



# Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**NINTH ASSEMBLY**

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**Tuesday, 1 August 2017**

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

**Mr Valentine Max Jeffery OAM**  
**Motion of condolence**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.01): I move:

That this Assembly expresses its profound sorrow at the death of the former MLA for Brindabella, Valentine Jeffery OAM, who leaves a remarkable legacy in his community of Tharwa and the wider Canberra region, and tenders its sympathy to his family, friends and colleagues in their bereavement.

Madam Acting Speaker, today we mourn the loss of a colleague. Val Jeffery was a lifelong Canberran and an iconic part of our city. He was a man who stood up for what he believed was right and, as I and others would be acutely aware, he never shied away from causing a political stir.

Val Jeffery was Tharwa's unofficial mayor for decades. He owned and operated the Tharwa general store since 1948. He met thousands of people—locals and those who had travelled to Tharwa for the day alike, and he was always up for a chat. His passion and enthusiasm for rural life were evident for all to see. He was a major advocate for rural ACT. As the city of Canberra grew rapidly in the decades after the Second World War, Val stood up for those on rural properties and in villages surrounding a growing city.

Over the decades he fought for his community, leading the campaign to reopen the Tharwa bridge, and he was instrumental in bringing the community together after the 2003 bushfire recovery effort. On top of that, Val was captain of the local bushfire brigade for 38 years. Bushfire recovery and abatement was a cause he was very strongly committed to, cared very deeply about and championed in this place.

Of course, he was also very active politically. For half a century he was an active member of the Canberra Liberals, before standing for the Community Alliance Party in the 2008 ACT election, in the seat of Brindabella, and then for the Canberra Liberals in the 2012 election, in Brindabella.

It would be fair to say that his election to the Assembly last year on a countback was well deserved. His maiden speech was full of tales of his rich life experience. While it is true to say that we on this side of the chamber did not always agree with Val, ACT Labor and I personally always greatly appreciated his passion and enthusiasm for engaging in issues important to the Tharwa community and to the broader Canberra community. He was a true local champion, honoured with the Order of Australia Medal for his services to his community.

Whilst we in this place will undoubtedly miss him, the people who suffer most during this time are his family and close friends. Our thoughts and sympathies are with them, particularly his wife, Dorothy, and son, Kevin, during this period of bereavement. On behalf of the parliamentary ACT Labor Party, I extend my condolences to the Jeffery family.

**MR COE** (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (10.05): It is with great sadness, but also pride, that I rise today to speak in memory of a former member of this place, Valentine Max Jeffery OAM, AFSM. It was a year ago tomorrow, on 2 August 2016, that Val entered the Legislative Assembly for the first time as an MLA, making his maiden speech, after filling a vacancy in the Assembly. I believe he was the oldest person ever to deliver a maiden speech in an Australian parliament.

While Val only briefly held public office in this place, we are all aware that his pursuits in life before he entered the Assembly are why he will be so dearly remembered. He was a community leader in Tharwa, a passionate advocate for the ACT's rural residents, a fearless firefighter and a stalwart of our community. While he was in the Assembly for only a brief time, Val certainly did not waste any time in making his opinions known. His raw honesty and his nature to pull no punches should be recognised by all of us in the Assembly today.

Val was born in December 1934 in Queanbeyan and, as he described in his inaugural speech, he lived through the Great Depression, the Second World War and the impact it had on the Tharwa community. In that speech he delivered here a year ago tomorrow, Val spoke passionately about Tharwa and what he regarded as a growing disconnect between government and the people. I quote from that inaugural speech:

... Australia started moving from a population ingrained with get up and go after enduring a depression and two world wars to approach a generation of educated politicians and bureaucrats out of touch with the real world of those decades.

He went on to say:

... an active, vibrant rural community like Tharwa does not ask for much but expects a bit of respect, which has been completely lacking since self-government. Surely it is time for an ACT government to take a deep breath, open its eyes, look a bit outside the concrete bunker in Civic and recognise that there is an important rural part to the ACT.

As we are remembering Val today, these words should serve as an always timely reminder that we in this place are here to serve the people, not ourselves, and that the local government should not lose touch with its citizens, including rural citizens.

