is a connecting building. If you look from the road, on the left side across that courtyard you will see a building for admin and a visitors' area being built on the right of the building. It will completely change the feel and look of the school. It will take a school which is 40 years old, or thereabouts, and turn it into a modern, contemporary learning place fit for 600 students of the next generation and beyond.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, why has the project been cut by a reported \$8.2 million?

MS BURCH: I would have thought those opposite would have applauded us for working with the community and delivering a project for less. They complain if it costs more; they complain if it costs less. The school community, through the principal, has said it provides everything the school community desires. It will refurb the entire school. It will build new areas for admin and visitors. It will create an outdoor learning area and recreational space. It is of great benefit and a great lift to the Belconnen community.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, has the scope of works proposed for Belconnen High School been narrowed or reduced from the original 2012 election commitment?

MS BURCH: They come with their set questions. They stand up and read their question and they do not listen to the answer provided. The commitment was to refurbish the school's learning areas. This will deliver that. The commitment was to provide new buildings for visitors and for admin. This will deliver that.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, how can people associated with Belconnen High School be certain that this is not just another election promise re-announced, as it has been since 2012?

MS BURCH: Because the school community have been involved, and they will be involved over the latter part of this calendar year, in the detailed design. They will get a say in the look and feel of the colours and the amenity within this refurbished school. By the end of this calendar year they will have a new recreation area. We have

demolished the unused building that was at the back of the block. That area is now absolutely clear, and it is in that space that they will have a recreation area and learning area.

The buttress that is really just poured cement over an incline will turn into tiered seating. There will be recreation space. The principal spoke about exercise bikes that will be put in place where you can plug in your smart phone. You can do exercise on a bike and charge your smart phone. That is what we are providing as one of the improved amenities at Belconnen high.

Budget—roads

MR COE: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Roads and Parking. I make reference to a comment by former Labor senator Kate Lundy that it was a “disappointing” budget for Canberra motorists, with increases in parking charges and motor vehicle registrations. An official from the NRMA notes that the government will raise \$216 million from motorists this financial year alone. Why has the government increased parking fees and motor vehicle registration by so much in this year’s budget?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Coe for his question and his eloquent discussion about our new member for the NRMA in the ACT. I will not go to the comments and the answer on registration, because it is not in my portfolio, but I can advise that, in regard to costs for parking, it is part of an integrated transport network plan that the government has instituted. That means that we will be able to look at where parking can become available for commuters across the territory, ensure that parking prices are appropriate for that area and, of course, encourage active travel across the city.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, will the increases in parking and/or other fees related to motor vehicles reduce demand for the relevant service?

MR GENTLEMAN: Once again I will talk to my directorate’s work on parking. That includes active transport as well. As I said, we will be able to allocate particular parking areas. We will be able to encourage people to park in different areas across the city. It will encourage some churn in city areas so that short-term parking in the ACT will be taken up by those visitors wanting to go to the local shopping centres and take opportunity there. Long-term parking will be at the fringes of the city. That will encourage people to park in those areas, with the associated costs.

I can say that the business industry across the ACT have encouraged this. They are saying that churn for the ACT is appropriate and it will encourage people to come and shop in the local centres.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Do you agree with the former senator’s comments that this is a “disappointing” budget?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do not think that the budget is, in my portfolio, in that sense. However, I think this budget is fantastic for the ACT. It sees some fantastic infrastructure spend across the city. It will encourage jobs. It is a great budget for the territory.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, is the government trying to force lower income Canberrans out of their cars through constant increases in parking fees and motor vehicle registration?

MR GENTLEMAN: Certainly not.

Budget—social inclusion

DR BOURKE: My question is to the minister for social inclusion and equality. Minister, how does the 2015-16 budget support the inclusion of Canberrans and progress the government's social inclusion agenda?

MADAM SPEAKER: I call the minister for social inclusion, Minister Berry.

MS BERRY: I am the minister assisting, but I will take the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: I was just following Dr Bourke's lead.

MS BERRY: That is okay; it was just to make it clear. I thank Dr Bourke for asking the question. Social inclusion lies at the heart of this year's budget. It is an honour to be the minister assisting the Chief Minister. In the first year we are offering a specific budget overview of the work we do to build a more inclusive and a more equal city.

We know that all Canberrans need support sometimes. This is why this budget continues to invest in core services, such as education and health care, to make sure all Canberrans have access to the high quality services which form the foundations of a healthy and happy life in our community.

But for those Canberrans who sometimes need a helping hand, we have looked carefully at where we can target initiatives to make sure that they are included and better supported. These initiatives include the \$159 million committed to build better quality homes for Canberra's public housing tenants; \$107 million in recurrent funding for disability and therapy services; \$40 million to better support kids in care through the step up for our kids program; \$1.2 million to continue better services initiatives to make sure that Canberrans are getting the right support, at the right time, for as long as they need it; \$2.5 million for the Bendora through-care unit to help young people leaving detention to reconnect with their communities; and \$3 million for homelessness services, matching the commonwealth funding under the national partnership.

These investments have been the focus of the social inclusion statement, but there are many more programs throughout our budget and across government that seek to make sure that everybody can be part of the life of this city. In particular, I am proud to be part of a government that is investing \$495,000 to continue the successful flexible bus service.

I have lived in Belconnen all my life. I live there because it is where I feel connected—to people, to places and to the local landscape. This government believes that wherever you live—in the Lanyon Valley, Dickson or west Belco, like me—illness, age, disability or disadvantage should not force you to move from your community. Our investment in public transport, and especially flexible transport options, means that all Canberrans can stay connected and access the services that they need.

The flexible bus service reflects what our social inclusion agenda is about. It is about valuing the communities that people build for themselves, it is about giving people the support they need to get involved and it is about making sure Canberrans have access to great services when they need them, no matter where they live.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what resources are being delivered to support the inclusion of women and children experiencing domestic violence?

MS BERRY: Recent domestic violence-related homicides in the ACT have drawn attention to the brutal reality of domestic violence. This budget focuses on working with our whole community to tackle this issue, from prevention through crisis responses to post-violence support. I want to emphasise the importance of a \$250,000 increase in funding to our excellent domestic and sexual violence crisis services. These services build women up and support them while they go through an often long and difficult process of leaving violence.

Expanding the capacity of the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the Canberra Men's Centre will assist women to build their confidence and engage with their community. This comes on top of the \$3.3 million already spent to fund specialist domestic and sexual violence services. This funding will assist with the spike in service demand we can expect as we work with the federal government to deliver a \$30 million education and prevention campaign.

We are also building the foundations of a safer community by delivering \$615,000 in funding for ACT public schools to provide kids with the skills to build respectful relationships, which builds on the \$300,000 already committed for the domestic violence data framework, women's safety grants and funding to assist the Domestic Violence Prevention Council. We are funding these ongoing and new initiatives to help our community become the kind of place where no-one is excluded or isolated by violence.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, how does the extension of better services funding support social inclusion for Canberrans who are doing it tough?

MS BERRY: Thank you for your question, Ms Fitzharris. The extension of funding for the human services gateway and strengthening families initiatives offers an opportunity to continue two programs that are already delivering results for the community.

The experience of families in the strengthening families pilot shows us what the better services program means on the ground. Every family in this program has complex needs. Sixty-nine per cent of families experience mental illness, 46 per cent have disabilities and 38 per cent are involved with care and protection services. Strengthening families addresses this by assigning a worker who helps the family identify where in their lives they think they need the support to be included and enjoy life in our community.

For one family, getting services right for their son who had a significant disability meant that they had the time and the energy to give to their other two children the support that they needed. It is a marker of success that as this family have moved through the strengthening families program they have focused on creating connections and building a community network that will work alongside their formal support to ensure they are better included and connected in our community.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, what is the government doing to improve its support for public housing tenants and to make it easier for them to be part of their community?

MS BERRY: As I mentioned, we are making a once-in-a-generation commitment to renew our public housing stock. In this budget we are committing \$159 million to build new, modern homes. We are building new homes across Canberra's suburbs and town centres because we want grandparents to have room for the grandkids to stay, because we want kids to be able to stay at their local school, and because we want people with disabilities to be able to live in houses that meet their needs.

But we are also doing it because the foundation of inclusion is in making sure that we get the basics right. We want to provide tenants with a house that is affordable to heat, that enjoys natural sunlight, has modern noise insulation and is modifiable to meet people's differing abilities. We want to provide houses where, on a crisp morning like this morning, you can turn the heater on, get the house warm, flick on the kettle and enjoy a quiet cuppa in a sunny spot in the house.

The reality is that much of our high density housing stock could never be modified or modernised to guarantee people these simple comforts. So we are committed to building more modern homes than can do so.

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

Transport—infrastructure

Debate resumed.

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (3.16): I speak in opposition to the member's motion. Yesterday the ACT Labor government delivered a budget that invests in transport infrastructure across our territory. For those who walk or ride, the budget has delivered. For those who catch the bus or drive, this budget has delivered. For those who believe in investing in the diverse future of an integrated transport network, this budget has delivered.

I will talk a little about our focus for transport in this budget. Our strong focus is on the future of our territory and that of an integrated transport network. This is something to be proud of. The \$375 million capital contribution to light rail shows that this government is serious about our transport future. Light rail will not only attract more Canberrans to public transport, but it will also free up buses to provide connections to other areas of the territory. Light rail will ease congestion and deliver almost \$1 billion in benefits to our community.

For those who walk and cycle, the budget is investing an additional \$1.5 million to improve our shared walking and cycling paths, including \$600,000 to construct new paths through Bowen park, connecting to the Kingston foreshore and improving the loop ride around Lake Burley Griffin. Belconnen and Tuggeranong will also share in \$300,000 for feasibility studies into improved walking and cycling path connections for locals visiting their town centres. For those who catch the bus, an additional \$500,000 will be invested in continuing services for older Canberrans and Canberrans with a disability. This money will also invest in continuing the popular flexible bus service. For those who drive, we have ensured the quality of our roads are invested in and supported.

For residents in Tuggeranong, \$24.6 million will be invested in the duplication of Ashley Drive. For residents in Gungahlin, \$31.2 million will be allocated to duplicate stage 1 of Gundaroo Drive, an investment I have personally advocated for in this chamber and in the community, and I am proud to see it funded in this year's budget. Stage 1 of Gundaroo Drive, along with the improvements we have already funded for the Barton Highway-William Slim Drive-Gundaroo Drive roundabout will vastly improve the commute along this road and improve congestion. This is part of \$333 million in this year's budget that is dedicated to roads and transport services.

There is an additional \$18 million to start the duplication work on Horse Park Drive, and another \$14 million for the Gungahlin town centre upgrades. This is inclusive of the \$90 million in new roads projects in this year's budget. This, as part of the \$333 million for roads and transport networks in this budget for Canberra, includes the maintenance and upkeep of 3,300 kilometres of roads in the territory. We are investing \$2.5 million for safer roads. We maintain 960 bridges and 800 kilometres of on and off-road cycle lanes. The significant investment in roads and transport infrastructure will vastly improve the flow of traffic and general congestion around the city, especially in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin.

I cannot support this motion because not only is it short-sighted but it shows little understanding about the real transport issues this city faces and what cities around the world are doing. Let us consider what the Canberra Liberals have proposed so far to invest in transport infrastructure across the territory. After 2½ years in opposition, on Monday—timing that is very notable, being the day before the ACT territory budget—they released stage 1 of a comprehensive transport plan. Stage 1 mentions one road alone in Gungahlin and “super buses”. Let’s talk about the super buses. So far the Canberra Liberals’ plan for transport in this city is super buses and Mr Coe’s Audis. With absolutely no proof of how this super bus system will function in our ever growing city and how it might increase congestion, the Canberra Liberals have not thought this through. Again, this does not provide any solution to congestion. The fact that they have neglected to factor in the costs of additional bus depots is indicative of this sloppy work. They are simply deceiving the people of Gungahlin about the suggestions for a flyover at the Barton Highway roundabout.

Let me talk a little about Gundaroo Drive. In the four months since I have been in this chamber, I have been out talking to the local community. At the first Gungahlin Community Council I attended as an MLA, they had just presented the results of the Gungahlin Community Council survey. Some 1,400 local residents had completed the survey the GCC circulated throughout the community, and many of them noted Gundaroo Drive as their priority road infrastructure. Many of them noted they would like to see work done on this key arterial route.

Subsequent to discussions at Gungahlin Community Council, I spoke to the community around starting a petition. In my first month in the Assembly I started a petition and spoke with the minister for roads about duplicating Gundaroo Drive. Two and a half years into opposition, the Canberra Liberals have barely mentioned Gundaroo Drive. It was not part of their election commitments in 2012 but suddenly, on the Monday before the ACT budget, they decide to start talking about Gundaroo Drive. I will leave that to the community to decide about the Canberra Liberals’ real intentions about Gundaroo Drive. This week the ACT government has committed to funding the duplication of Gundaroo Drive—\$32 million to start stage 1, the most critical priority on this road between Mirrabai Drive and Gungahlin Drive. That work will start this year.

What about Horse Park Drive? No mention in the Canberra Liberals’ announcement on Monday about Horse Park Drive. In this budget delivered on Tuesday the Treasurer outlined this government’s plans to start duplicating the full length of Horse Park Drive from Majura Parkway to Mulligans Flat Road at Bonner and Amaroo. The work to design that duplication will get underway, and an additional \$17 million for upgrades to intersections and the construction of duplication on one section of Horse Park Drive will get underway.

I had a look at the petition which I presented to Minister Gentleman, who took that in to the cabinet budget deliberations on behalf of the Gungahlin community. I checked on Monday as to whether Mr Coe, who has known about my petition for many months and has seen it presented in an online format and also in hard copy at a couple of Gungahlin Community Council meetings, had signed the petition. To my surprise,

given the commitment on Monday by the Liberals to duplicate Gundaroo Drive, he had not taken the time to sign the petition. That is disappointing. Mr Coe's proposals are not only out of touch but I do not believe they represent what the Gungahlin community wants. The Gungahlin community wants to see duplication of Gundaroo and Horse Park drives get underway as soon as possible, and that is what this week's budget delivers.

If the Canberra Liberals want to see a proper response to real community consultation, they should look no further than our budget and our commitments to roads and an integrated transport network. This budget has delivered for all Canberrans and it ensures that we will continue our strong investment in the territory's transport future.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (3.24), in reply: I will wrap up debate on this very important motion, which is all about finally getting a common-sense approach to the delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the territory. We have waited a long time in the ACT for a government that actually responds to our growing city and to the real demands of people living here. Unfortunately, it seems we are going to have to wait until October next year for a government that genuinely prioritises Canberra families who live in suburbs right across the ACT in their efforts to get to and from wherever they need to go.

The motion the opposition have proudly put on the table for discussion today is about several very important road projects and public transport initiatives. The Canberra Liberals firmly believe the intersection with the Barton Highway, William Slim and Gundaroo drives warrants a flyover. In fact, that is what the government's own report says. Despite what Ms Fitzharris might say, that she was the one who initiated this whole issue about Gundaroo Drive, the government a couple of years ago did a feasibility study into Gundaroo Drive. That feasibility study discusses the roundabout and clearly says that, at best, signalising the roundabout is a five to 10-year solution. What is required is a flyover. The Canberra Liberals are about long-term infrastructure for this city, and that is why we are proudly saying we would construct a flyover at that intersection, why we would treat the people of Gungahlin and northern Belconnen with some respect and give them the infrastructure they deserve.

The government's solution—which they stuffed up, incidentally—is a solution they said would be for a \$10 million roundabout upgrade. The tenders came in, and they were all near \$10 million. The government said, "Actually, it probably should be \$5 million, so we'll put it out for tender again." They put the companies that tendered to considerable expense in having to resubmit. That tender is now out apparently, and we are going to spend millions of dollars as a community on a project which is only a five or 10-year solution at best and which their own report says will lead to 316-second delays on the Barton Highway. That is the government's solution. That is the option they went for.

There they are in cabinet and they get a proposal for upgrading the roundabout. There is option A and option B. Option A says you can signalise the roundabout. It will only be good for five or 10 years, will cost nearly \$10 million and it will lead to 316-second delays. Option B says you can do the long term infrastructure that you are going to have to do anyway in five or 10 years time. You would think a forward-

thinking government would have gone to option B; but no, they did not. They went for option A in the full knowledge that it is going to lead to 316-second delays for people at that intersection. It is absolutely outrageous. If this government think they are on to a winner by announcing a signalised roundabout at that intersection, they are gravely mistaken.

Mr Rattenbury criticised the opposition by talking about how we just support greenfields, in effect, paving the forest and building more roads. This is a minister who is part of a government that is supporting the construction of Moncrieff, Jacka, Taylor, Throsby, Kenny, Lawson and Denman Prospect. If Mr Rattenbury was consistent with his own language how could he possibly sign off on those new estates? We have no problem with those estates, but how does Mr Rattenbury criticise the opposition for greenfield development when he is part of a government that is signing off on all those new estates? How does he do it?

You can rest assured, Madam Speaker, capital metro is not going out to Throsby or Taylor or Kenny or Denman Prospect. How does Mr Rattenbury sit in this place, criticise the opposition for greenfield development and yet support all those initiatives? It is outrageous. If he does not feel somewhat hypocritical or guilty I would be very surprised. It is a big call to criticise the opposition about greenfield development when he is rubberstamping greenfield development right across the ACT.