As a community man, Val played a leading role in numerous organisations in Tharwa, including the local progress association, the Tharwa community hall trust, the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association, Junior Farmers in Tharwa and the Tharwa school board. He was also president of the Tharwa show society for many years. Of course, he also ran the general store for 60 years, taking over from his parents. In addition to being an accomplished dancer and poet, Val was also a keen shooter, and he played cricket and tennis.

While reflecting upon Val's life, I came across an article that appeared in the *Canberra Times* in November 1981 entitled "Tharwa plan optimism". The article discussed an NCDC plan for the village of Tharwa and its presentation to local residents at the Tharwa community hall. On one occasion there was concern about an NCDC plan and how it would have an impact on the tennis courts. It was reported that at that public meeting Val Jeffery argued that the village should simply be "kept as it is". Somewhat amusingly, the final sentence of the article noted:

At the end of the meeting, Mr Jeffrey ... asked the NCDC for the standard fee of \$20 for the use of the hall.

This sums up Val: putting his community first, ahead of bureaucracy. No bigwigs from Canberra were going to escape that \$20 fee. Of course, it was Val's involvement for 60 years as a member of the local bushfire brigade, 38 of them as captain, which he will be particularly remembered for. I quote from an editorial in the *Canberra Times* last week:

His knowledge came to the fore during the 2003 bushfires.

Four days before the January 18 firestorm devastated Canberra, Mr Jeffery wrote to Tharwa residents warning them there was a very real chance the fires would break out of the mountains and if that happened suppression forces would be overwhelmed so that people needed to be prepared to help protect their own properties.

Many residents regarded that advice—as well as Mr Jeffery leading the brigade in burning a break around the western side of Tharwa on the night of January 17—as being instrumental in saving the village. Not only that, Mr Jeffery persuaded two young police officers on the afternoon of January 18 not to evacuate Tharwa because residents were well-prepared and needed to be on the ground to protect their homes against ember attack.

That was more than 14 years ago. Many Canberrans who arrived in the national capital after the firestorm may not even know it happened. We cannot afford to be complacent.

Val was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 2006 for his service to Tharwa, noting his service to the local bushfire brigade. He was also awarded the prestigious Australian Fire Service Medal in 1994 for distinguished fire service. In 2012 his name was added to the ACT Honour Walk in recognition of his extraordinary contribution to Canberra.

I, too, would like to offer my condolences to Val's wife, Dorothy, his son, Kevin, daughter-in-law, Linda, and grandchildren, Madelaine and Charlotte. Val was a very special person and he will be missed.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (10.11): On behalf of the ACT Greens, I join my Assembly colleagues in expressing my condolences on the death of Val Jeffery two weeks ago. Although he was a member of the Assembly for such a short period last year, he was, of course, well known to many of us, not so much as a political

candidate or as an MLA but as someone who campaigned for his local community for many decades.

As has already been said this morning, Val was a well-known Canberran who was passionate about Tharwa and regularly advocated successfully on behalf of the Tharwa community. He was always doing his best to make sure that the rural village was not forgotten, and I am certain that the Tharwa community will ensure that he is well commemorated in the village so that he can be remembered by the Tharwa community for generations to come.

From when I was TAMS minister a few years ago, I can certainly testify to how vigilant Val was in making the case for his community, regularly raising issues of maintenance and service provision for Tharwa, issues of the public domain and the like. The other issue he cared about deeply was ensuring that Canberra was well prepared for the threat of bushfires. His many years of dedication to firefighting, as well as a decade as chair of the ACT Bushfire Council, are testament to this. He received a Bushfire Service Medal for 60 years service with the local brigade, as well as an Order of Australia Medal in 2006 for his service to Tharwa.

During his short stint in the Assembly last year, Val—or Valentine, as he was less well known—continued to make the case for Tharwa. Actually, his inaugural speech on 2 August, almost to this day last year, was an interesting history lesson about Tharwa. It really highlighted to me the immense change that the region has experienced over the past decades, as times have changed, and, of course, largely from the impacts of the growth of Canberra on our rural villages.

The ACT Greens convey our thoughts and sympathies at this time to his wife, Dorothy, and his family and friends.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (10.13): I would like to thank those who have contributed to the debate by telling stories of Val's rich life. I would like to start by thanking Val for his contribution to the community, particularly our rural community and the people of Tharwa. I recognise that we have a number of Val's former colleagues, family and friends here today, and that is great.

Madam Acting Speaker, there is no doubt that Val was an iconic character, and it is likely that we will not see the likes of Val Jeffery in this chamber again. I would like to focus on his time in the Assembly, where many of us got to know Val a lot better. Members would remember that he came in after Mr Smyth, who got the job of Commissioner for International Engagement. I will not use this opportunity to elaborate on that appointment, but you could imagine that there was some consternation on this side of the chamber when that occurred. It was the case that Val was the last man standing on the Liberal ticket, and if he did not take the job it was likely going to fall to a Labor or a Greens member.

Val, understandably, given the short time left of the Assembly and his age, was somewhat reluctant to take up the job. His initial comment, when contacted by the media, was that he did not want it. There was quite a flurry of activity, which my colleague Mr Wall will recall. There were a number of short-notice trips down to

Tharwa to have a chat to Val and to ask Val to step up and serve in the Assembly. I am very glad that he did. It was typical of Val that, even though he was reluctant when called upon to serve, when the need was there he did step up, and I think at great expense to himself in many ways. He stood up, he made the commitment and he came into this place. I am very glad, for a whole range of reasons, that he did. The compelling argument that if he did not it would likely be a Green that came into this place was probably what sealed the deal for Val.

In retrospect, and having spoken to Val, he was very glad that he did step up as well, despite his initial reticence. He enjoyed being here and he did get a lot out of it. He made it very clear to me at the time that if he did come into this place then he would speak his mind. Those who were here at the time would agree that he kept that side of the bargain. He kept his word on that. As Mr Coe and Mr Barr have alluded to, his maiden speech was a beauty, and very different from most of our maiden speeches. I encourage those that were not here to look at it on Assembly on Demand or to read it, because it was very forthright. He talked about a lot of topics not normally spoken about in this place, and particularly about the rural community.

He gave it to a few people—all of us, I think, in various degrees. Despite being a politician himself, he did not have a high regard for politicians. Mr Corbell and Mr Gentleman particularly copped it from Val. He argued that the rural communities had not been served particularly well by this Assembly, and I think that, to a large extent, he had a point. I think that we should remember his words at the time and make sure that we serve our rural communities. A lot of what he said about the bushfires was borne out in 2003, and it reminds us to be ever vigilant. It was certainly an honour to have him here and his plain speaking served this place well.

I visited Val in hospital earlier this year. He had a difficult time during his illness before he died. I thanked him personally on that occasion for his service to the community, to this Assembly and to the Liberal Party. I made the point that, although his service was brief, he had probably made as much of a contribution as many who have lingered in this place for a lot longer. Val did not dispute that. You would not be surprised to hear that he did not dispute that fact.

Many of us who were at his funeral last week heard some great stories. We were at the cemetery in Queanbeyan, in the bush setting. It was a very appropriate place and setting for Val. Many of his friends, family and colleagues were there, amongst all the birds chirping in the bush. We were regaled by some wonderful stories of his life. It certainly was a remarkable life.

I say to Val's family, friends and former colleagues, to those from the Tharwa community and everyone who was touched by his life, thank you very much for sharing Val with us last year. We appreciated having him in this place and we are all much richer because of it.

**MR WALL** (Brindabella) (10.19): I rise to join my colleagues today in paying tribute to a truly decent Canberran, Mr Valentine Max Jeffery OAM, AFSM, very affectionately known by all of us as just Val. I reflected just a moment ago on when I first met Val. It is a story I never actually got to tell him when our lives crossed

paths again last year. I first met Val in about 1999 when my grandmother passed away. Val, with his role in the RFS, played an instrumental role in helping my family carry out my grandmother's wish to be spread from the highest peak in the region, which was Mount Tennent. Val piled us all into one of the RFS troop carriers and took us up to the top of the hill to do that.

As life takes its many twists and turns, my grandmother's husband, my dad's stepfather, later married Lena Jeffery, who is Val's sister. So, whilst it was not really publicised last year, Val and I are, through some obscure marriages, family. That made a very interesting case when the 2012 election came around and both Val and I appeared on the Liberal ticket running alongside each other down in Brindabella. As all of us in this place know, Hare-Clark elections are not necessarily Liberal versus Labor versus Green; they are Liberal versus Liberal versus Liberal, and Labor versus Labor versus Labor. So the fight is always inside the ticket. The feeling in the family was, "There's a two out of five chance. One of you has got to get up." The betting people in the family backed Val, after his performance in 2008. I, as most people in this place recognise, was the dark horse of that election and came through. But the opportunity to have served alongside Val for the very brief period he was here last term was certainly very special for me.