Mr Gentleman brags about these duplications, yet he does not even understand that the Ashley Drive duplication is stopping at Ellerston, and he does not understand the price differential if they went the extra 300 metres to Johnson Drive. He claims there is not enough demand to go to Johnson Drive. You would think that would have been the number one question he asked when he got this briefing from Roads ACT and they said, "We're going to do an Ashley Drive duplication but we've decided we're not going to do the final 300 metres. We'll do the couple of kilometres in the lead-up, but we won't do the final 300 metres." Did Mr Gentleman just nod his head and say, "Yep, fair call"? Surely he asked the question, "Why aren't you going the extra 300 metres? Isn't it going to be cheaper? Aren't we going to get economies of scale by pushing the bulldozers an extra 300 metres and doing the extra bitumen?" You would think that would make sense. You would think there would be some critical thinking from this minister, or you would hope that at least.

You would hope that somebody in cabinet—perhaps not Mr Rattenbury because that might take away some herbage which might be deemed greenfield development—would have asked the question, "Why don't we go the extra 300 metres? Why don't we just carry it through to Johnson Drive?" Mr Gentleman has not even thought about it, it seems. When we asked the question today, he did not even know what the hindrance was and what the additional price would be if they were to extend the Ashley Drive duplication all the way to Johnson Drive.

Ms Fitzharris spoke about the government's commitment to Gundaroo Drive and also Horse Park Drive. Something else I am sure she is aware of, because the Gungahlin Community Council clearly said it in their survey, was the preference to do all the roadworks at once and get them over and done with. "Don't do it in stages. Do it all at once. Get it over and done with. We've suffered long enough." What has this

government done? Not even half a road with Gundaroo Drive—about a quarter of a road. Again, the government's own report says there are significant economies of scale by doing it all in one stage rather than doing it in two or three stages or however many stages there are going to be. The government actually has not said how many stages there will be for this project. Is the next one just going to go up to Palmerston and the next one up to Crace and the final one from Abena through to the Barton Highway roundabout? Who knows?

There are questions about the Horse Park Drive project. They call it the duplication of Horse Park Drive. For somebody travelling on the Majura Parkway, when they hit Horse Park Drive I do not think they are going to see a duplicated road anytime soon. There is no funding for that bottleneck. There is no funding for when Majura Parkway comes straight into Horse Park Drive. With this money, are we going to see funding all the way through? We are seeing lots of design work and lots of overpromising and raising expectations. That is what this government does—they raise expectations but never meet them.

The Canberra Liberals are proud to say we will genuinely invest in the infrastructure and services that will serve all Canberrans. That is what our commitment today is all about—a flyover at Gundaroo Drive and a full duplication of Gundaroo Drive from Mirrabai through to the Barton Highway. They are the sorts of commitments we firmly believe Canberrans need. The extra 50 buses we proudly say will be super express, non-stop services from Canberra suburbs to destinations will be services we hope will be well patronised and ones we firmly believe are what Canberrans need.

I urge those opposite to prioritise these projects, to prioritise these services and to truly invest in infrastructure and services that will serve all Canberrans and not just the two or three per cent who happen to live within walking distance to a tram stop.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

Ayes 7

Noes 8

Mr Coe
Mr Doszpot
Mrs Dunne
Mr Hanson

Ms Lawder
Mr Smyth
Mr Wall

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Dr Bourke
Ms Burch

Mr Corbell
Ms Fitzharris
Mr Gentleman
Mr Rattenbury

Question so resolved in the negative.

Housing—public

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.39): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the ACT Government's pursuit of light rail down the Northbourne corridor;
 - (b) the ACT Government's public housing program includes selling all public housing properties along the Northbourne Avenue corridor, which includes the Dickson Flats and connected vacant land, Dickson Garden Flats, Owen Flats, Northbourne Flats in Braddon and Northbourne Flats in Turner;
 - (c) the ACT Government's plans to relocate public housing tenants from the Northbourne Avenue corridor to public housing properties that are not yet built;
 - (d) the ACT Government's timeframe for relocation has not yet been disclosed to residents, who are living with uncertainty;
 - (e) that under this Government, these public housing properties have been allowed to seriously deteriorate to the point where they are almost uninhabitable;
 - (f) the resettlement of public housing tenants may dislocate them from their community and important services;
 - (g) ACT residents who are public housing tenants deserve safe and secure housing, with access to transport, education and training opportunities, employment and support services; and
 - (h) public housing tenants who are relocated may experience transport disadvantage and social exclusion; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to guarantee that no public housing tenants who wish to remain close to the city or along the Northbourne corridor will be forcibly resettled to make way for light rail.

I am pleased to move the motion today on public housing along the Northbourne Avenue light rail corridor. We all know that this government is recklessly charging down the path towards light rail. The government is following its ideological pursuit without any regard for the impacts this is having and will have on those people most affected—those who live in public housing properties along Northbourne Avenue.

Canberra has a long and proud history of public housing. Many of our contemporaries have lived in public housing and still do. For some people, public housing is a temporary part of their journey along the housing continuum. For others, it is longer term. Either way, public housing is there to support people who need assistance in the housing market. It is this government's responsibility to ensure that the public housing system meets that need.

Is this government managing our public housing system so that it meets that need? I do not think so. We all know the government's light rail project along Northbourne Avenue means there is a public housing renewal program underway where the government will sell off all the public housing properties along Northbourne Avenue,

except for two parts. This includes Dickson flats and connected vacant land, Northbourne flats in Turner, Owen flats, Dickson garden flats and Northbourne flats. On 18 February this year in this place Minister Berry said:

Canberra has always had a unique approach to public housing. This has become known as the salt and peppering of housing to distribute social housing throughout our suburbs and regions. It is a good thing and it will continue.

By relocating all public housing tenants out of Northbourne Avenue corridor, how does this continue the salt and pepper approach to public housing? Are the government really committed to continuing the salt and pepper approach to public housing? Will they commit to ensuring that new public housing properties will be built along the Northbourne Avenue corridor?

Quite simply, this government seems to want the public housing tenants who live along Northbourne Avenue out of sight and out of mind. The government wants them off the Northbourne Avenue corridor to fund its light rail project using proceeds from the sale of the land. The government's planned redevelopment of the Northbourne Avenue corridor does not seem to fit with its so-called support for salt and peppering. In this place on 6 May, Ms Fitzharris said:

I think most Canberrans would agree that we can measure the strength and success of our community by how we provide opportunities for our most vulnerable members ... And one of the ways we can support the most vulnerable people in our community is through providing good quality housing.

I agree with Ms Fitzharris. It is all very well to make nice, warm, fuzzy statements like that, but does the reality match up? Do the plans and actions of the government match up with what they say in this place? According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australians in the bottom income quintile are much more likely to experience transport difficulties than those in the top income quintile. Transport disadvantage is experienced by specific subgroups in the population—for example, families with young children, people with a disability and Indigenous Australians.

Transport disadvantage is also common in specific geographical locations, such as outer urban areas as well as rural and remote Australia. In outer urban areas, transport disadvantage is the result of a range of intersecting factors, including poor public transport infrastructure, a higher proportion of low income households and the need to travel further distances in order to get to places of employment, services and activities. Young mothers and sole parents are particularly vulnerable to transport disadvantage. For these groups, transport difficulties can play a key role in social exclusion.

Public transport can be difficult for people with disability. Factors such as accessibility, communication about changes or cancelled services and malfunctioning equipment can all contribute to transport disadvantage. Yet the government is making the Northbourne corridor—currently well-served by buses, which is often remarked upon by the public housing tenants along that corridor, and in the future potentially having light rail—available to those in the higher quintiles rather than those in the lower quintiles.

I ask you, Mr Assistant Speaker, how relocating public housing tenants away from Northbourne Avenue to suburbs where it is difficult to get public transport within a reasonable walking distance of households will make it easy for those people to access opportunities, including education, training and employment. Relocating public housing tenants off the Northbourne Avenue corridor may dislocate them from their support networks and put them at risk of social exclusion.

We have previously spoken in this place about Chisholm, because there are some plans to relocate some public housing tenants there. However, as we have said previously, the government's own transport for Canberra 2012-31 plan states:

For some areas on the fringes of suburbs—

such as Chisholm—

the circuitous street layout and hilly topography ... make it difficult to provide public transport within a reasonable walking distance of ... households, and make the car an easier travel option.

It goes on to say that housing near transport corridors such as Northbourne Avenue has access to high frequency public transport.

Forced car ownership is a real risk to those public housing tenants relocated to the outer suburbs where it is difficult to provide public transport within a reasonable walking distance of households. Forced car ownership is defined as an “involuntary choice low income families have when owning and operating cars because no other transport options are available but they need the accessibility which a car brings”.

Of course, they will then experience further disadvantage because of this government's plan to charge more for parking, more for rego and more for drivers licences. So we see additional burdens on those who may be forced to buy a car as a result of being relocated to suburbs where public transport is not easily accessible. There is no need to take my word on this: just ask former Labor senator for the ACT Kate Lundy.

Just this morning Ms Berry referred to working with residents of public housing to understand their views. I have just this week received large amounts of feedback from residents of the Owen flats. They want to know how the government is going to relocate them before June 2016. Does the government already have suitable public housing stock available for these tenants?

Feedback I have received from Owen flats residents is that they are living with uncertainty. They are unsettled and unsure of the timing of their relocation. They ask why a tenant relocation committee or group was not established at the beginning of this government's public housing renewal program. This would have been a good way to talk with them, rather than at them. Unfortunately, the talking at people in housing units along Northbourne Avenue appears to continue.

The concerns of Owen flats residents range from rubbish accumulating at these flats as tenants move out to mail redirection, to insurance and, of course, to the time frames. It is my understanding that tenants are concerned about being out of pocket from the move, just as any of us would be concerned about how much it would cost us to move. Out-of-pocket expenses on gas and electricity reconnections, on mail redirection and on telephone connections will be a burden on their already low incomes. In addition, they might have to take one or more days off work in order to move, and what will that mean?

The feedback I have received from Owen flats residents includes that they are experiencing not only financial stress but also psychological stress as a result of the relocation. They feel that beggars can't be choosers, as though they do not have the right to voice their concerns and they must accept whatever is handed to them. ACT residents who are public housing tenants deserve safe and secure housing with access to transport, education and training opportunities, employment and support services.

As you know, I love talking about light rail because it is so deeply unpopular in my electorate of Brindabella, where people know it will never take place. My concern about the light rail in this instance today is about more than opposing light rail per se; it is about the disregard for public housing tenants along that corridor. Under this government, these public housing properties have been allowed to deteriorate to the point where they are almost uninhabitable. The residents themselves say that they cannot live there any longer because they are in such a state.

But why and how has this government allowed public housing along Northbourne Avenue to deteriorate to that state? Was it just a ploy to legitimise demolishing the properties to make way for light rail? This decline of what was once decent and affordable public housing to run-down dens of squalor, if not iniquity, is one of the more distressing failures of welfare policy in the territory. Those are not my words; that is from the *Canberra Times* of 9 May this year. It goes on to say that the government is now moving to sell off run-down but still adequate public housing complexes with what seems like indecent haste.

In 2012, Mr Barr issued phase 3 of the government's affordable housing action plan. Phase 3 introduced a set of 14 new actions aimed at improving housing affordability in the ACT. In the words of RiotACT at the time:

One would be hard pressed to describe phases one and two of the Affordable Housing Action Plan as a raging success.

It continued:

But undeterred Andrew Barr announced Phase III and promised Labor will be "continuing to deliver on our commitment for more affordable housing" which—

RiotACT went on to say:

... as strings of weasel words go is deserving of posterity.

I wonder whether the public housing renewal program will be as ineffective as phase 3 of the government's affordable housing action plan appears to be. One of the actions identified in the affordable housing action plan, one of the actions that has been largely unactioned, was to:

Investigate a requirement for the delivery of public and community housing stock in large infill and greenfield residential developments.

We could look at that and ask why this Labor government is not demanding the delivery of public and community housing in the Northbourne corridor. That requirement is out on the scrapheap with the rest of the affordable housing action plan, because we all know housing is not getting any more affordable in Canberra.

It is clear that this government is charging after the ideological pursuit of light rail down this corridor at any expense. And, sadly, in this case, it is at the expense of public housing tenants, who will be pushed out to suburbs further and further out, whether they like it or not. For those people who need ready access to services, to education and training, to employment and to transport, this may not be the best option for them. Those who wish to stay on this corridor should be supported to do so. I commend this motion to the Assembly.

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) (3.52): I move:

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

"(1) notes:

- (a) the Government's strong commitment to deliver Stage 1 of the Capital Metro project from the Canberra CBD to Gungahlin;
- (b) that the Government has entered into an asset recycling initiative with the Federal Government, and that the proceeds from this initiative will be directed to the Capital Metro project;
- (c) that the Government has commenced a major public housing renewal program, including 1288 older public housing properties across the ACT which are included in the asset recycling initiative signed with the Federal Government;
- (d) that the public housing properties included in the public housing renewal program were built in the early days of Canberra, do not meet the needs of today's tenants and are expensive for people to live in due to their poor energy efficiency and high maintenance costs;
- (e) that the 2015-2016 ACT Budget includes an investment of more than \$159 million for replacement housing for 352 public housing properties as part of this program;

- (f) that the ACT Government is working closely with tenants of these properties to identify their housing needs and preferences so that tenants can be relocated into properties that meet their individual needs, and that this work will continue for the duration of the housing renewal program;
 - (g) that the Government is responding to the needs and preferences of tenants along the proposed Northbourne Avenue redevelopment sites, by providing accommodation within the 800 metre corridor (including Flemington Road), in the inner north and the city, where possible; and
 - (h) that the Government will be maintaining the “salt and pepper” approach to public housing in existing suburbs, and expanding this approach to public housing in new and developing areas; and
- (2) calls on the Government to continue its public housing renewal program so that public housing tenants are provided with modern housing that meets their individual needs.”.

I take the opportunity to speak again today about the government’s strong commitment to public housing and I am pleased to see that Ms Lawder is taking such an active interest in the government’s housing renewal program. Unfortunately, Ms Lawder’s motion did not fully reflect the benefits of the housing renewal program. The amendment that I have moved seeks to properly reflect the work that the government is doing in housing renewal and the positive benefits that will be delivered for the people who live in these new homes and for the broader community.

I am very honoured to be the Minister for Housing at the time when the government is delivering a once in a generation renewal of Canberra’s public housing. I am also honoured to be a minister in this government which has a strong commitment to urban renewal, economic development and public transport.

Capital metro and public housing renewal are key elements of the government’s policy in these areas and these projects will deliver significant benefits to the Canberra community. This has been recognised by the federal Liberal government who have agreed to include the public housing renewal program in the asset recycling initiative, with the benefits being directed to the capital metro project.

As I have said previously, I have always been proud of Canberra’s public housing renewal story, and I think we all are. Since the early public servants moved in decades ago, public housing has provided homes for countless thousands of people and today we have more than 22,000 people living in public housing in the ACT. Over more recent times, we have targeted public housing progressively to those who are most in need, to the point now where we have the most highly targeted system in Australia.

We need to remember that 95 per cent of our tenants are from low income households. Nearly 40 per cent of public housing dwellings are home to people living with a disability. Almost two-thirds of our main tenants are women and just over two-thirds of single older tenants are women.

Public housing has been a fundamental part of the growth of Canberra and has helped to shape the city of today. It has played a vital role in providing accommodation to people on low incomes and supporting those who have the greatest needs.

But some of our housing is old and has become expensive to maintain. The dwellings were also built to the energy efficiency and disability standards of a different time and simply do not meet the needs of today's public housing tenants. These older properties are expensive to heat in winter and to cool in the summer months and are not adaptable for people with mobility issues. This was why in July 2014 the government announced that it was embarking on the largest renewal of the ACT's public housing in the history of self-government.

The public housing renewal program is a major government commitment to improve the public housing stock and ensure that it continues to be distributed across Canberra, is prioritised to those who are in the highest need and supports the inclusion of public housing tenants as important members of our suburbs and communities. Initially, we are replacing 1,288 properties, including the flats along the Northbourne Avenue corridor, the Bega, Allawah and Currong flats in the city, and older complexes in Red Hill, Woden and Griffith.

We are building homes which better suit the needs of our tenants, reduce the costs of maintenance, are energy efficient and improve safety and accessibility. All properties will incorporate energy and water efficient features, appliances and technology. The aim is to achieve at least gold standard livable design or C-class building standards for people who are living with a disability.

The program will overhaul our ageing public housing stock with new, fit-for-purpose housing distributed across the ACT through the well-understood salt and pepper approach. Most new developments will range between 14 and 25 dwellings. This will be vital in ensuring we do not return to the days of high density, multi-unit properties. The program will enable an increased public housing presence in growth areas such as Gungahlin, west Belconnen and Molonglo, ensuring the continuation of the salt and pepper approach throughout Canberra as our city grows further.

As we work to incorporate public housing into new suburbs and redevelop housing in existing suburbs we are working with the broader community to achieve the best outcomes in the design of replacement stock. The government is committed to delivering appropriate housing that fits in with individual locations and is indistinguishable from the surrounding housing stock.

The integration of public housing throughout Canberra's suburbs is not just about the numbers of stock and where it is located. It is also about the benefits of having mixed communities, people living side by side, people going to the same doctors, sending their kids to the same schools. As I have mentioned before, and we all know this from our own experiences, children do not think about housing tenure when they are playing together in school.