Val's contribution to the Canberra community spanned his whole lifetime. His commitment to reminding us of the significance of rural villages, particularly his beloved Tharwa, is unrivalled. Val has been described by many as a warhorse. I think that this is a pretty apt description. He took the fight to whoever was in charge on a range of issues that affected not just him but the broader community around the Tharwa region. One of the biggest battles he waged was on bushfire preparedness or, rather, the lack thereof. Val saw firsthand the legacy of being ill-prepared in the face of our fire vulnerability and never ceased raising awareness and reminding us all of lessons from the past.

Val fought long and hard alongside fellow Tharwa villagers to keep the Tharwa primary school open. Its closure was a devastating blow that the village never quite recovered from, similar to the closure of the Cuppacumbalong homestead, another nail in the coffin for rural villages around the ACT. The preservation and restoration of the heritage-listed Tharwa bridge was also high on the priority list for Val. Again, his determination to see the bridge restored in the wake of poor government decision-making was applauded by fellow villagers and indeed the wider community. It was nice to see at his funeral the tie-in: that parts from the original Tharwa bridge were used to prepare Val's coffin, which was crafted by a couple of local artisans in the Tharwa Valley Forge and in the woodworking shop down there—the makers of the Assembly's mace, so some very talented craftspeople.

I often went out to visit Val in Tharwa. My connection with him, as I have described, went well beyond the walls of this building and our common connection and affiliation to the Liberal Party, so there was always something to talk about. You always knew you were in for a big chat when the conversation got moved from inside the shop to outside in the shed. That is where all the big decisions were made and all the important topics were covered with Val. It was a great privilege to have counted

him not only as a colleague and a friend but also, through that obscure connection, as family.

Canberra has lost one of a kind. His humility, his no-nonsense attitude to life and his deep connection to his country and village will be very much missed. I finish with a reminder for all of us in this place, with a quick note taken from Val's inaugural speech, delivered 12 months ago tomorrow in this place. Val said:

... an active, vibrant rural community like Tharwa does not ask for much but expects a bit of respect, which has been completely lacking since self-government. Surely it is time for an ACT government to take a deep breath, open its eyes, look a bit outside the concrete bunker in Civic and recognise that there is an important rural part to the ACT.

Hopefully some of the issues that Val was still passionately fighting on, particularly the Tharwa water supply, can now be looked at, perhaps as a memorial to the great work that Val has done down there. My deep sympathies go to his wife, Dorothy, who herself has been battling illness; to his son, Kevin; and to his remaining sister, Lena; as well as to the extended Jeffery family at this time. Val's commitment to this territory will be very much missed by all the family and the very wide circle of friends that he managed to keep. Vale, Valentine Max Jeffery.

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (10.24): Mr Val Jeffery OAM was born on 6 December 1934 in Queanbeyan and was a lifelong part of our city and our region. A true believer in the power of the individual to act, to make a difference, Val fought valiantly for what he knew to be right and for common sense in keeping our community and our environment safe. Val was a member here in the Assembly for a short time and, as has been said, perhaps one of the more reluctant members to take up a seat here. He was concerned that if he came up here the mail in Tharwa might not be properly delivered and that the people he knew were relying on him might be let down.

In Val's maiden speech we heard about his passion for the ACT region, that he felt disappointed at some of the outcomes of self-government. He saw a growing lack of common sense and a bureaucratic approach being brought to decision-making for our region, which was alienating to him and to others with deep experience of the realities of our bush capital. He served for 60 years in his local RFS, 38 years as captain of the brigade, and I think many will miss his advice. I hope that in my work in sticking up for our volunteers as well as our full-time firefighters I will do him proud.

Val was a member of the Liberal Party since his younger years working farms and owning property around New South Wales. He joined the local division near home and was a part of our team. After his 4,000-plus votes that he won in the 2008 election as part of the Community Alliance Party, he was someone who our party decided we needed back on our ticket. Even though he was here for a very brief stint, he left us having been the oldest member of any parliament in Australia, having started his work here at the age of 81.

In the time I spent with him he was a great encouragement to me, especially at the time I had just taken up the emergency services portfolio. We all know how much fire

has affected Canberra and how much Canberrans expect of their government. One day while here in the Assembly, Val asked Mr Corbell, the ESA minister at the time, a question about a rural fire we had had the remote firefighting team sent to the year before. Val could not hear a word of the answer, so the next day I printed out *Hansard* for him to look at. He sat there in his office looking at *Hansard* and he said, “Lies, lies. It’s all lies.” It really made him angry. He believed that in the bush you have to jump on a bushfire really hard and really fast—and clearly he is right—and it worried him that we were putting people in danger and people’s properties in danger unnecessarily and that our natural environment would be destroyed.

Last week Val was buried. His funeral was attended by a great number of people—hundreds. I saw many dedicated RFS and fire service personnel. He was known as someone who would put himself on the line when there was danger in his work on the Bushfire Council in its various iterations, as well as in his local RFS unit. At his funeral it was said that for a decade he undertook six-monthly checks of our various bushfire trails around the region and he really lamented that these trails had been closed or given less attention over the time since. He saw this as a cause of needless danger.

Val’s funeral was a really simple ceremony, held beneath two glorious golden wattles. The birds chirped overhead and it felt like even the overhead planes were there to salute him. He wanted a religious minister to administer his funeral, not because he was a religious person but because he believed it was the right thing to do. As my colleague Mr Wall has said, his coffin was made by local craftsmen of beautiful local wood, with bolts and washers from the old Tharwa bridge that he fought so hard to have upgraded. As we stood there looking out over the hills and valleys of Canberra, I pondered that there could not be a better place for Val to be laid to rest—looking out over the countryside which he so loved.

Val was a salt of the earth sort of man. He did not try to impress with brand-name clothing or shiny shoes. His actions spoke louder than any of that could ever have. In fact, I believe he may go down in history in this place as the only man to ever pull off the polo shirt with the elastic tie. In reality, none of those things really matter. When our lives are over, we will be measured by our love. Val loved his family and he loved his fellow man and his community.

Val was a man whose life is told in his actions and achievements for other people. He is and will remain a legend of our city and our region. Val fought for better fire safety from bushfire, for the repairs to the Tharwa bridge, for his community’s identity and for its local school, closed in 2006. He was well respected by people near and far and he will remain someone that this Assembly had the privilege of having within its four walls—not the other way around. Godspeed, Val. Even though you did not think it is there, I hope to meet you in heaven one day.

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (10.30): I rise today to pay tribute to Val Jeffery OAM, AFSM. Much has been and will be said about Val, who was, amongst other things, the unofficial mayor of Tharwa, the proprietor of Tharwa store, a longstanding and highly regarded bushfire fighter and a short-term parliamentarian. Beyond these

things in the public realm, Val was, of course, a loved family member whose loss will be keenly felt by his family and friends. I extend my condolences to them.

I first met Val back in the late 1980s, through the volunteer bushfire brigade. At that time I was working at the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex at Tidbinbilla, where NASA, through the space tracking station, supported the local Tidbinbilla bushfire brigade. There were many joint meetings and training exercises held with the Tharwa brigade where, of course, Val was the captain.

Before this, Val had owned the licence to deliver fuel to the Honeysuckle Creek and Orroral Valley tracking stations in the golden years of the manned space missions. At that time Val may not have realised that he was playing his own small part in modern history, supporting manned space flight. As history has shown, the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station relayed the first images of the first steps of man walking on the moon, after problems with the feed from the Parkes radio telescope, which was originally scheduled to transmit the images. There was no commercial power to either of those two tracking stations so, by delivering the fuel that ran the generators that powered the sites, Val had a hand in this historic event. This is just one example from the rich tapestry of Val's long and full life.

Much later, in 2003, after decades of bushfire-fighting experience, Val went on to accurately predict the devastating impact of the 2003 bushfires. His forethought and warnings to many local landholders, along with his direct disregard for orders about back-burning, probably saved many local farmers, livestock and the Tharwa township from even more catastrophic injury and loss.