Housing ACT will also retain a significant proportion of inner city properties, ensuring public housing tenants who currently live close to the city centre are able to

continue to do so if that is their preference. Tenants being relocated as part of the renewal program who want to remain close to the city centre will be offered appropriate accommodation in sites within the 800-metre Northbourne Avenue corridor, in the inner north and the city centre and other locations, considering their preferences and needs.

This renewal program certainly has its challenges but these challenges are far exceeded by the possibilities for the ACT community and the tenants of these new homes. In anyone's calculations, relocating more than a thousand tenants is a big job. We all know that moving house can be daunting. The government is committed to working with each and every affected tenant to make sure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

I am disappointed that members opposite are not joining us in this task and are putting the best interests of the tenants before their own political goals. Instead of showing leadership and assisting the tenants through a smooth transition to a better home, the Canberra Liberals are more interested in spreading fear and division across the public housing community and the new neighbourhoods that the tenants will be moving into.

On the other hand, the government, though Housing ACT, are talking with our tenants about their individual housing needs and where they would like to live. In fact, a number of the tenants who lived on Northbourne Avenue in Owen flats have already moved into new homes. One of the tenants at Owen flats indicated that they would like to live in Belconnen. When a home was offered in Belconnen, that tenant actually went, "You know what? This isn't where I really want to live. I actually want to live closer to the city." So we were able to accommodate that person's needs and they have been able to move into a new home that meets their needs and that they preferred to move to.

It is incorrect to say that the government are not listening to public housing tenants. We are absolutely doing that and will continue to do that through this process. We are doing this work with a number of community organisations. We know full well what a house move can mean. It can mean new neighbours, new shops, new bus routes, new medical services and new schools, for a start. For many, the move will be a chance to get closer to the amenities that they need or to be closer to family, friends and social activities.

The government are working through the different individual preferences of all our tenants and working together with them on how, when and where they want to move and about how we will be able to assist them when they do. These tenants will be relocated in areas of their choice and we are mindful of their particular needs. Many may move into new housing to be constructed whilst others may choose to relocate closer to existing family supports elsewhere in Canberra, similar to the situation that I have just described.

The needs and preferences of tenants will inform this process and all tenants will be closely consulted throughout the process now and into the future. This process is already underway, and last year's relocation of tenants at the Dickson flats saw a number of people request and receive moves to different parts of Canberra.

The public housing renewal task force and Housing ACT have employed a range of professional specialist staff who will be working with each individual tenant to relocate them successfully. These staff will be making individual appointments with each tenant and undertaking an individual, holistic assessment to identify their housing and social needs. This assessment includes their property needs, the location of choice request, medical and support needs of the individual, family, religious and other needs of the tenant.

Staff have commenced visiting individual tenants and discussing their needs with them. A number of tenants who were on the transfer list have already been helped with appropriate moves that have met their needs. Housing ACT is working closely with tenants and community organisations to ensure that every tenant who requires additional assistance is supported to move into their new home. Financial and other support will be provided to each individual tenant who relocates as part of the housing renewal program.

Where tenants are transferred as part of the housing renewal program, Housing ACT will pay all costs associated with the tenant relocation, including removalist, utility connection fees and postal redirection. The linking into new communities task force, LINCT, will oversee the relocation of tenants. LINCT comprises executives from the ACT government and community partners which include Northside Community Service, the YWCA, ACT Shelter, ACT Council of Social Service, Oasis youth service, Canberra Men's Centre, Barnados, Catholic Care, Inanna, and the Tenants Union ACT.

This collaborative group has jointly developed communication strategies and engagement plans to support the renewal program and the smooth relocation of affected tenants. It meets every six weeks and oversees the effective implementation of these strategies, working closely with the transforming communities partnership. LINCT has tasked the transforming communities partnership with responsibility for the continuous engagement of tenants to be relocated before, during and after the relocation process. The TCP includes operational staff from various LINCT organisations and these staff work on the ground with public housing tenants to identify their preferences and needs. The TCP members meet on a fortnightly basis to review progress and ensure the needs of tenants remain at the core of their engagement activities.

Tenants will continue to be supported after they move. Tenants who move to new parts of Canberra as part of the renewal program and who are receiving support through location-specific community support agencies will have that support transition with them while a new service is engaged to assist them in their new suburb. Where support agencies operate Canberra wide, that case support will continue unchanged—for example, the Canberra Men's Centre.

I am pleased to report that yesterday's budget included an investment of \$159 million for the first round of replacement homes. This funding will deliver new homes for tenants of 352 public housing properties along the Northbourne Avenue corridor. This is the first stage of the government's four-year program, with the next stages of the replacement to be detailed in future budgets.

I would also like to let members know that the Northside Community Service, which has been assisting public housing at Owen flats, will be using a vacant unit, unit No 31, to provide a meeting point for staff and tenants to discuss their needs in a confidential manner particularly as the weather cools in the ACT. I will give those dates to you now: Thursday, 18 June, Tuesday, 23 June and Thursday, 25 June from 11.30 to 1.30. I hope that, with the information that I have been able to provide to the chamber today, members will be able to go and reassure and provide information to those tenants about the relocation program and have an opportunity to listen to what their needs are and put them in touch with government services or with Northside Community Service officers to assist them in making sure that they are well informed all the way through this process.

I do want to thank Ms Lawder for bringing this motion to the Assembly today. The government's housing renewal program is an ambitious program, and it will benefit the entire ACT community. The government committed in May this year to reporting to the Assembly later in 2015 on the replacement housing being delivered for tenants who will be relocating as part of the program and I look forward to speaking further on public housing renewal at this time. I commend the amendment to Ms Lawder's motion to the Assembly.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Health, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (4.07): I would like to commend Ms Berry on her amendment and the very good work that she is doing to drive an inclusive, equitable and visionary agenda to provide housing fit for people when it comes to our public housing stock.

Canberra is a very inclusive community, and public housing plays a key role for some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged. As a city, we have a very proud history of public housing, right from the early days of the city when housing was built for newly arrived workers to build the national capital. Since self-government, successive governments, including this one, have continued to prioritise public housing for Canberra.

Because of this longstanding commitment, we also have some of the oldest public housing in the country, with an average age of more than 30 years. And much of this housing, particularly along Northbourne Avenue, is no longer fit for purpose. The buildings do not suit families. They do not support ageing in place. They certainly do not provide disability access. The buildings are expensive to maintain and to live in when it comes to water bills and electricity bills, and it is simply not viable to bring them up to contemporary building or energy efficiency standards.

This government has committed to a far-ranging public housing renewal program to build new, modern accommodation to replace just under 1,300 of these properties which have reached the end of their useful life. This new public housing will be contemporary, with good design and good construction, far exceeding current standards for the housing that people live in today. These homes will go beyond compliance with our current legislation and standards. We will be requiring minimum six-star energy ratings and designs that take advantage of natural sunlight and

ventilation, the types of qualities that Minister Berry has outlined as important for people just to be able to have a good quality of life. These sorts of design features will also reduce the utility and living costs of public housing tenants. The new homes will be developed through the public housing renewal program and will be required to have good private open space for tenants, or generous balconies, and a strong focus on security and privacy.

Some of the new homes are being specifically designed to suit families. We recognise that many of our public housing tenants are getting older or live with a disability. We are ensuring that the new public housing is designed to support these tenants too. We require livable and adaptable housing designs that ensure that these homes are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

Through this program of renewal, the number of public housing dwellings that make up our portfolio will not be reduced. Through the public housing renewal program, this Labor government are putting into practice the policy that has been longstanding in our city, of distributing public housing across Canberra. We are building and acquiring new homes across this city so that we can break down concentrations of disadvantage and give public housing tenants the opportunity to be part of their communities without facing the challenges of living in a large complex of 100 or more tenants.

This scattering, or salt and peppering, of public housing across Canberra allows public housing tenants to be integrated into our community. It gives children the chance to attend schools in our suburbs and gives all tenants the ability to access services that meet their needs. Dispersing public housing and reducing concentrations of disadvantage are just one way in which our city sends a clear signal that we are an inclusive one, proud of providing housing options for all Canberrans.

The public housing renewal program will improve outcomes for public housing tenants by lifting the quality of the overall public housing portfolio. The government is committed to working with local communities where new public housing is proposed to ensure that the design and location of these homes are appropriate for the local area and community. The budget handed down by the Chief Minister and Treasurer yesterday puts dollars—concrete dollars—into this important commitment to an inclusive and supportive community.

I note that in Ms Lawder's motion there is criticism of the light rail project. Ms Lawder fails to recognise how projects like light rail are so important for all Canberrans. We need to act now to stop unacceptable congestion in north Canberra as the area's population doubles over the next 35 years. Fifty-seven minutes as the average commute by car from Gungahlin to Civic in 2031 is the prospect we face if we continue business as usual. The economic cost of congestion across Canberra is \$700 million a year in lost productivity if we do not act. The environmental cost is having twice as many cars on the road if we do not act.

Capital metro also gives a timely injection to our economy when it needs it most, with \$1 billion in benefits across our economy and more than 3,500 jobs during construction alone. We know that light rail can increase private sector development

and achieve good urban uplift and densification. We know that it creates more usable, accessible precincts, not just a place for cars to drive and park. There was a great article by Professor Peter Newman, the distinguished Australian transport academic, emphasising the importance of light rail in the knowledge economy, where we are competing with other cities to excel.

A Canberra-wide light rail network will offer a superior integrated public transport service for Canberrans. It is a proven way of getting people out of their cars and into public transport. It provides an attractive, comfortable, easily accessible public transport option. And because it is apart from the general traffic, it improves journeys for all commuters, including those who continue to need to use their cars.

The commonwealth government has recognised the productive nature of this infrastructure. Through its asset recycling scheme, it is making a \$60 million contribution to capital metro. It only signs off on these payments when it knows that its contribution is going towards productive infrastructure, infrastructure that improves the productivity of the local economy. Through this partnership agreement, the government will be selling surplus assets and investing the proceeds in light rail infrastructure.

We are the first jurisdiction to sign up. Through this, we will be selling our old, out-of-date public housing precincts and some government commercial property assets. This will not only see a massive injection into light rail but also allow for significant renewal of our public housing stock, as Ms Berry outlined earlier; the transformation of some of the most tired areas of Canberra; and the building of new and better housing for vulnerable Canberrans. Through this agreement, in party with the commonwealth, we will be transforming the Northbourne Avenue precinct, Canberra's front door. We need a vibrant and active corridor along this key transport corridor and this key urban area for our city.

This urban renewal has the capacity to change our city for the better. A transformation of the Bega, Allawah and Currong flats in the city centre, along with public housing in Red Hill and Griffith, will see these sites transformed into modern, sustainable precincts with high quality public realm, great design outcomes and a mix of public and private housing.

The asset recycling initiative will bring new investment into our city. It will bring jobs. Think about how many jobs there are in the construction of over 1,200 new homes for public housing tenants, as well as the jobs associated with light rail directly. This is part of this Labor government's agenda for our city—transforming our city for the new century; making sure we have high quality public transport; and making sure we have homes fit for people into the next century, homes which are affordable, which are livable, which are sustainable, and which are integrated in an inclusive way with the broader community.

I commend the amendment to the Assembly.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (4.17): I want to refresh the memory of some of those who were not here at the time by saying that the previous Liberal government had a

strategy to fix all this 15 years ago. It was called a multi-unit strategy. My memory is that anything over 30 units was considered to be a large multi-unit site. We started this work; they came to office and they stopped it. There is the bleating, the words we have heard today about how they are helping public housing; they have neglected it for 15 years.

It was the Canberra Liberals that got rid of Macpherson Court, 144 bedsits with a disproportionately high population of people with mental health issues. It is now City Edge, which has won numerous awards for urban redevelopment and, 10 or 15 years later, is testament to what should have started years ago. We got rid of Lachlan Court in Braddon, which I think is now called the National, and all of that money was reinvested. And we started the work on Burnie Court; we announced that it was to be the next one. It was 364 bedsits, a place of intimidation and crime. The only people who probably were sad to see Burnie Court go were the police at Woden, because they knew where all the likely contenders were, they told us laughingly one day. That started back in 1999, 2000, 2001.

It is to the eternal discredit of those opposite that they neglected that process, allowed the deterioration of big flats to continue and allowed people to remain in what is substandard housing 15 years later. The flats were not real good back in the late 1990s, but they are even worse now. To have them here lecturing us is quite galling. Most of it is inaccurate and they are wrong.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.18): I thank Ms Lawder for bringing this motion to the Assembly today. However negatively framed her motion is, I trust that the intent is to highlight the importance of public housing in promoting social inclusion. Perhaps Ms Lawder, as opposition spokesperson for housing, could play a stronger role on behalf of the Canberra Liberals outside the chamber in promoting the benefits of a salt and pepper approach to public housing across the territory, as recent media commentary has been silent on the Liberals' apparent support for social inclusion in this portfolio. Given some of the recent public commentary on the relocation of public housing, I would have welcomed Ms Lawder's contribution to that debate.

But I will take this motion before us today at face value, and I will speak to some of the elements of it. The issue of retaining public housing along the Northbourne corridor is close to my heart and that of the ACT Greens. I am keen to ensure that all residents along the corridor can take advantage of the many benefits that the light rail project will bring.

I am on the record very publicly for my view, as a member for Molonglo, as a Greens member of this place and as a minister in this government, that public housing must remain in the inner north and in the Northbourne Avenue corridor. I am also clearly on the record as saying that our public housing is ageing, some of it is unsuitable for our tenants and there is great need for renewal and modernisation. I do not believe these views are mutually exclusive.

I would like to draw to the attention of the Assembly, and also that of Ms Lawder, a media release on 30 June last year issued at a time when I was the Minister for Housing. It was a joint release with the now Chief Minister. We stated quite clearly that cabinet had just endorsed:

- Accelerating the renewal and redevelopment of ageing public housing stock
- Responding to the needs and preferences of tenants along the proposed Northbourne Avenue redevelopment sites, by providing accommodation within the 800 metre corridor (including Flemington Road), in the inner north and the city, where possible
- Growing social housing through new partnerships, innovation, intelligent design, public/private partnerships and specific project budget bids that align with Government priorities
- Maintaining the “salt and pepper” approach to public housing in existing suburbs, and expanding this approach to public housing in new and developing areas

I do not believe you can get much clearer than that in spelling out this government’s approach to public housing. I look forward to hearing the Canberra Liberals’ policies for public housing being equally clear. In fact, I look forward to seeing their housing policy, period.

I would certainly be very interested in what a Canberra Liberals government would offer for sale as part of the federal government’s asset recycling initiative. But I digress.

I was strong on this issue as Minister for Housing. I was very pleased when Ms Berry took over the portfolio, because she has also been vocal in her support for inner north public housing. I was further encouraged by her early comments about ensuring that there would be solid and regular consultation with affected tenants. If I might paraphrase Ms Berry, she summed it up very well when she said that we need to stop talking about tenants in public housing on Northbourne Avenue and talk to them. I think she was reflecting a frustration which I have also spoken of in this place.

It has been very difficult for the government, because various media outlets have been very happy to speculate on what might happen and on the timetable for certain things, and to portray the uncertainty around it. I, as the Minister for Housing, and Ms Berry, since she has taken the portfolio, have been working actively to set up groups like the LINCT task force the minister just spoke of that seeks to put in place the mechanisms to provide strong channels of communication. LINCT provides a point of advocacy for tenants that is not direct contact with the government, for people who perhaps do not feel comfortable about directly advocating with the government or would benefit from the additional support of having NGO and stakeholder groups help them make their case or make the case on their behalf.

I share some frustration in that place, and I think Minister Berry said it very well when she talked about talking much more to the tenants and, hopefully, having less talk about them by other commentators.

Let me turn to some of the parts of Ms Lawder’s motion in more detail.

Paragraph (a) notes that the government is pursuing light rail. This is obviously correct, and the reasons why have been repeatedly debated here in the Assembly. What the motion fails to mention is that the corridor in this case extends from the city to Gungahlin in the first stage and includes Flemington Road, where there are also plans for social and public housing.

Paragraph (b) notes the full range of public housing properties along Northbourne Avenue but fails to mention that to redevelop the full list will take years and will be staged accordingly. Again, this goes to the point that some commentators have made—the suggestion that it is all going to be razed in one go, that people will be dumped out quickly and those sorts of things. The government has a very clear and deliberate strategy to make sure that people are given plenty of warning and that, as Minister Berry touched on and as I will come back to in a moment, people are assisted in making choices about where they would like to move to.

Paragraph (c) of Ms Lawder's motion notes that the time frames for relocation have not been fully communicated. I acknowledge Ms Lawder's concerns on this point and, as I just touched on, I do understand that it must be difficult for some tenants to frequently read about their lives and homes in the media, with little certainty. I can appreciate this from my time as minister as well, but to undertake a renewal program of this scale requires a solid lead-in time, with many complex contingencies that will be staged over years. The point is that it is impossible at this early stage to talk about exactly where, what and how the renewal process will occur. As we all know, some of these sites will require territory plan variations and the like, which, when done properly, do take time. That said, I would hope, and I trust, that the Minister for Housing will continue to consult, inform, listen and talk to those tenants as and when appropriate, to keep them up to date as much as possible. That is something that I am quite confident Minister Berry is committed to.

I cannot really talk to paragraph (e) with any great authority other than to say that some of the public housing along that strip is indeed ageing, hard to maintain, and hard to heat and cool in Canberra's extreme climate. These properties in particular are, in my mind at least, exactly the reason why we need to renew the stock and build better and more appropriate homes.