Apart from his strident criticism of the management of the 2003 bushfires, including the failure to get the assistance of New South Wales in a timely manner when they were, in Val's words, "champing at the bit at the border, waiting to come and help", Val also lobbied hard against the closure of Tharwa school, changes at Cuppacumbalong, the years of closure of Tharwa bridge and the threat to the water supply, understanding that these would contribute to the decline of Tharwa village and to hardship for its residents.

While Val had originally voted against self-government, he was willing to stand up and be counted in the political arena when necessary, bringing his rural knowledge to the Assembly for at least a short time.

Val was the quintessential country bloke—to the point, hands on, with a dry sense of humour, down to earth, "just get on with the job"—and a storyteller from the old school with years of adventures and experiences to draw upon. When I stopped by the Tharwa store on occasion, Val always had a yarn to tell and added some lobbying about improvements to Tharwa village, as well as his constant war waged against excessive signage littering the roadside, and what he saw as over-bureaucratisation and wasteful government spending. For example, he once wrote to me, "I urge you all to keep a finger on the pulse as Tharwa is taken further down the plughole of governmental and bureaucratic ignorance that has virtually decimated us since self-government." In this world of political correctness, straight talkers like Val Jeffery are few and far between. He will be missed.

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (10.35): It is always a very sad time when a great life ends. It is always very sad. But I think there is also joy that comes through as we remember what a great man Val was and we remember the amazing effect that he had on so many people. Tharwa will never be the same. There will never be another Val Jeffery. What a man. It was a privilege to know him.

I see Val as one of the last remaining links to the old Canberra. To me, he represented the mountains and the trees as much as he represented the people, but he also represented a generation of doers. I think one of the reasons I felt such a connection to Val is that he reminded me so much of my father. My late father never got to meet Val but, had they come together at a pub somewhere, I think they would have got on famously. They were both unashamedly old school in most of what they did. They both ran small country stores. They managed to connect to the entire community. They were both able to gather so much wisdom about the ways of the world as they made their journey through life.

I came to Canberra in 1999, when Val was in his mid-60s, so I did not know him as a younger man. It was a great pleasure to stand among the hundreds gathered at the Queanbeyan Lawn Cemetery last week and to hear stories from those who did know Val as a strapping young man—stories of the strapping young bloke from Tharwa who captained the cricket team. We heard stories about him hauling bags of super, building farm fences and going bush bashing, and the fire brigade stories, stories from people who grew to rely heavily on his expertise and his commitment to keep them safe. And keep them safe he did.

One of the stories I heard revolves around this place. There was a photo session at the time that Val came into this place. There was a photo shoot out the front involving Mr Hanson and Val, and Joe Prevedello was down there from the leader's office. Now, Joe is a big lad. He is built like a front-rower, he has a voice like a foghorn and he does not take a backward step. The photo was about to be taken and, I am told, Val's glasses were stuck in the top of his jumper. Joe stepped forward and said, "Val, we might just remove those for the photo." Val apparently shunted him away and said, "Son, no-one's going to change me. Don't even try." And Joe took a backward step and left the glasses there.

The stories at the funeral reflected the man that I knew. They were stories of hard work, ingenuity and integrity. I can understand why the village—everyone in it—is as proud as Punch of who he was. If not for Valentine Jeffery, Tharwa would have burnt to the ground in 2003. I have no doubt about that whatsoever. In Val we had a man who was prepared to make his mark on the world, not based on what he said but based on what he did.

Rob Lovett, my adviser, got to know Val pretty well after he was assigned to Val as his staff member during his short-lived stint in the Assembly. One of Rob's tasks was as a taxi driver: to get Val from Tharwa to the Assembly and back on sitting days. During those 70-odd kilometre round trips, Rob got a few insights into Val. Rob tells me that he found a kind and gentle sort of bloke who never swore or raised his voice and never had a bad word to say about anyone. He revealed himself to be genuinely

old-fashioned in the most positive way, with a strong sense of public spirit and community mindedness. Rob tells me that Val would recount the days when his family ran a garage and towing service from the Tharwa village. He would talk about his days working on the land and his experiences as a firefighter. He looked back on his idyllic life growing up in Tharwa and what he and his family had done in that community.