The Greens have been calling for substantial public housing investment and renewal for many years now, so I am pleased to see that this is the government's agenda. Yesterday we saw in the budget a very real and significant commitment to doing just that, and bringing public housing stock up to a modern and acceptable standard. Things like the energy efficiency rating of the new-build homes are a universe away from some of the residences that currently exist.

It is of serious concern that Ms Lawder is suggesting that Housing ACT has in any way deliberately neglected these properties over more than 30 years just to prepare for today. I do not think that the Canberra Liberals have any credentials in this space at all, given that the single biggest public housing sell-off in the ACT occurred in the mid to late 1990s, when Mr Smyth was the minister for housing. I note that Mr Smyth came in and talked about the history of the issue, but I do not recall him talking about this.

My understanding is that we used to have around 12 to 13 per cent public housing. That has reduced to now around eight per cent. Part of that driver was the sell-off by the Canberra Liberals at that time.

This reduction in public housing stock has had big implications for Canberra residents; it has reduced the number of people who have access to public housing, and put pressure on people who are not deemed high enough priority for the reduced number of available dwellings but cannot afford to purchase or even rent. I know that Ms Lawder is well aware of the impacts on the second quintile, through her work with Homelessness Australia. It is not just a numbers game; it is also a people game. This change, this sell-off, that the Canberra Liberals undertook in Mr Smyth's time as minister has also meant that the diversity of public housing residents has reduced and the number of market renters has severely reduced, directly reducing the level of income going into the budget and the resulting available maintenance budget for the properties that Housing ACT maintains.

Ms Lawder's points (f) and (h) in her motion, read together, are again something that I agree with; I genuinely appreciate her ongoing interest and intention. The resettlement of public housing tenants may dislocate them from their community and important services. But I say "may" advisedly. The relocation of tenants from the Dickson towers, undertaken while I was the responsible minister, was done in collaboration with tenants and the community sector partner, in this case Canberra Men's Centre. Housing ACT worked hard to find out what the tenants wanted and where they wanted to go, and then, as much as possible, supported that move. It may be worth noting that not all tenants wanted to stay in the inner north, for a variety of reasons. People moved to locations across Canberra, reflecting their engagement with employment, family needs and social supports. And while this was admittedly a small number of tenants, I believe that it serves as a positive example of the way things can be done and can be repeated. Again, in her remarks the minister went to some detail about the way that is being approached and the support mechanisms, both financial and otherwise, that are being offered to tenants as part of any relocation process.

I am sure we can all agree that ACT residents who are public housing tenants deserve safe and secure housing with access to transport, education and training opportunities, employment and support services. That is why the redevelopment of new housing across Canberra is so important. I would like to add that public housing tenants also deserve respect and privacy as they move into new areas—unlike the very unsavoury comments we have heard in recent weeks from residents in Nicholls.

Lastly, I would refer Ms Lawder to my previous comments. The government is committed, and the Greens are committed, to responding to the needs and preferences of tenants along the proposed Northbourne Avenue redevelopment site by providing accommodation within the 800-metre corridor, including Flemington Road in the inner north and city where possible—and, I should add, where requested by tenants. As we saw with the Dickson towers, not every tenant wants to remain in the corridor, but I believe we should always have a solid mix of social and affordable housing near the city and in the inner north. I point members to the fact that that was put out clearly in a press release, as I mentioned, in the middle of last year, and it was again repeated in Ms Berry's amendments today.

Many housing residents in the inner north have lived there for decades. Some have families who have grown up in the area, going to local schools, making local friends, and generally being part of the local community. The Greens think that it is important to work to help people who wish to remain in their communities as well as those who wish to move to other areas of Canberra, perhaps to access facilities in other areas or to be closer to their families.

What we should all be able to agree on is that we need a diversity of public housing types—a diversity of building types on offer, with or without gardens, and a diversity of areas, with some housing in areas more evenly distributed across Canberra. This is what the government is working towards.

All of that said, I will not be supporting Ms Lawder's motion as it is written, even though, as I noted in my remarks, I certainly support some of the ideas there and I believe there are some positive elements to it. I will be supporting Ms Berry's amendment, for some of the reasons I have outlined today, with the additional information she has provided there, the reinforcement of the work the government is doing and its commitment to ensuring that public housing tenants in the ACT have good quality properties to live in, that we do renew those properties that are outdated and unsuitable, and that we do it in a way that is supportive of tenants, allows us to consult closely with them, maximises their choice and includes development in the Northbourne Avenue corridor.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.32): I would like to thank Ms Berry, Mr Corbell, Mr Smyth and Mr Rattenbury for their contributions to the discussion today. There are a number of points on which we agree and obviously a number on which we disagree. I reiterate that I think it is a pity that it took light rail for the government to suddenly take their responsibilities with respect to these rundown properties seriously.

Mr Smyth pointed out that it is 15 years since looking after those properties was raised in the multi-unit strategy. Apparently, Housing ACT will provide up to two written offers of an alternative property to each tenant. I am aware of an example where an elderly lady wished to relocate to Belconnen. She was offered a property in Belconnen. Unfortunately, the bus stop was too far away for her and involved a hill either to or from the bus stop. She ended up in Ainslie, which was not her first choice of location, but the place in Ainslie, which was her second offer, was close to a bus stop.

The uncertainty about the timing and where they end up is distressing for residents. I reiterate that. Perhaps I misheard, but I reject any suggestion that perhaps we over here are spreading fear and division. I challenge the minister to back that up with anything concrete, because I certainly have not spread anything whatsoever, let alone fear and division.

In fact, a representative of the residents of Owen flats is here today. I do not think she feels I have been spreading any fear and division. I would like to thank Marie for coming along today and for the advocacy that she and some of the other tenants have been undertaking on behalf of the residents. Well done to those who are willing to

stand up and talk about their issues. This is illustrative of so many facets of our community, where there are a few people who are willing to stand up and take a bit of the load to make life better for the rest of the people. Well done to those at Owen flats that are willing to do that. As I mentioned earlier, it is a pity that a resident is not part of the working group that has been looking at the relocation, but perhaps that will come with time.

When Ms Berry spoke to her amendment she failed to articulate orally that the words “where possible” are included when she talks about relocating people within 800 metres of the corridor. She did not actually mention the “where possible” proviso which is part of her amendment.

We will oppose this amendment today, which is more about the government’s requirements than about recognising the needs of public housing tenants. They have rights and certainly the right to be treated with respect and have their needs considered carefully in light of the government’s wishes to redevelop the Northbourne Avenue corridor.

Access to services, transport and ensuring social inclusion and connection to the community are imperative for most Canberrans and even more so for those who may be disadvantaged. I am very disappointed that the commitment or the guarantee to not forcibly move people away from the area is not given for those who wish to stay in the area.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 8

Noes 7

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

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Sport—Woden facilities

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (4.39): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

(a) the recent opening of the upgraded Woden Athletics facility;

- (b) that this \$7 million facility was originally budgeted for \$4.7 million and frequently promoted as being built to national standards as an elite venue;
 - (c) that the construction was to include internal car parking, upgraded athletics facilities and an improved playing surface for the Woden Football Club;
 - (d) the seating capacity has been reduced by over 50 per cent; and
 - (e) the new ground falls short of expectations with a deteriorating playing surface, no shaded spectator stands, no scoreboard, no additional car parking and obstructed views for spectators and officials; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) immediately address the shortcomings of the football playing surface to allow matches to be played safely for the duration of the current season;
 - (b) explain why the seating capacity was reduced and no sun shades installed;
 - (c) inform the community how the ground will deal with crowds for major events such as potential athletics meets and Capital Football events;
 - (d) meet the ground users to assess other shortcomings of the grounds; and
 - (e) assure Canberra families that local sport and local facilities are as important to Canberra as international matches and elite level sports.

I rise today to speak to this motion, but it gives me no great joy to do so. Before I move to my comments, I want to let the Assembly know that I was first made aware of the concerns about the upgrade to the Woden facility by the president of the Woden football club. He and I met regularly to talk about the club's concerns and I pursued this issue for and on behalf of him and his club. That man was John Brooks, and it is my very sad duty to advise the Assembly that Mr Brooks died this morning. It is for him and all the people he worked for that I bring this motion to get this facility functioning as it should.

Woden oval has been the home ground of the Woden football club and the Woden Little Athletics Club for many years. In the 2004 ACT election, ACT Labor committed \$4.5 million for a southside synthetic track to improve the conduct and staging of athletics competitions and training in the south of Canberra. The government announced it would conduct a feasibility study, consult with interested stakeholders and determine an ideal location for this new facility. It is now history that while both the wider athletics community and the Woden football club would have preferred a new greenfield site at Stromlo, that was rejected and the offer was an upgrade of the Woden facility.

Given the cost of a new build, there was some merit in arguing for an upgrade but, as always with this government, the promise seems to fall far too short in delivery. At the time, the Woden football club were assured that they would not be forgotten in the

upgrade, that they would be included in discussions and that their season would not be affected because work would not start until the end of their then 2013 current season. Again, we know now that that was all just words. What was originally scoped and assumed to be on offer turned out to be something less in reality. And the reality has become more and more disappointing since the facility has been opened.

My concerns and those of the Woden football club over the planning of the upgrade and its execution have been shown to be valid. “Shortcomings” is probably not a strong enough word to cover the range of mistakes that have been made, from the unfortunate to the straight-out incompetent. It is unfortunate for the ACT community that we are continuing to see a pattern forming in this current government, a pattern which sees poor vision, poor planning, insufficient community dialogue, that leaves community expectations far short of what is actually delivered.

Woden park is the home to the Woden athletics community and the Woden football club and is utilised all year round by these two sporting communities. Each of these two communities has the ability to draw large crowds, great competitors and a fantastic community. The Woden football club, now playing as the Woden-Weston Football Club, play in Capital Football’s top-flight competition in the ACT and were given an expectation of a much-improved ground. They had to put up with not just one season of disruption but, almost longer, they had to relocate all their games and training to the other side of Canberra. They lost valuable patronage and essential canteen revenue while this upgrade was in progress. Promised dates of completion dragged on and on.

But the club held onto the belief that what they would be getting was an improved playing surface that the club could proudly boast as their home turf and that Capital Football would get a much-needed additional premium football ground with lights that would enable important matches to be played at this new facility.

Let us see what has been delivered after so long. After being forced to relocate for the 2014 season, even after assurances that they would not have to, the Woden football club have returned to the pitch that is far below any expectation that was set, as the pitch itself has already begun to deteriorate. After just two months of use, there are explicitly visible signs of wear on the pitch in a number of areas—the goal area, the centre of the pitch and down the sidelines, where only the lines men and women who officiate operate. Even this area has rapidly deteriorated.

From a football perspective, the promised upgraded playing area has proven to be even worse than the previously acknowledged substandard playing surface that was there before. How long will this government allow this pitch to deteriorate before taking action to allow quality football to be played again at Woden park?

After the upgrade of the Woden park facilities, Capital Football indicated that the location could be used to host premier events such as finals. But there are now concerns over the potential for these events, concerns that go across a number of areas. First of all, where are the spectators going to sit? Prior to the developments at Woden park, the Woden football club was able to host in excess of 400 people on seats. Now we see that the ground has been stripped of a section of stands, leaving fewer than 200

seats. For an elite venue that cost not the projected \$4.1 million but \$7 million to now have a reduced seating capacity in the order of 50 per cent is an absolute disgrace—a \$7 million facility for the benefit of 200 spectators.

What is made worse is that the limited seating is located only at one end of the ground. Instead, in place of the old seating, there is now a building that houses offices and storage rooms, and that is in prime viewing space. Why, with a little planning, could there not have been a grandstand built there, with the offices located under the grandstand, however modest that grandstand may have been? Just this fact alone is enough to question the whole planning process for this venue. But there is more, lots more, to highlight and to call this government to account on, and that is the important part of trying to address this issue, where the mistakes occur and keep occurring.

This facility was frequently touted as an elite, almost AIS-type athletics facility. Comments from the then sports minister and his directorate often stated—and as late March 2014 it was reported—that the upgraded facility would accommodate a range of current and future event opportunities, including potential international events. Without even going to international event expectations, which I always thought was ambitious at best and probably not a requirement, I ask: where are the seating and spectator facilities to accommodate just 400 spectators, let alone the previously quoted figure of 3,000 spectators, to attend an athletics grand prix event or the school athletics events that attract over 1,500 competitors and spectators? Where will all these spectators sit? And where is the undercover seating, as required under athletic association rules for such events?

We have often said, and others in the wider community have agreed, that this government's track record on planning and delivering on budget is abysmal. The upgrade of the Woden facility is sadly just another classic example of this failure, with our community paying more and getting less from this government. Maybe this government are only expecting 200 to ever turn up to events at Woden park, as they certainly have not planned for too many people to be at the ground at once. With just 38 designated car spaces and two disabled parking spots, where would 3,000 people possibly park? I think at some stage, as the equivalent of "let them eat cake", it was suggested the hospital car park was just across the road. I think Mr Barr suggested that.

The brief from Athletics Australia also states that any seating outside a grandstand should have permanent sun protection sails over it. For the information of the Assembly, athletics is run during the summer. Melanoma accounts for 11 per cent of all cancers diagnosed in Australia. The Cancer Council ACT SunSmart policy encourages schools, workplaces and sporting clubs to promote sun safety at outdoor events. Surely this is an approach that this government should also be taking note of.

Where is the shade at Woden? There is not any. That is not quite correct. It is interesting that during a recent visit to Woden park I noticed that the government was able to provide a roof and shelter for the garbage bins. We certainly do not want our garbage bins getting sunburnt during summer or wet during rain. Spectators, though, and the many young competitors that will be expected at this upgraded venue have not received any protection from the elements, basic features that an upgraded \$7.1 million facility should provide.

Of course, some might argue that there is some shade provided at the front of the building, the building awnings at the facility, but if you stand under this shade you will notice that there is a great big light pole in front of you. The new lighting tower has been placed in front of what could be termed the premier central standing spectator location. If you were to make the decision to stand in the very limited shade you would not be able to see certain parts of the ground. Depending on which sport you are attending, you might not be able to see the goals or the throwing cage or the far side of the running track. Spectators who make the decision to stand under the roof of the building would have to deal with this obstructed view.

Why did this light have to be installed directly in front of where spectators could stand? Could it not have been installed behind the building so as not to obstruct the view of spectators to the field? I have to ask: did anyone competent in reading plans look at the drawings and were any of the users of the facility consulted about the exact location of such things?

It is apparent that spectators have two choices: sit in the sun with no shade and no protection from rain or compromise their view. I remind the Assembly that this was a \$7-plus million refurbishment that was intended to be an upgrade of what was previously available. It was intended to accommodate a range of event opportunities including, potentially, international events. What was delivered was limited seating, obstructed views, no shade, no parking, poor playing surface. And this is just what has been discovered in the first few months of use. What more is to be found wanting?

These are the sorts of oversights that the ACT community is being forced to deal with. Despite all these shortcomings at the facility and more, such as the lack of a scoreboard, somehow we have seen the budget for the project grow from \$4.5 million to \$7 million and I would be very interested to hear an explanation from Mr Rattenbury, who, I believe, will speak to this, of how all this has occurred. How can the budget for this facility grow without delivering even basic parts of the facility, such as a grandstand in prime viewing location or a scoreboard or, at the very least, just sun shades?

It is fantastic for the Woden athletics community to have the opportunity to use first-class athletics facilities but it is such a shame that what has actually been delivered to them is so sorely lacking—a football pitch that has been described as worse than it was before, reduced capacity seating, no sun shades, obstructed views, no scoreboard and very, very limited car parking.

As I have acknowledged many times in this Assembly, sport is a serious business for many Canberra families. We have a very high participation rate for people in both formal and informal sport, and we have that because of the many opportunities available to families to get their children involved. We know that if we get children playing sport at an early age, they not only improve their health outcomes in later life but some of them go on to be very successful in sport as a chosen career.

One of the best examples of these opportunities for participation is the Little Athletics movement. In Canberra we are very lucky to have a raft of families who provide

thousands and thousands of volunteer hours in a number of clubs. They provide support for a wide range of sports, from running to long jump, steeplechase, shot-put and javelin. When these families heard that there was a chance for a synthetic south side track they were pleased that at last the government had listened to them and that their sport was to get some assistance.

But, as with so many of this government's announcements, the promises too often fall wide of the mark. I am sad to say that, because it did have the opportunity to be a very good initiative. However, in the final delivery it suffers and suffers very badly. As with all infrastructure projects and elite sports competitions, if you want to run any sort of quality competition, whether it is a regional Little Athletics meet through to an Olympic selection trial, there are certain requirements that you have to meet, and many of the very basic requirements have not been met. Instead, they have given the athletics community a least worst option, only preferred over a range of existing local community ovals and hardly a south side alternative to the AIS.

My motion outlines a number of deficiencies that have been identified at this ground and my motion calls on the government to immediately address the shortcomings of a number of these, including the football playing surface to allow matches to be played safely for the duration of the current season. I call on the government to explain why the seating capacity was reduced by 50 per cent and no sun shades were installed. I call on the government to inform the community how the ground will deal with the crowds for major events, such as potential athletics meets and Capital Football events. I call on the government to meet with ground users to assess other shortcomings of the grounds. Finally, I call on the government to assure Canberra families that local sport and local facilities are as important to Canberra as international matches and elite level sports.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Justice, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Transport Reform) (4.54): I welcome the fact that Mr Doszpot has brought this motion before the Assembly today because clearly it is a terrific opportunity to provide him with a solid briefing on the relatively new Woden park, to help him with his depressed view of the state of affairs regarding this wonderful facility, and to remind him that I am always happy for him to contact my office to get a briefing at the site with the staff who are working on the project. I think there are two quite different stories here, and I am glad we have a chance to discuss them in public and on the record.

I think that the new Woden facility is fantastic. As I will go through in a moment, there are certainly a number of issues that are still being worked on, and the turf is one of those where there are some teething difficulties. But to talk it down in the extraordinary way that Mr Doszpot has makes me feel sorry that that is the world that he inhabits.

At the start of this discussion I thank Mr Doszpot for sharing with the Assembly the very sad and unfortunate news about John Brooks. I know, having met him briefly on a number of occasions, that he was a wonderful driver of the Woden football club. I would like to offer my condolences to his family, his friends and those at the Woden

football club, who will be very sadly affected by this loss. It is a loss for both the club and football in Canberra. I appreciate Mr Doszpot's offering that information to the Assembly this afternoon.

Turning to the motion that has been put on the table, I will not be supporting the motion as it stands. I have circulated an amendment, and I now move that amendment that has been circulated in my name:

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

"(1) notes:

- (a) the upgraded Woden Park was officially opened on 14 February 2015;
- (b) the original budget of \$4.5 million was increased to a total of \$7 million to enhance the facilities, and to supplement the user groups' priorities;
- (c) that the final construction included internal car parking, upgraded athletics facilities, and improved playing surface for the entire sporting community;
- (d) that the seating capacity is dependent on need, and is made up of easily relocatable aluminium bleacher seating which may be moved from site to site as required;
- (e) there is currently capacity for at least 500 people, and further capacity is being developed;
- (f) the new grounds provide a resilient drought proof surface that has received 102.25 hrs of match play for football since February 2015 and is currently receiving remedial work to aid in strengthening the newly established grass growth;
- (g) the provision of a scoreboard that could cater to the needs of both football and athletics was outside the scope of available funds at the time of the redevelopment; and
- (h) extra internal car parking was included in the redevelopment of Woden Park, and approximately 1500 car parks are within walking distance; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) continue to work with Capital Football and Athletics ACT on options for managing the newly established playing surface;
- (b) continue work underway to accommodate additional bleacher seating on the eastern side of the park, utilising the relocatable seating units at Sports and Recreation Services' disposal to respond to demand as needed;
- (c) continue, in consultation with Athletics ACT, plans to provide shade cover for the existing seating units;

- (d) continue to regularly meet with ground users to ensure the grounds are being well managed and maintained; and
- (e) reiterate its commitment to providing high quality sports grounds for use by local, community, national, international and elite sports.”.

I hope the amendment, when read side by side with Mr Doszpot’s original motion, will give members in this place both clear information and an assurance that Sport and Recreation Services are working hard. They already have addressed some of the issues, and they are working hard to address some of the questions that Mr Doszpot has raised. Also, there are some good answers to some of the questions that Mr Doszpot has just raised.

In case the amendment does not do the job, I will take some time now to further expand on the issues so that there can be no doubt of this government’s commitment to providing high quality sports grounds for use by local, community, national, international and elite sports.

In regard to the difference in the price tag for the upgrades to the oval, the initial project for the budget was in fact \$4.5 million and not \$4.7 million, as stated in the motion. Funding for the project was identified within the “where will we play” capital works budget appropriation. Savings as part of “where will we play”, which were presented due to some reduced costs in another area, meant further funds were available to supplement the Woden park project to address priority concerns and needs raised by stakeholder sports during the planning, design and consultation.

These priorities included sealing of the existing car park and construction of new car park space in a fenced area of the park, and construction of a photo finish and events building. That is quite a major one. I hope that Mr Doszpot is listening to this part, because that photo finish and events building is an extraordinary piece of infrastructure, one that involves considerable detail. It means that an athlete can go to the Woden athletics track and set a qualifying time to go to the Commonwealth Games, the world championships and other such events. It is a very specific piece of infrastructure, and I have had the good fortune to have its considerable details explained to me. That was not in the original design. That is a feature that was added, and it explains part of the increase in the amount of money that was spent on this project. There is also a new amenities building, including the athletics office and refurbishment of the existing building, and additional storage.

In the end a total of \$7 million was spent on the project. I would have thought that Mr Doszpot and his colleagues would be happy to see increased investment in these types of local sports grounds. I am happy to confirm for the Assembly that the increased costs were just that—an increased investment with better outcomes, not a budget blowout or whatever Mr Doszpot is alluding to. In fact, it is for additional facilities that were not in the original scope of the project.

For the Assembly’s edification, Sport and Recreation Services have worked closely and positively with Capital Football, Woden Valley Football Club, Athletics ACT, Little Athletics ACT, Woden Little Athletics Club and the ACT Veterans Athletics Club to arrive at this enhanced redevelopment plan, and continue to appreciate their support and collaboration in managing and maintaining this wonderful facility.

In line with this enhanced development, the construction indeed included internal car parking, an upgraded athletics facility and an improved playing surface, for not just the Woden football club but the entire football community. I will come back to the playing surface.

In terms of seating capacity, I must admit that I was a bit concerned at first by Mr Doszpot's assertion that seating has been reduced by 50 per cent as a result of the improved facility upgrades, and would agree that that does sound somewhat counterintuitive. I have sought an explanation from Sport and Recreation Services, who have advised me that they are not aware of such a reduction. It is possible, I am advised, that prior to the redevelopment there may have been more seating units stored on the site, but these seating units were never fixed as a firm capacity at Woden.

For members' understanding, the seating capacity within Woden park has always been dependent on aluminium bleacher seating, which is relocatable and not permanent. Sport and Recreation Services has over 80 aluminium seating units which seat between 50 and 60 adults per unit. These units are regularly moved around Canberra as needed to meet demand. These units are also available for hire and are often relocated for special events. Apparently, initial plans for building and seating location were amended after feedback provided by the stakeholders, including Woden Valley Football Club, but I am told that the seating configuration on site was agreed in consultation with the stakeholders.

The short answer is that we currently have capacity on the site for at least 500 people, in terms of ground to place the units on, and are currently in the process of levelling ground on the eastern side of the park to accommodate additional bleacher seating in the future.

I am not sure I can agree with Mr Doszpot's negative running down of the Woden park in the next few points of his motion, and in his comments about expectations. I believe it is a fantastic facility, and I have had positive feedback from user groups and individuals who attest to that. I also meet with a range of these stakeholders on a pretty regular basis.

I have been to Woden athletics track for various events. Those events have included organised meets of the athletics club. I went out there for the first game of Woden's season this year—and I did see the state of the pitch, which, again, I will come back to. I have also been there for other events. For example, one of the Indian communities in Canberra booked out the facility for a family fun day. I went down there at the end of the day. Mr Coe was there as well, at the end of the day. I can attest that that community had the most marvellous time. They were thrilled with the facility and thrilled that they had been able to book it and use it for what was a wonderful day for their community.

As members will appreciate, I move in the running community quite a bit. I have talked to active athletes, adult athletes and the parents of junior athletes, and I know they are thrilled to have a second track in Canberra. The AIS is a terrific facility, but it is one that has a national focus at times and it is not always available to local athletes.

So a second athletics track on the south side, with the quality of lighting that it has, with the quality of the timing facilities and with the quality of the new jump pits, for example, has been thoroughly welcomed by the community.

Let me go to some of the other matters raised in Mr Doszpot's motion today. I agree with Mr Doszpot that shading is important, and Sport and Recreation Services are currently seeking quotes for shade cover. The playing surface has certainly had some teething problems, but this is hardly a new or unduly concerning issue. It is a new ground that is getting a lot of use, which is, in my mind, a positive thing. There was an on-site meeting with Capital Football held on 20 April 2015 to discuss options for managing the newly established playing surface during the first season.

Sport and Recreation Services and Capital Football are in agreement on remedial work to be implemented to address concerns. This includes fertilisation of Woden park to aid in the strengthening of newly established rye growth; the application of climate control cloth to the high-wear areas on the Woden park playing surface to enhance growth by increasing surface temperatures and protecting from frosts—I must say that will be very valuable this week at least; cloth staying down from Monday until Thursday each week to assist in managing the condition of the surface; and a commitment from Capital Football to alternating the sideline widths to reduce wear associated with sideline referees running.

Those are some of the steps that are already being taken. In Mr Doszpot's remarks there was a suggestion that there was no conversation going on. I hope, again, that I am able to assure members, and the chamber as a whole, that there is considerable discussion going on.

It is also perhaps useful to note that the couch grass surfaces on ACT sports grounds are annually over-sown in autumn to provide a suitable playing surface, as couch grass is dormant during Canberra's cool seasons. In reaction to post-construction surface levels and early season trial games, Woden park was top-dressed to address inconsistencies in the surface levels. Eighty tonnes of sand was brought in on 20 March 2015, giving the surface a bit of a sandy appearance, which might be part of Mr Doszpot's concerns. But recent rains have settled the surface sand into the profile.

I was quoted in last Saturday's *Canberra Times* as acknowledging that there have been some problems with the surface, but it is a new surface. Sport and Recreation Services horticultural staff are working hard to get it right, and they are certainly working in partnership with the sporting clubs. So I reject any suggestion of a lack of communication. If there is somebody who feels they have not been adequately communicated with, I would urge them to ring Sport and Recreation Services, who will be more than happy to spend time talking with them and to get their feedback.

In relation to the lack of a scoreboard, that is one that I possibly do have to take on the chin, as it were. I am advised that the need for a scoreboard was considered within early consultation with user groups, and the need was agreed, but unfortunately the provision of a scoreboard to meet the needs of both football and athletics was outside the scope of the project and available funds.

I can appreciate that a multi-sports-friendly scoreboard would be a good addition to the park. Again, I can assure members that the necessary infrastructure was provided for any future scoreboard. The work that is often quite expensive—the underground cabling and the like, and the conduits—has been put in place. But it is a question of what might have been left off the current project to achieve this instead. I ask for patience as we consider other competing priorities, and perhaps for a bit of acknowledgement of the foresight in ensuring that the conduit piping and the like is there so that additions can be made over time.

It is fair to acknowledge that facilities do get upgraded and additions get made over time, but the strategic thinking has been done on that. With respect to the more unsavoury elements of Mr Doszpot's remarks, when he asked, "Does anybody have any strategic capability in the department that is planning these things?" he might reflect on that and perhaps acknowledge that it was a little over the top. People might have different views on how things are executed, but people do put a lot of thought into these things. Everybody is a Monday expert, but at the time the best was done within people's knowledge. Certainly, there was considerable consultation and discussion with some of the sporting groups. It is all well and good to come in here and do the politics of it, but reflecting on public servants in that way is probably a little bit unnecessary.

Extra parking was included in the redevelopment. A mapping of the broader precinct was developed, detailing a range of parking options within the immediate facility. Approximately 1,500 car parks are within walking distance in Phillip and nearby Garran at the following locations: Phillip district playing fields; the car park off Yamba Drive opposite Canberra Hospital; the car park off Albermarle Place in Phillip, adjacent to Phillip district playing fields; the CIT Woden campus; and Garran neighbourhood oval.

I heard Mr Doszpot's comments that some of those are really a bit far away. With respect to those exceptionally large sporting events where so many spaces are needed, they were obviously never going to fit inside the ground anyway. People coming to a significant event would have the expectation of parking a little bit further away. Certainly, many of those car parks would be within the same distance that I parked when I went to see the Raiders play on the weekend before last. So let us be real about community expectations about these things.

Mr Doszpot knows this well, as my staff provided him with a copy of the Woden recreation precinct parking plan not so long ago, and I am more than happy to provide it to any other members that would like it.

In closing, while I appreciate Mr Doszpot's alertness to the problems and his ability to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, there is nothing going on at Woden that we are not already on top of or currently working to fix. I have discussed the surface issues directly with the CEO of Capital Football, and I know SRS are working with user groups to provide the best possible playing surface. I hope that this very public briefing has updated members on what is being done and I commend my amendment to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (5.09): In the interests of time I will not go over all of the points that Minister Rattenbury has made. I indicate that Labor members will be supporting Mr Rattenbury's amendment. I think he has provided a comprehensive response to all of the issues raised by the shadow minister. In the interests of time I will not repeat them all, other than to say that the amendment moved by the minister responds to all of the issues raised. In addition, he has now given the Assembly a very comprehensive response to some further issues that have been raised in the context of the debate. I commend the amendment to the Assembly, and the government will be supporting it.

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (5.10): I will talk to the amendment and close the debate. I am used to Mr Rattenbury partially agreeing with me and then saying, "No, what the government's doing is actually fine." I was not critical of the public servants per se. I was critical, and I stand by the criticism that I offered. It was not personal criticism of individuals; it was about the planning process, which I still claim fell far short. With respect to this facility that we spent \$7 million on, the basic seating requirements have not been looked at, and it does not have a scoreboard or the other facilities that would cater for the type of crowd expectations which are the reason why such an upgrade was required in the first place.

I am surprised and disappointed that Mr Rattenbury has left the car parking issue at such a low level of urgency. Yes, there are other grounds; there are other parking areas. But one of the things that is overlooked is that Mr Barr originally suggested that people park in the Canberra Hospital car park. Obviously, that is not a very good suggestion whatsoever when people who use that car park are parking there in order to visit family members. Staff also have to park there.

What is left out of this equation about the number of parking spaces available is that those parking spaces are adjacent to other nearby grounds. There are two other grounds opposite Woden park where they play Australian Rules, Rugby League and Rugby Union. Those grounds most often are in use at the same time that the facilities at Woden are in use. So there is a wilful blindness to some of the issues that have been raised in my motion.

My motion is not meant to be a political motion. I think I have addressed the issues. I commend part of Mr Rattenbury's answer—the fact that he acknowledged some of the shortfalls and said he was willing to have a look at them. I welcome that. With respect to the facility that was promised to the community in Labor's promises, by the now Chief Minister when he was sports minister, we are simply trying to keep the government accountable. The fact that more money was spent on Woden oval in itself is good, if it meets the expectations of what it was meant to do. What I am questioning, and what I have not been told, is that if the original \$4.5 million was going to cover all of the things that basically are covered now, I cannot see what additional things have been built. So I still do not have an explanation as to why the enhanced \$7 million target was reached. But I would welcome some information on that from the current minister for sport.

There were several issues in Mr Rattenbury's explanation that I do not agree with. There were blocks of seating—fixed seating, not temporary seating—on either side of the dressing room and canteen facility at the old Woden oval. I visited the oval several times over a number of years. There were two blocks of seating on the left, facing the canteen area, and two blocks of seating on the right. All that is left out of the four blocks of seating is one block of seating which is now located between the finish line of the athletics events and what I believe is the canteen that has now been built next to that. That means there are no more than 200 available seats at the moment. There is no provision for sun shades there, and that is a very strict requirement of Athletics Australia.

These things have been discovered in a \$7 million facility two months after it has opened. Whether they discovered it earlier has certainly not been acknowledged, and there has been no attempt to rectify the problem. I have not heard anything along those lines. But the fact that a \$7 million stadium could not have seating for, say, 1,000 people, is just beyond comprehension. I would need a very strong explanation for why that was not done.

As far as Mr Rattenbury's amendment is concerned, basically he has omitted all of the things that I have noted. I think it is only fair to acknowledge some of the shortcomings, but I do not think he has done that. There is a little bit of latitude in talking about the capacity currently available. I cannot agree with some of the information that Mr Rattenbury notes in that section.

With respect to the part that "calls on the government", I will support that part of the amendment. We have achieved one thing here—to make the government look at the shortcomings of the ground. While they do not admit they are shortcomings, they are looking at talking more to the people who are using these facilities. I will accept the amendment on that basis. But I do not accept, and I still wonder why, there is such denial about some of the shortcomings.

Mr Rattenbury did not touch upon the location of the lighting. The lighting is very important for a ground like Woden, which is a multi-use facility for both athletics and football. But to put a light pole smack bang in front of where the spectators would get a prime view just does not make sense. It could have been located 10 metres behind the building that is directly in front. So there are issues that I think the minister is still failing to recognise. I would call on him to address some of the issues that I have raised.

The issues I have raised were not raised with any sense of gleeful political knock-off. I said that I was sad to say the things I said because there was the opportunity for the facility to be a very good initiative. I am sad that the final delivery has suffered so much as a result. The athletics community, I know, are very grateful to have received upgraded facilities, and I can understand why they are loath to criticise the fact that the government has at least delivered something for them. But the bottom line here is that, for \$7 million, the expectations of the community were not just for the running track but for the facilities that would benefit people who come to the ground to watch their children play, for spectators who come to see sport played.

There are 38 parking spots and two disabled car parking spots. According to Mr Rattenbury, that is sufficient. Is that sufficient for potentially 3,000 spectators? With the nearby ground parking, which I have mentioned already, Mr Rattenbury needs to address the fact that some of those car parking areas are in use at the very time that he expects them to be used by the users of the athletics track and those involved with football that Woden park is now home to.

We will accept the amendment, based on the caveats that I have mentioned.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Budget—urban renewal

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (5.19): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the pride the ACT community feels in our town centres, suburbs and urban villages;
- (b) that the 2015 ACT Budget invests heavily in renewing our suburbs and town centres; and
- (c) that the 2015 ACT Budget provides for more mowing, more cleaning and more of the municipal services that the Canberra community expect; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) continue renewal in our suburbs, local shops and town centres; and
- (b) ensure Canberra continues to look and feel like the world's most liveable city.

I rise today to speak about the continuing investment of the ACT government in this budget in our suburbs, town centres and local shopping centres. Canberrans are proud of our city and our suburbs. Our town centres are not structures implanted by the government in their completed form; they are the product of what Canberrans want, continually evolving as our city grows and matures. There are older, more established suburbs that are so rich in Canberra's history, and there are our newer suburbs, like Bonner, Casey, Dunlop, Wright and Coombs, that are attracting young families keen to find their own patch to call home in Canberra.

I am proud this budget continues to invest heavily in renewing our suburbs, no matter where they are. Our town centres, suburbs and urban villages are places that people enjoy spending time in with their families and friends. The ACT government listens to

and invests in the services that Canberrans want in our town centres and our suburbs. This continues in the latest ACT budget. As the Chief Minister has said, we are both a state and municipal jurisdiction. We should never lose sight of both these functions. Indeed they provide us with such a great opportunity to provide for Canberrans.

This ACT Labor government has shown its commitment to consistent urban renewal across the territory. It is doing so by investing in the accessibility of the town centres from their surrounding suburbs, making it easier for more Canberrans to utilise the services provided in these centres. The town centres will all benefit from significant investment in local walking and cyclepath connections. For example, \$532,000 is committed to delivering improved walking and cycling connections between the Woden town centre and the Canberra Hospital. Further, a feasibility study into connections around the Belconnen, Tuggeranong, and west Belconnen to Belconnen town centres will look into improving the existing walking and cyclepaths for locals. This government is passionate about encouraging Canberrans to explore their own suburbs by walking and cycling around them. The positive impact for those who choose to be more active will be fantastic for our whole community.

While our town centres will specifically benefit from investment in renewal, the surrounding suburbs will also benefit. For example, \$600,000 is dedicated to constructing a new shared pedestrian and cyclepath through Bowen park to make it easier for those in the inner north and inner south to access the Kingston foreshore precinct; \$230,000 will go towards funding the first stage of the Oaks Estate heritage walk; and another \$200,000 will contribute to designing stage 1 of the Molonglo cycle highway from the city to Acacia Inlet.

In terms of local shopping centres, \$1.7 million will be dedicated to revamping the Erindale and Weston Creek group centres. The Kambah group centre will also benefit from \$50,000 to develop designs for an upgrade. These initiatives will ensure our suburbs and town centres look and feel great.

I also note the continuing effort in this budget to invest in additional municipal services. In particular, I note the increase in funding by the ACT government in order to deliver additional services to the entire territory community to continue to make Canberra beautiful. This is a budget for all Canberrans. The ACT government has committed \$8 million additional funding in the budget to deliver more mowing services, more weed removal and tree maintenance, waterway cleaning and graffiti removal in all of our suburbs. Additional mowing services will include all of Canberra receiving an additional mow, taking the number of mows of the entire city to six each year.

In my own town centre of Gungahlin, the Yerrabi Pond and Gungahlin Pond areas—areas I personally enjoy walking around with many other residents—will be cleaned more frequently. Similar cleaning of Lake Tuggeranong and Lake Ginninderra will also take place. Cleaning and maintenance such as this will ensure more Canberrans can enjoy the beauty of our territory at all times. This is a budget for all Canberrans.

The scenic landscape across the territory will also receive extra maintenance. Foliage around bus stops, road signs and other high visibility areas will be given more

attention. There will be a strong effort to efficiently cultivate young, developing trees as well as a concentrated focus on weed removal on median strips, cyclepaths and verges.

Another important component of keeping our city clean and planning for the city's future are the waste management services that have also been funded in this budget. A \$2.8 million feasibility study to investigate long-term options for the management and treatment of waste in the ACT will be undertaken, including the development of a full business case for a waste to energy facility. A new landfill cell will be created with \$20.9 million to expand the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre, and \$400,000 will allow the bulky waste collection service to continue. This service allows eligible concession card holders to have large items, such as couches, collected and disposed of for free—another service this government provides for some of our more vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.

The ACT government has shown its passionate commitment to keeping Canberra beautiful. The results of this continued commitment are very simple: beautiful, well-maintained suburbs are home to people who have pride in the city they live in. From Gungahlin to Belconnen to the city to Woden to Tuggeranong, every region will benefit from this investment. This is a budget for all Canberrans. It is a sign of the Chief Minister's—or should I say "mayor's"—pride in this city that maintenance in our suburbs is such a priority.

It is no secret that Canberra is the world's most livable city. Because of the continued investment of the ACT Labor government in this budget, it will continue to be the world's most livable city. Where else in the world can a person live in a bustling town centre and then, in as little as a 10-minute walk, be able to enjoy bushland? This budget invests \$275 million in municipal services to ensure our city and town centres look and feel great. It also includes \$90 million additional funding on roads, with more than \$60 million in Gungahlin, to help develop a truly integrated transport network for Canberra's future.

It includes \$159 million for public housing renewal, which will better meet tenants' needs and break down concentrations of disadvantage across the city. And it includes \$2.8 billion for infrastructure over four years for major projects and to deliver better services in all our suburbs and town centres. We are all proud Canberrans, and I believe this budget will ensure Canberra continues to look and feel like it is the world's most livable city.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (5.27): It gives me great pleasure to speak to this motion today. There is a different view about urban renewal on that side of the chamber than there is on this side of the chamber. When we hear about urban renewal from those opposite, we generally hear about the light rail and what they are planning for the Northbourne corridor. I and my colleagues—I know you, Madam Speaker, do also—spend a lot of time out of this place in the suburbs talking to Canberrans about what is important to them and what matters to them in their suburbs, in my own electorate in places like Weston Creek and in Woden, and across broader areas of Canberra. I recall going with Madam Speaker to Belconnen quite recently. Many constituents came to see us about what they considered to be

urban decay in their suburbs. One gentleman had a folder with photographs of urban decay in his suburb, with weeds out of control, with pavements that had been neglected for years with cracks and potholes. The stories we heard in Belconnen reflect the same stories we hear across Canberra when we talk to our constituents. Many of them say to me, “Where is Labor? Where are they?” Although this side are out talking, we see very little action when it comes to real engagement with the community from those opposite.

We know the government is a bit tetchy about this, because the Chief Minister is starting to call himself the mayor of Canberra. I thought Mr Rattenbury was the mayor of Canberra, but it now seems that is a mantle Andrew Barr wants to take on—“I’m the mayor.” We are not quite sure which of them is the mayor, but it indicates a little bit of sensitivity on this issue. These are issues that the Canberra Liberals, in particular Mr Coe, have been talking about for years in this place that this government is slowly starting to wake up to. When you look at the money in the budget for mowing and urban maintenance compared to the money being invested by this government in their number one priority—that being light rail—you can clearly see the priorities of this government.

Ms Fitzharris talked about our being the most livable city and therefore we need light rail. I make the point that we are the world’s most livable city and we do not have light rail now. This argument that we need to have light rail in order to become a livable city is a nonsense. We have achieved that without light rail. In fact light rail will suck up the resources that could be applied elsewhere in our city in the sort of urban renewal that we genuinely need; it will suck it away into a project that will really service only a very narrow band of Canberra—that is, those people who happen to live within walking distance of a tram, which is some two or three per cent of the population.

In terms of the road duplications that Ms Fitzharris talked about, we see the same pattern of mistakes being made by this government as we have seen previously. You would have thought they would have learned from the GDE. You would have thought they learned that building half a road was a mistake. I think that has been broadly acknowledged; I think even those opposite would now acknowledge the way the GDE was built was a mistake. It ended up disrupting the lives of those in Gungahlin unnecessarily and costing tens of millions more than it otherwise would have. It was a mistake.

But we are seeing the same mistakes being made by this government as Ms Fitzharris touts what this government is planning for Gundaroo Drive. If you are going to do a road duplication, do it properly. Learn from the mistakes of the GDE. Mr Coe has argued cogently for this. If the government is going to do a duplication, if it is going to do improvements, it should do it for the longer term. It should not be so short-sighted. We see the same with the Barton Highway roundabout where Mr Gentleman wants his short-term fix, the signalisation. The government’s own reports indicate that is only a temporary measure. In the longer term, if we want a solution for the people of Gungahlin we need an overpass.

When it comes to urban renewal, I think we have government playing catch-up out in the suburbs on mowing and urban maintenance, still not investing the sort of money needed to fix up the neglect of the last 15 years. When it comes to infrastructure projects, like roads, instead of putting the priority into those roads at the outset, what the government is doing is piecemeal. As experience tells us—the jail and the GDE—you build half a road, you duplicate half a road, the community will pay more in the long run.

We have heard about public housing renewal. Let us be very clear what a lot of this agenda is about. It is about bulldozing Northbourne to make way for light rail. In order to make the BCR anywhere near positive—it is 1.2, and that is a very optimistic figure—it relies on the so-called urban renewal of the Northbourne corridor. That means the Chief Minister, Mr Barr, and his colleagues need to get rid of all the public housing tenants along Northbourne and move them elsewhere throughout Canberra so they can make way for urban renewal, as they call it, to put new developments on Northbourne to justify the BCR for light rail. There are many people in those properties along Northbourne that have been neglected by this government for years. I accept fully that some of those properties need renewal. But whose responsibility is that? Under whose watch for the last 15 years or thereabouts have these properties been allowed to deteriorate? That is the question.

If we are talking about urban renewal, let us be serious about it and let us acknowledge in this place that under this government we have seen urban decay. What we see in this budget is a small start in the right direction, but it is a small start compared with the enormous amount of money drained from this budget to pay for light rail.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (5.36): I am very pleased to rise to speak in support of this motion and I thank Ms Fitzharris for bringing it forward. I know that she is just as proud of our city's suburbs, local shops and town centres as I am and, indeed, every member of the government is. Indeed every Canberran should be supportive of this. I am sure every single person in this place and across the city takes pride in knowing that they live in the world's most livable city. You do not become the world's most livable city without world-class schools and hospitals, and yesterday's budget supported both, with \$160 million invested in modern classrooms in schools across Canberra, and \$1.5 billion in total for the health budget, including funding for a new public hospital at the University of Canberra.

One of the things I think all Canberrans appreciate about their city is how easy it is to move around. Yesterday's budget invested to make sure it is just as easy to get where you want to go in Canberra in the future as it is at the moment. Obviously the government is investing in transport infrastructure that will transform the way Canberrans move around the city through the capital metro project. It is a very clear statement, a commitment for the future of Canberra, that we will not become a city like Sydney with people commuting for hours at the end of each day and the beginning of each day from far-flung outer suburbs by motor vehicle because that is the only option.

There is only one way to avoid that future for this city, and that is to invest now in transport infrastructure ahead of this inevitable future of increased population for our city. Let us invest now in transport infrastructure, the infrastructure our city will need as it grows. That certainly means an integrated response to transport infrastructure investment. It means light rail. It means buses. It means demand-responsive transport. It means additional walking, cycling and active transport options. It means investment in road infrastructure as well. It is the full range, a complete holistic approach to transport reform in this city. It means updating the road network to make sure it meets our city's needs, and that is exactly what this budget delivers right across the city.

As the Minister for Roads and Parking has outlined in previous contributions today and last week, in Tuggeranong we are investing \$25 million in the duplication of Ashley Drive to reduce congestion, delays and queuing. This duplication doubles the capacity on a key stretch of the road to cater for new transport-related developments planned for the Erindale group centre into the future.

In Gungahlin the government will invest \$31.1 million to duplicate Gundaroo Drive from Gungahlin Drive to Mirrabai Drive-Anthony Rolfe Avenue. Gungahlin is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia and it will be a growing area in Canberra for some time to come. This duplication will help make sure that Gundaroo Drive remains safe and keeps congestion low as it does so.

On this side of the chamber we know that keeping our city accessible for all is about more than just cars; it is about more than light rail too. It is about making sure our transport system caters for everyone—cars, cyclists, freight, pedestrians. That is why we are spending \$700,000 on a range of bridge-strengthening projects along the Monaro Highway to provide a direct freight route into Canberra. Just as importantly, it is why we are investing \$23 million into our active transport network to integrate our walking, cycling and road infrastructure. There is a range of shared walking and cycling paths to be supported in the budget, including one through Bowen park to connect to the Kingston foreshore to make it easier to ride one of the great cycle loops in this country, if not the world, around Lake Burley Griffin.

We are designing and constructing new crossings on the busy Sullivans Creek cyclepath. We are upgrading the path connection between the Woden town park and the Canberra Hospital. Our city has amongst the country's best walking and cycling paths. This government will continue to invest to make sure that Canberrans can enjoy what our city has to offer.

In my acceptance speech as Chief Minister in this place, I made some very clear statements about our government's commitment to each of Canberra's suburbs. We know that each of our suburbs has its own character. The government values each of these suburbs. We have just as much pride in them as the residents of each of those suburbs.

Yesterday's budget provides extra funding to make sure the look and feel of our suburbs matches that pride. We are providing extra mowing capacity so that our parks and roads get an extra mow when they need them. We are providing a rolling program

to clean almost 440 hectares of urban lakes and ponds. We are providing extra maintenance for trees, road signs and bus stops, and more weed removal on road verges, median strips and cyclepaths. We are providing more funding for street lighting and maintenance of our public places.

I moved to Canberra around my fourth birthday. Approaching next year I think will be my 40th year in this city. I grew up in this city—

Mr Doszpot: 50th?

MR BARR: 40th—in its leafy garden suburbs. I know that people are drawn to Canberra by its amenity, and once they are here they stay for that amenity. I am determined that we hold on to that as we grow. I am also determined to make sure that our town and group centres are places that suit everyone, that there are things for young people to do and that there are things for young families and older Canberrans. That is why we are investing and continue to invest in improving landscaping and safety in key areas of our city, particularly in this budget—\$860,000 to improve landscaping and safety in Weston and a further \$860,000 on extra car parking, footpaths and infrastructure at the Erindale shopping centre. That is why we are investing in Tuggeranong and Kaleen to widen footpaths, provide traffic islands and wheelchair ramps in these areas.

This is a government that can sustain multiple initiatives at the same time. We can build the transport infrastructure our city needs whilst we renew our ageing public housing stock. We can upgrade our roads whilst we are building new cycling and walking infrastructure. We can invest in our important state government services, our schools and our hospitals just as we deliver high quality municipal services—the high quality services that Canberrans expect and deserve—maintaining public parks, pathways and pleasant public spaces.

Yesterday's budget was a budget for Canberra. It is a budget that reflects the pride that every single member of this government feels for this wonderful city. I thank Ms Fitzharris for bringing this motion to the Assembly today.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrective Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (5.44): I am very pleased to support this motion; it is an issue that is close to my heart. As the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, I take great pride in how the city looks and I know that the staff of the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate take great pride in this city. They enjoy their jobs looking after this city and they are very passionate about what they do.

I am certainly pleased that additional funding has been made available in this budget to assist TAMS to look after this city and to present it in a way that Canberrans aspire to. We live in a great city, and we are very lucky with the city we live in. This extra money will help us to maintain it at a standard that we want to see. Certainly, as a Greens member of this government, I am very pleased that through this budget process a number of items that are a part of our parliamentary agreement and things that the Greens are very passionate about have been funded, which will assist with investing in our community, in our suburbs and our urban villages.

I focus firstly on the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate because this is really the local council directorate within the government, the agency that gets out there and does a lot of the on-the-ground work that I know many members in this place are interested in. Certainly it is an area of great interest to the community. It takes the lead in both caring for our suburbs in their current form and providing that level of renewal and ongoing maintenance that keeps the city in great shape.

There are a number of initiatives in this budget that go to the very heart of Ms Fitzharris's motion about really looking after this city, including direct municipal services funding in new suburbs—\$8 million over four years—which means that TAMS will be able to afford to deliver the same services across new suburbs instead of stretching existing funds across existing and new suburbs. As those new areas come on stream, TAMS will have additional capacity to make sure they are looked after.

We have also seen \$8 million over four years for more mowing, weeding, tree and shrub management in high visibility areas, lake and pond cleaning, graffiti removal and prevention. This range of services is often the one that members of the public write to us about. In fact many of them contact Canberra Connect directly, and that is something I would remind members of. I am always happy to respond to letters from members, but I would ask members to encourage members of the public to go directly to Canberra Connect. The job usually gets done quicker, it is more efficient, and people are therefore happier because the job is done in a more timely manner.

On some of those really basic requests that we get about overgrown trees over a footpath, members might take the time to help educate the community and indicate to them that if they just ring Canberra Connect the ranger will go straight out. They do not need to contact a member of the Assembly, who will then write to me and then the department has to be contacted. I will always do it, but you might like to spend some time informing members of the terrific government service that is there through Canberra Connect.

There are a range of other initiatives coming out of this budget in relation to the TAMS Directorate that I think are very beneficial. We have \$500,000 over two years for the design and construction of age-friendly facilities in Kaleen and Tuggeranong. This is the continuation of a program that we got underway in my time as Minister for Ageing. Mr Gentleman is carrying this forward now and shares the same enthusiasm. We started with the suburbs of Weston and Ainslie. We had a very focused approach of looking at a suburb and saying, "We've got a lot of older people in this suburb. Let's have a look at the physical infrastructure in this case and look at how we can improve it, renew it, upgrade it, to make life that bit better, particularly for our older residents, who may be less sure on their feet but still want to be able to get out there and walk." We wanted to make sure, I guess, that they felt safer doing it.

There were a range of steps there, including the widening of paths, the implementation of traffic islands, refuge spots and wheelchair ramps—those very practical things that make a real difference, particularly for older people. I am pleased that the project is continuing. It is a testament to the fact that the idea was the right

idea. I thank members of the ministerial council on the ageing who originally raised the idea of targeting suburbs and focusing on making them age-friendly. It was a great idea that came forward and I am pleased to see that it is continuing.

This year we see the investment of \$430,000 for the Tuggeranong town centre—the Anketell Street northern end—new improvements which include street trees, landscaping and lighting to improve safety and amenity. Similarly, we see investment in Cooleman Court following on from the master planning process that has taken place for the Weston Creek group centre. The government indicated at the time—I have certainly said this to people in the community and I know that Minister Gentleman agrees—that it wanted to start implementing that master plan. It will take many years.

The idea of a master plan is to roll it out over a period of time. What we see here is an investment to get on with the first part of that master plan and to begin to liven up and refresh areas around the Cooleman Court precinct. We are going to see the design and upgrade of the Brierly Street and Trennery Square landscape, improved pedestrian connections and safety. Again, these are really basic services. These things accrue over time. I reject Mr Hanson's characterisation of the city being in urban decay. Yes, things age over time. You simply have to get on and replace them and maintain them and the like. That is what this government is doing by making these sorts of investments for the benefit of our community right across the city.

There is \$300,000 for public toilet upgrades, for example, at Chifley and at Lake Ginninderra. We have got \$50,000 for public domain improvements at the Kambah group centre. We have got \$1.2 million to improve lighting to provide safer public spaces across Canberra and some upgrade to energy efficient bulbs. We receive requests from time to time for upgrades to lighting or new lighting where some might not exist. This money will make sure that we continue to improve that so that if people want to walk to and from work, to and from the bus or to and from the shops they can do that not only in the summer but throughout the year, perhaps with a coat and gloves at some times of the year, but nonetheless.

Those sorts of improvements are the ones we want to keep making across this city. In some places the city simply was not built with that infrastructure in the first instance or, in the case of the older parts of Canberra, the infrastructure is of a different era. So steadily replacing that or upgrading it is an objective. The challenge with some of the inner parts, of course, is the heritage status and/or feel of those areas. There is a certain character to them that people do not necessarily want to lose. There is always, of course, a tension there.

There are a range of other upgrades that I could continue to rattle off, but I have given members a flavour of the sorts of upgrades and maintenance that the government is undertaking right across the city. It is very much consistent with Ms Fitzharris's motion about reflecting the fact that we are doing work in the town centres, the local shopping centres and in the suburbs—fixing the footpaths and all of those kinds of things. Speaking of footpaths, I get quite a few letters about those as well. This year we are seeing a record spend on active travel by the ACT government of \$23 million. That will go to a range of both upgrades and new infrastructure. Again, we will see that spread out right across the city.

We are investing in new infrastructure in areas such as the new suburbs of Gungahlin and Molonglo. It has not always been done in the past but we are now building our suburbs with the right infrastructure so that people do not have to go back and expensively retrofit this stuff at a later point in time. Some of these have been referred to already.

In closing some of the gaps in the network, there is the new cyclepath that we built in Bowen park, for example. At the moment there is a dirt track, which gets a bit hairy on a rainy weekend, and we will see an improved facility across what is a very popular part of Canberra. But we will also see small projects right across the city that just fix up those little black spots or problem areas that people write to TAMS about. They contact the government through Canberra Connect and say, "Can you do something about this?" The government keeps a list of these things. It seeks to prioritise them and work through the list as people identify problem areas.

We have also got work going on at the arboretum—that is something that perhaps does not sit in the suburbs but is enormously popular with people right across Canberra—including toilet and safety upgrades for the pod playground. That is coming out of next year's budget. It is in addition to the work that is already underway that has just commenced to put up a new shade sail at the arboretum, at the pod playground. We are mindful of the requests we received for a new shade sail. That will be an upgrade to what is already an incredibly popular facility. We are also starting to see trails being built through the forests at the arboretum so that people can start to fan out more from the visitors centre as the trees grow and the arboretum takes shape. This is part of the ongoing development of this immensely popular facility.

The budget includes the installation of new fitness equipment at Yerrabi district park and Edison park. We have certainly had good feedback in recent times as TAMS has rolled out new outdoor fitness equipment centres and also created a website and resources for people to gain information on how to use the equipment. So you do not necessarily have to go to the gym. If people perhaps cannot afford a gym membership or just prefer training outdoors, the government is making sure that there is a range of opportunities available for people to keep up a fit and healthy lifestyle in their neighbourhoods.

I have already spoken about the walking and cycling infrastructure. For me, this is one of the real highlights in the budget and reflects the significantly increased commitment from the government to promoting active travel in the city. People sometimes ask, "What is active travel?" It is that idea of walking and cycling, whether it is parking your car further away and walking for the last part of your journey to get some exercise, walking to the bus stop, cycling all the way to work or combining cycling with a bus ride. The government is really working hard to make a range of options available, and that includes things like now putting the money in and sorting out the policy issues to get the installation of bike racks on the articulated and Steer-tag buses which will bring the ACTION fleet up to having 98 per cent of our buses fitted with bike racks, increasing from the current 80 per cent and particularly filling those gaps on the intertown routes.

Right across the city we will see works being undertaken. I have already spoken of Bowen park. This year we will be putting money into upgrading the Sullivans Creek cyclepath. That is a significant investment in recognition of the fact that that is the busiest cyclepath in Canberra and it has the wonderful honour of having become congested and actually needing to be widened, as well as needing to improve the road crossings on that incredibly busy cyclepath.

But it is not just in the inner parts of Canberra that we want to see high cycling rates. We want to encourage more cycling in the town and group centres. In fact we want to see more people out there. We want to see places like Belconnen and Woden look as busy as areas around, say, the inner north. That is why there is money allocated for improving works and, in particular, designing projects. We have more projects in the pipeline for next year. In the budget we see a good spend this year, but we also see design works being prepared so that next year when more funding comes through projects are ready to go. So again we see that commitment right across the city in terms of work being undertaken.

Members, I could speak for the remaining two minutes that I have on other initiatives, but I think I have conveyed the significant investment by the ACT government in the budget to continue the renewal in our suburbs by upgrading and maintaining our local shops and town centres, as Ms Fitzharris has identified in her motion. I think these initiatives will continue to ensure that Canberra continues to be the world's most livable city. These initiatives are about maintaining good services, basic services, and a high quality of life for the residents of this city. It is something I know they appreciate. I know that people think they are very lucky to live here and that they really value being a citizen of Canberra. The investments we see in this budget will continue to ensure that they feel that way.

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) (5.58): I am very pleased to speak on the motion on urban renewal across the territory. I want to go to some of the projects this government is funding through the current budget.

A close-up of Tuggeranong shows we are spending \$10.7 million for a new CIT training centre in Tuggeranong. There are 20 local shop upgrades, with upkeep and maintenance projects in those shops. There is \$24 million, as we have heard, for the duplication of Ashley Drive, including all of those roadworks that I talked about earlier on—traffic signalisation, traffic intersections, better pedestrian access and a pedestrian bridge over Monks Creek to allow residents from Isabella Plains to get across to bus stations on the other side of the road. And 1,177 hectares of grass mowed in parks on public land.

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

MR 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) (6.00): I was referring to 1,177 hectares of grass mowed in parks and on public land; 121 playgrounds, with programs on upkeep and maintenance around Tuggeranong; and 487,973 items loaned at the Tuggeranong and Erindale libraries.

On education for Tuggeranong, the government is delivering \$1.1 billion this year. This funds 8,046 students and 830 teachers in 20 public schools. Education issues in the budget for Tuggeranong include \$6.5 million for the Caroline Chisholm centre for innovation and learning, teaching for the future by specialising in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; \$10.7 million for the CIT in Tuggeranong, with a brand-new CIT campus for Canberra's southern suburbs; and \$600,000 for a purpose-built learning support unit at Gowrie.

I have talked about the duplication of Ashley Drive. Tuggeranong will take a share in \$19.5 million in funding on road maintenance programs across the ACT. While we are on the subject of roads across the territory, I want to talk about roads, especially the conversation that we have had today in regard to the work for the Barton Highway and Gundaroo Drive. As you are aware, we have announced \$10 million for the roundabout signalisation work for the Barton Highway and Gundaroo Drive to reduce congestion for that area and to assist residents of Gungahlin and, of course, Crace to get onto the Barton Highway with ease.

During those discussions, we heard from members opposite, Mr Coe in particular. He indicated that he has seen evidence of traffic delay should this process go ahead. He has quoted figures of 316 seconds of delay after the project is completed. It appears that Mr Coe has the wrong end of the table that was produced to model the traffic delays for the particular intersection. That modelling of 316 seconds in 2021 shows delay basically if we do not do anything at the roundabout. The option that we have chosen is to signalise the roundabout, put extra lanes in and ensure that buses flow freely through that roundabout. The delay in that option is 50 seconds. After all the work that we do on signalisation and lane work for the roundabout, the approach delay will be 50 seconds, not 316 seconds.

The half-baked plan the Liberals have for the Barton-Gundaroo flyover is not only underfunded by \$20 million but has been designed by Mr Coe, who obviously cannot even read a modelling table on the traffic flows for the exact same intersection we are working on. He is out by 266 seconds in his engineering calculations. Their plan for a \$50 million flyover to overcome a 50-second delay is quite expensive. In fact, if you extrapolate that out, it is \$1 million of expenditure per second. That is the Liberals' plan—to spend \$1 million for a second of delay. I am sure the rest of Canberra is going to be very interested in that level of expenditure. There will be some requests for flyovers right across town, I would imagine.

Going back to my electorate of Tuggeranong, the urban renewal for Tuggeranong will revitalise Tuggeranong shopping centres, playgrounds and shared spaces. The government will be providing for Tuggeranong over \$2 million for renewal projects in Kambah, Erindale and the Tuggeranong town centre. That will include cycleways, footpaths and landscaping upgrades. There will be more mowing, tree pruning, weeding, graffiti removal and prevention across Tuggeranong suburbs. Also, there

will be renewal in housing for Tuggeranong, with the new Southquay development, a fantastic development for the area. And there will be a new kids' splash and play pool, as we have heard, at the Lakeside Leisure Centre.

You can see that urban renewal is key in this budget. It is a key focus for the territory. I am very proud to support the motion today.

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (6.04), in reply: I thank the members today who have supported this motion. I would like to reflect on the comments they made in support of this important motion about suburban and urban renewal in our suburbs. In his statements in this place as Chief Minister since December last year the Chief Minister has made clear his passion for our suburbs—all our suburbs. He outlined the significance of this budget for increasing the pride in our suburbs, increasing the investment in our suburbs. He is serious about this. We on this side are all serious about this.

The Chief Minister noted that many Canberrans come here and stay here. They stay here because they value the amenity of the city; they stay here because they value the lifestyle in this world's most livable city. As the Chief Minister emphasised, this is what makes Canberra so special—what keeps people here, what keeps their families here. Over time, we are seeing generations of Canberrans still calling Canberra home.

I thank Minister Rattenbury. I know that he noted particularly the pride he feels but especially the pride TAMS staff feel in our city and in the work they do. These are the staff that are working every day—I gather every hour of every day—in making and keeping our city the beautiful city that it is. He made a very good point about Canberra Connect, now Access Canberra. I had to call Access Canberra today about an issue; they were fantastic. He also mentioned a very useful recommendation which, as the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, he has taken up. It was made to him when he was the minister for the ageing by the ministerial council on the ageing—to target the suburbs Ainslie and Weston to make them age friendly. What a great approach, and I am glad that it is underway.

He also gave a very good and strong overview of the range of issues across our suburbs—how they differ from older suburbs to newer suburbs, how suburbs change over time. As Minister Rattenbury noted, it is good to discuss here how we go about future-proofing our newer suburbs and the work that we undertake in our older suburbs—how we also do some future-proofing there as well. It was a reminder throughout the conversation of just how much value we get out of some of the smaller things—how much difference a shade sail at a playground, a shade sail at local shops, some upgrades to park benches, more planting or more weeds removed in our suburbs makes to the day-to-day lives of Canberrans as they move around the city, as they explore our city at different times of the year, in the different seasons we have, which bring particular challenges to our municipal services.

I thank Minister Gentleman for his support and also for his explanation, again, of the significant investment this budget is making in municipal services and in other investments in his own electorate, which I know he and Minister Burch feel very passionate about improving. I also note the very interesting comments that he made

about Mr Coe's earlier engineering commentary on the wait times at the Gundaroo Drive, William Slim and Barton Highway intersection. A \$1 million per second fix in a flyover is not something that is going to be widely supported. I hope to hear Mr Coe reassessing that proposal in light of this new evidence about wait times.

I am disappointed but not surprised at the Canberra Liberals' lack of support for this motion today. I believe they share pride in this city; I believe we all come into this place wanting to make Canberra a better place, wanting to make sure that it remains the world's most livable city. But I reject, as the supporters of this motion have done, that this city is characterised by urban decay. It just does not stack up that we can be in the world's most livable city, that we can be making record investments in health, education, transport and municipal services in this city this week, and be suffering from the urban decay Mr Hanson mentioned.

There were two things, in particular, about Mr Hanson's contribution that I found difficult to accept. One was the view that this government is being short-sighted on transport. The second was his lack of understanding of a budget position that needs to be strong.

Firstly, short-sightedness is not something that can be used to describe this government at all. This government has a vision; it has always had a vision and it is working hard to implement that vision. "Short-sighted" is not how I would describe a government that is making record investments in health infrastructure, in new and innovative health services and in new education infrastructure across the city. There is the CIT campus in Tuggeranong. It is not short-sighted to be investing in light rail. Far-sighted visionary governments across the world are investing in light rail; short-sighted political parties are talking only about roads. We need to do something about congestion, about the sustainability of our city, and short-sightedness is talking only about roads.

There was also the budget discussion that he is keen to emphasise. There were announcements this week by the Liberals on roads and public transport—two very small announcements on what for some time now they have promised is a comprehensive transport strategy. That is \$90 million. That is the sum total of the new investments in roads in this year's budget. From the investment that they announced on Monday, I would like to know which investments in this year's budget—which new investments of \$90 million in roads and infrastructure in this budget—they would not do.

I was disappointed, as I say, in the lack of support, but I am grateful to members for speaking in support of this government's commitment to investing heavily in renewing our suburbs and town centres, and also making sure that Canberra continues to look and feel like the world's most livable city.

Motion agreed to.

Magna Carta—anniversary

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (6.12): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

(a) that 15 June 2015 marks the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta; and

(b) the historic and legal significance of the Magna Carta; and

(2) affirms the importance of the rule of law to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Mr Assistant Speaker, 15 June marks the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta by King John at Runnymede near Windsor. I think it is important on such an important anniversary that we should pause for a while and contemplate, as I said in the motion, the historic and legal significance of the Magna Carta. Most importantly, we should contemplate the importance of such a document in the establishment of the rule of law in the legal systems that we have come to develop over those 800 years and the significance that has not only in the United Kingdom, not only in Australia, but also here in the Australian Capital Territory.

In a previous millennium, when I was an adviser to an attorney-general, I recall that in a statute law amendment bill we actually repealed the Magna Carta act in the ACT. I know that the attorney-general at the time was very concerned at the prospect that, although a symbolic thing, we might be throwing out a long history. But the ACT no longer has a Magna Carta act.

It is true that many of the provisions in the Magna Carta no longer hold a great deal of relevance—for example, the ways in which weirs were taxed in the United Kingdom or in England in 1215 were quite different from the taxation systems that we have today. But that does not diminish the importance of the Magna Carta and it is why we should spend some time in a legislature contemplating the importance of the Magna Carta.

A little bit of history, because this is a pretty nerdy subject and I am a history nerd: the Magna Carta was drafted by the Archbishop of Canterbury to make peace between King John, who, according to that seminal work *1066 and all that* by Sellar and Yeatman, was not just a bad king; he was an awful king. The charter was to make peace between that king and a group of rebel barons.

It promised the protection of church rights, the protection for the barons from illegal imprisonment, access to swift justice and a limitation on feudal payments to the Crown to be implemented through a council of barons. That seems pretty unexceptional, but at the time it was a problem. There were unjust levies against landowners. If landowners did not pay, their lands were summarily consumed by the Crown.

As was the case in 1215, neither side stood by their commitments. The church did not take a very strong view on the issue as well, and Pope Innocent III annulled the original Magna Carta in 1216. This led to a series of civil wars. After John's death, his

son, the young Henry III, reissued the document in 1216. It was at that stage a little watered down. This was an unsuccessful bid to gain support for the cause of the young king. At the end of the war in 1217, it formed part of the peace.

Henry reissued the Magna Carta in 1225 in exchange for a grant of new taxes because he was running short of money, as was the wont of the English kings at the time. His son, Edward I, repeated the exercise in 1297. The 1297 version of the Magna Carta is the one which is housed in the commonwealth parliament. From that time, 1297, it was incorporated into England's statute laws.

It is quite clear from this brief history that the Magna Carta was not initially a roaring success. But after 1297 the charter became part of English political life. It was usually renewed by each monarch in turn, although as time went by, and as parliament became less fledgling and passed more laws, it lost some of its practical significance.

By the end of the 16th century and into the 17th century there was an upsurge in interest in the Magna Carta. Of course, there was an upsurge in interest in the Magna Carta because there was a prevailing doctrine that became somewhat unpopular, which was called the divine right of kings. Both James I and his son Charles I attempted to suppress any discussion of the Magna Carta, but this attempt was curtailed by the English civil war and the eventual execution of Charles I.

What followed was what is called the interregnum. The republic, under the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, did not have any truck with the notion of Magna Carta because Cromwell, after all, attempted to make himself a monarch in absolute terms. He referred to the Magna Carta as the "magna farta", which is unparliamentary. I apologise, but it is a historic fact.

That having been said, the Magna Carta with its protection of ancient personal liberties was used as the basis of the agreement to install William and Mary. It formed the basis of the act of succession and laid the foundation of what is called the glorious revolution of 1688 and the bill of rights of 1689.

I do not want to be accused of having a Whig view of history—that everything is a continuous improvement and a continuous success. Although there is much to be said about the 1689 bill of rights and the establishment of rights in the United Kingdom, the act of succession was not necessarily an unalloyed good because it was, after all, a document that was founded on religious intolerance.

Since then, the Magna Carta has gained considerable significance not only in the United Kingdom but across the world. It influenced early American colonists in the 13 colonies and in the formation of the American constitution. The fifth amendment to the American constitution almost completely replicates the wording of the right to liberty, which is found in clause 29 of the Magna Carta.

Over time there has been considerable discussion about the importance of the Magna Carta. With the arrival of the 800th anniversary this year, there is again a discussion about whether Magna Carta is an insignificant document or whether it is a significant document. I would contend that, although there are no provisions of the Magna Carta in our law here today, its importance cannot be overstated.

Although it was not an unalloyed success at the time of its promulgation in 1215, its importance cannot be overstated. It is reflected in the statute books of most advanced countries. These are the common law countries, of course, but in other places as well. The notions that were first set down in a comprehensive way are entrenched in legislation across the world. Magna Carta was, in fact, the exemplar of how liberties should be upheld.

In a sense, even though it was not an unalloyed success, it has become greater than the sum of the parts. While many of the provisions across the world have been repealed because they are no longer in date, it has become a symbol of liberty and a symbol of the separation of powers. That is an important thing to remember.

The fact that the king conceded that he was no longer above the law was a truly revolutionary thought. Kings did not take to it easily. It took a long time for that to come to pass. But there are many places in this world even today where kings or their equivalents—dictators—have not come to terms with the notion that they are not above the law. Many countries across the world suffer because of that.

Lord Denning described the Magna Carta as “the greatest constitutional document of all times—the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot”. Whether that arbitrary authoritarian despot was John the Bad, some African dictator that we could name or some despot in Asia or South America, this foundation is an important bulwark against their power and a reminder to people, whether they are living freely or whether they are oppressed, that there is an opportunity for them to overcome the arbitrary power of individual despots.

This notion has been carried forward through a multitude of documents and enshrined in many places. We have seen the same sentiments being described in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was put together in response to the despotism that we saw in the early part of the 20th century. The great thinkers and moralists of the mid-20th century who were contributors to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights drew their inspiration from the Magna Carta, amongst other documents.

The main provisions that are still contained in some form are those which relate to the seizing of person and property. Clause 29 of the Magna Carta says:

No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or his possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgement of his peers or by the law of the land. To no-one will we sell, to no-one deny or delay right or justice.

This and the many other provisions of the Magna Carta, as I said before, have become the bulwark of the rule of law, the separation of powers and all of those things which we consider important here in the ACT. We spend some time on these issues. For instance, the administration and procedure committee is currently considering how we fare in relation to the Latimer House principles. Of course, this is another extension, another development, of the thinking in relation to parliamentary rules and procedures,

parliamentary practice and the rule of law. All of these things should be acknowledged as significant. We should affirm them in this place because of the importance that they play in ensuring the freedoms of the people of the ACT and the people of the world.

As I said before, the fact that a king conceded that he was no longer above the law was a truly revolutionary idea. This parliament is not above the law. No parliamentarian or chief minister or prime minister or president is above the law. What we need to remember is that both the challenges and the benefits of this freedom have never been more evident than they are in a place like this Assembly today.

We are the inheritors and the beneficiaries of a long legacy. We are also its trustees. It is incumbent upon us that we affirm the importance of the rule of law to the people of the Australian Capital Territory and in doing so mark this significant anniversary and mark it in a way which is appropriate to legislators. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Health, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (6.25): I thank Mrs Dunne for bringing forward this important motion today. It is still important and relevant that we as an elected legislature mark the 800th anniversary of the signing of the great charter, the Magna Carta, in the Assembly this evening. The Magna Carta is described as the most famous and important document in the history of the English speaking world. It is widely viewed as one of the most important legal documents in the history of democracy.

The original document, handwritten in medieval Latin on untanned animal skin, was written in the 13th century by a group of English barons to protect their rights and property against a tyrannical king. On 15 June 1215, when confronted by these barons, the king consented to their demands and affixed his seal to the Magna Carta in order to avoid civil war. Although that agreement was later nullified, it was, as Mrs Dunne has indicated, reissued several times.

As a statute of the realm from 1297, the Magna Carta officially became part of British law to be referred to, interpreted and quoted in the courts and in the parliaments of Britain and countries that have adopted British law, including Australia. Echoes of Magna Carta can also be found within the American constitution and its influence can be seen in modern documents, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Here in Australia, the ACT along with Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales have legislated to take in selected imperial legislation, including chapter 29 of the Magna Carta. In the ACT the legislation adopting chapter 29 can be found on the ACT's legislation register. In Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory most chapters are in force. At its essence, Magna Carta acknowledges that no-one in society is above the law: not the king or his subjects, not the government or the governed. As an affirmation that authorities should be subject to law arising from the community itself, it is a foundational stone of constitutional and parliamentary government.

The legacy of the Magna Carta is evident in the ideals of rule of law and due process and in a number of fundamental rights, such as the freedom of speech and the right to justice and a fair trial. Eleanor Roosevelt, in referring to human rights, noted that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights may well become the international Magna Carta.

In that context, our own Human Rights Act here in the ACT demonstrates the vitality of the principles outlined in this 800-year-old document and their subsequent evolution. The Assembly will recall that in 2014 we celebrated the first decade of operation of our Human Rights Act. While the document itself covers many matters related to the feudal system of government that existed in 13th century England, the Magna Carta enshrines two crucial principles in criminal law which continue to underpin the way in which our criminal justice system operates.

The first might be characterised as the principle of justice and the second as the principle of proportionality. The Magna Carta promised that no free man shall be taken or imprisoned, save by the lawful judgement of his peers or by the law of the land. This principle of justice has been applied to the whole of the criminal justice process from arrest through trial and to sentence and sentence administration.

It is supported by the further undertaking in Magna Carta that no-one will be subject to the law without faithful witnesses in evidence. In other words, an accusation alone is not sufficient. There must be reliable evidence to support that accusation. These two statements create the framework on which the criminal justice system is founded and are, in somewhat more modern language, included in our own Human Rights Act today.

Section 21 of the Human Rights Act contains the right to a fair trial. This right includes that any criminal charges must be decided by a competent, independent and impartial court or tribunal after a fair and public hearing. Section 22 contains the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law and includes the right to examine witnesses.

It is hard to imagine a criminal trial where these principles would not be followed. They have become so ingrained in our way of life that we accept them without question. They are rights because, in the context of a criminal trial, they are the right thing to do. The rights operate to ensure that an accused is dealt with fairly throughout the process and upholds our community, as with so many others, as safe, fair and just.

The second principle, that of proportionality, comes from the promise that “for a trivial offence a free man shall be fined only in proportion to the degree of his offence, and for a serious offence correspondingly but not so heavily as to deprive him of his livelihood”. Put another way, the penalty should reflect the seriousness of the crime. This is the thread which runs through our criminal laws and it is embedded in our national psyche and our collective respect for the rule of law.

It would be unthinkable for all offences, however minor, to always result in a prison sentence. Equally, it would be out of the question for a murderer to simply be fined

for their crime. Proportionality is a fundamental principle in sentencing law. It is applied by the courts on a daily basis as they search for the right penalty to reflect both the gravity of the offending and all the other factors that they are required to consider.

While criminal laws develop and change, these principles remain the foundation on which our criminal justice system is built and operates 800 years on from the signing of Magna Carta. This debate today offers us the opportunity to reflect on how this important document has shaped us as a democratic society. I am confident that our human rights framework and criminal justice system will continue to develop and mature in the future based on the significance and enduring influence of Magna Carta. Eight hundred years after its signing, we celebrate a document that remains in this current day the foundation stone of the rule of law. In the words of Lord Irvine of Lairg:

Its terms continue to underpin key constitutional doctrines; its flame continues to burn in the torches of modern human rights instruments; and its spirit continues to resonate throughout the law.

Motion agreed to.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Harry Irvine

MR COE (Ginninderra) (6.33): I rise tonight to talk about Harry Irvine and his inspirational family. I am glad that Harry and his family—father Brendan, mother Lauren, grandparents and great-grandfather—are able to join us in the Assembly today.

Harry Irvine is a seven-year-old Canberran who faced an extraordinary health battle. Despite the challenges, Harry has remained positive and has beaten the challenges that have come his way. Of course, his brother Cooper has gone through these times as well, and his patience and support are to be celebrated.

Harry was born in January 2008 with a large tumour at the base of his spine. The tumour was expected as it had been identified during a routine ultrasound. However, what was not expected was the amount of damage the tumour had done to Harry's body. The tumour had managed to spread through his abdomen, bowel and bladder.

Just after being born, Harry was airlifted to the Sydney Children's Hospital at Westmead, where he underwent an 18-hour operation to remove the tumour. Two days later, he required further major surgery, with a 12-hour operation required to finish removing the tumour. Harry spent the next month in the Westmead neonatal intensive care unit before he could finally return home to Canberra.

At just six months old, Harry began a course of chemotherapy to help prevent any future regrowth of smaller tumours which were scattered throughout his body. We are happy to report that so far the chemotherapy has done its job. Whilst Harry's tumours have not completely disappeared, there has been no regrowth.

Harry's latest challenge is kidney failure, a disease which he has had to battle for the last two years. It is very pleasing to note that in February this year Harry was the recipient of a new kidney from his father, Brendan. Despite the expected ups and downs since the transplant, we are happy to report that both Harry and Brendan are doing extremely well. Just recently, Harry was well enough to return to school; he is a second grader at the Canberra Grammar School.

To help Harry through his medical battles, his parents established a charity, Harry's Ride. It is through this charity that I had the pleasure of meeting them and also very briefly attending the fundraising dinner back in November. The event was held at Trevino's restaurant at the Gold Creek Country Club, and all funds raised went to help support Harry and his family through the ordeal in Sydney earlier this year.

I would like to thank Trevino's restaurant for hosting the fundraiser. Thank you also to everyone who attended and purchased auction items and to everyone who donated an auction item for the night. The time and money that people contributed was for an extremely worthy cause.

Most importantly, thank you to Harry's parents, Lauren and Brendan. They are facing life's toughest challenge, but they are facing it very stoically and with resolve to see their family remain fit and healthy.

I would also like to mention the medical staff who have treated Harry over the years. It goes without saying that they all do an amazing job. In particular, I would like to pass on the thanks of the family to Dr Jeffery Fletcher from the Canberra Hospital. Dr Fletcher is described by Lauren as their "knight in shining armour" and is always there to provide advice to the family.

Harry's story demonstrates to all the importance of good health facilities, but perhaps more importantly the importance of family. Situations like theirs must surely be testing for all concerned, so a resilient and loving family is a must.

I encourage all members to support Harry and to welcome him and his family to the Assembly today. For more information about Harry and to keep updated on his progress, I encourage members to view his Facebook page at facebook.com/theharryride.

In this ACT budget week, I can assure the family that all of us here are very much aware of the plight of you and many others around town and just how important it is that we get the priorities right, especially when it comes to health funding. In the meantime, I wish Harry and his family all the very best for the future, and thank and congratulate them on their journey.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—youth

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (6.38): During this National Reconciliation Week, I represented the education minister at an event to welcome the 2015 Canberra Institute of Technology Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student ambassadors.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student ambassador network is part of CIT's commitment to reconciliation. It was established last year to enhance CIT's achievements towards its reconciliation action plan. It encourages the ambassadors to be leaders on their campus and to be a voice across our community on reconciliation.

The ambassadors network consists of three students selected from within CIT. I congratulate this year's ambassadors, Dearne Brown, Daen Lomas and Julie Oakley. The ambassadors will each be supported by a mentor, a CIT staff member who has volunteered their skills to assist the ambassadors to develop in areas such as public speaking, events and running meetings. This year eight staff members have volunteered to continue as members' mentors, as well as the 2014 student ambassador, Felicity Corbin. Training is provided to support the ambassadors to achieve their goals, and further training is offered at CIT Solutions to enhance their leadership skills.

The aims of the program are to develop a framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student ambassadors to meet, to support participation in reconciliation events, and to provide feedback on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; to recruit a network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student ambassadors that can discuss issues and share ideas; to provide development opportunities for the ambassadors; to support them to be role models to other students; and to document their stories so they can be used to inform CIT and the community on future initiatives to enhance outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The dedicated support of CIT Yurauna Centre, a lighthouse for education and training in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, has helped thousands of Indigenous students to achieve something better through education and training.

We are seeing in Australia a lot of support and goodwill from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people for great reconciliation initiatives—support that shows there is a strong desire in the community to understand, to put right the wrongs of the past and to take positive action towards the national vision for a shared future.

When I was Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, I had the privilege of launching CIT's first reconciliation plan in 2012. It is fantastic to see how far that plan has progressed. Reconciliation is a recurring theme, perhaps a motif for my political career—elected as I was four years ago during Reconciliation Week.

At last week's event, I was also able to observe that in 2002, when I was chair of the ACT's Indigenous Education Consultative Body, I helped launch the CIT's reconciliation statement, the first for an ACT government agency. This followed on from CIT's launch of a sorry book in 1998.

Back in 2011, I said in my inaugural speech in the Assembly that reconciliation will be the nation-building task of this century—a nation building that redefines what is Australia and what it means to be an Australian, a nation at one, without shame, embarrassment or the anger of dispossession, when non-Indigenous Australians can draw upon that 40,000 years of Indigenous culture as their heritage and their history.

I congratulate CIT on the ambassador program, which is about commitment to reconciliation. I applaud the incoming ambassadors for the fortitude they have shown in taking a leadership role in reconciliation at CIT.

ACT Fire and Rescue—Nepal visit

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) (6.42): I rise to talk about some activity from our Fire and Rescue crews. Last month, on 13 May, I was presented with a framed letter of appreciation from the community fire units within the Khumbu or Everest region in Nepal. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Khumbu community for their kind words and warm gesture and to acknowledge members of our ACT Fire and Rescue for their efforts in supporting that region through the establishment of community fire units.

In mid-last year ACT firefighter Geoff Batram received a request for help from some of his friends in the region of Nepal. The request was to help the Lukla community set up a community fire unit to support the local villages. After receiving this request, Mr Batram approached the then chief fire officer for support, and it was agreed that the ACT Fire and Rescue were in a position to donate some equipment that was no longer in use, such as uniforms and hoses.

As the plan to support this small village establish a community fire unit started to progress, a further seven ACT firefighters expressed a desire to support this cause. In addition to Mr Batram, these are the firefighters who put themselves forward: Matthew Buchtman, Steve Clyde-Smith, Brian Connell, Aaron Kiewiet, Neil Maher, Mark Phillips and Paul Swain.

In March this year this group of eight visited the Khumbu region on their own time and at their own expense to support this worthy cause. This is truly commendable and speaks volumes about the community-mindedness of our ACT Fire and Rescue teams.

In Mr Batram's own words, when recounting some of the experience:

Our flight landed at Lukla, which the History Channel in 2010 named “the most dangerous airport in the world” and after rejoicing at our safe landing, we went to look at the water system. It was a simple yet incredibly effective system with water pressure in the village only slightly less than we enjoy in Canberra.

The team of eight spent the first morning discussing fire prevention and safety. On the second day they were involved in fire drills. A competitive element was added and the

teams raced against the clock and each other to dress in the firefighting uniform, roll and connect the hose to the hydrant and knock a drum off a fence with a jet of water. The team was thrilled with the level of community participation from both the men and the women in the village and the enthusiasm shown for learning the drills and absorbing the safety messages from our firefighters.

The final task of the team was to visit a local school, and they thoroughly enjoyed that experience. Again, to quote Mr Batram:

These communities expressed their gratitude. Speeches, presentations and promises to return were made. We left these villages satisfied, feeling we had left some useful expertise behind, knowing we had made many new friends and firefighter colleagues—but also knowing that with a couple more visits and a little more firefighting equipment, we could work with such willing and enthusiastic communities to create a community fire unit the equal of anywhere.

It gives me a great sense of pride to be able to recognise the eight members of our Canberra community and ACT Fire and Rescue and to thank them for their selfless service in this small community in Nepal. Their time and dedication in not only serving our local community but also taking their skills and their passion overseas to enable others to have the skills and the tools to keep their communities safe is, indeed, commendable. I am sure I am not speaking alone in thanking those eight representatives from ACT Fire and Rescue for their visit to this region in Nepal. I am sure they looked on the most recent devastation in Nepal with heavy hearts. But to Geoff, Matthew, Steve, Brian, Aaron, Neil, Mark and Paul, my deepest thanks. I am sure all in the ACT community would like to offer their thanks to you and also to ACT Fire and Rescue for facilitating the donations of equipment.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 6.47 pm.