He often despaired, says Rob, at what was seen by others as social progress but to him was unnecessary complexity, bureaucracy and hindrance. He cherished a time when things were simpler, when government was less intrusive and when you built your future without reliance on a government handout. Rob would prepare him for sitting days, taking him through the notice papers and daily programs, with Val shaking his head in despair at all of the procedure and paperwork. For Val, all you had to do was get on with the job. He embraced any opportunities to help constituents and was passionate whenever there was a chance to advocate for Tharwa.

My deepest sympathies go out to all those who were close to Valentine Jeffery. Val Jeffery, you touched many people and you positively influenced many lives. Thank you for being uniquely you.

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

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** I understand that it is the wish of the Assembly, as a mark of respect for Mr Jeffery, to suspend until the ringing of the bells.

*At 10.40 am the sitting was suspended until the ringing of the bells.*

*The bells having been rung, Madam Acting Speaker resumed the chair at 10.49 am.*

## **Petitions**

*The following petitions and e-petitions in the same terms were lodged for presentation:*

### **Community facilities—Farrer—petitions 13-17 and 16-17**

*By Mr Steel, from 161 and 379 residents respectively:*

#### **Petition 13-17**

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

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly that there has been limited investment in the Farrer, or adjacent suburbs, community facilities for a long time. Specifically, the community lacks facilities such as a playground, basketball court or skate park, amenities block, seating, barbecue facilities, fitness equipment, safe access to the shops for elderly or children and associated facilities such as lighting and paths.

Farrer is a strong, vibrant, diverse and engaged community and the development and implementation of a strategic plan for integrated, appropriate and environmentally sensitive community facilities, including those mentioned above, would build on the positive environment in Farrer in addition to serving the entire South Woden District.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to allocate resources to develop and implement a strategic plan for enhanced community facilities in Farrer, including facilities such as a playground, basketball court or skate park, amenities block, seating, barbecue facilities, fitness equipment, safe access to the shops for the elderly or children and associated facilities such as lighting and paths.

### **Petition 16-17**

#### **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 there has been limited investment in the Farrer, or adjacent suburbs, community facilities for a long time. Specifically the community lacks facilities such as a playground, basketball court or skate park, amenities block, seating, barbecue facilities, fitness equipment, safe access to the shops for elderly or children and associated facilities such as lighting and paths.

Farrer is a strong, vibrant, diverse and engaged community and the development and implementation of a strategic plan for integrated, appropriate and environmentally sensitive community facilities including those mentioned above would build on the positive environment in Farrer in addition to serving the entire South Woden District.

**Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to** allocate resources to develop and implement a strategic plan for enhanced community facilities in Farrer including facilities such as a playground, basketball court, or skate park, amenities block, seating, barbecue facilities, fitness equipment, safe access to the shops for elderly or children and associated facilities such as lighting and paths.

### **Billboard advertising—petitions 14-17 and 17-17**

*By Ms Lee, from 749 and 30 residents respectively:*

#### **Petition 14-17**

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

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly:

Billboards have been prohibited in the ACT since the early 20th century, a move designed to protect the new capital's national significance and preserve its natural character and bush setting.

Cities around the world - from Paris and Sao Paulo to New York and Chennai - have moved to ban or significantly reduce the number of billboards in their cities, an acknowledgement of the negative effects that billboards have on the urban landscape. Time and again, when people have been given the opportunity to have a say about billboards in their cities, they have elected to remove them from the public sphere.

The benefits of advertising billboards are concentrated amongst the few - major advertising firms, corporations and the private owners of billboards - while the costs are carried by all.

As people suffer from information overload, lose their connections with the natural environment and experience the feelings of inadequacy and craving that advertisements seek to instil, there is no sensible reason to consider relaxing the ACT's current prohibition on billboards.

Canberra's unique status as the 'bush capital' is now threatened by a proposal to relax the regulations that prohibit fixed billboards in the ACT. This is not something that Canberrans have asked for.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to maintain the prohibition on billboard advertising in the ACT, and properly enforce the current rules that regulate public advertising in the Territory.

#### **Petition 17-17**

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

Billboards have been prohibited in the ACT since the early 20th century, a move designed to protect the new capital's national significance and preserve its natural character and bush setting. Cities around the world - from Paris and Sao Paulo to New York and Chennai - have moved to ban or significantly reduce the number of billboards in their cities, an acknowledgement of the negative effects that billboards have on the urban landscape. Time and again, when people have been given the opportunity to have a say about billboards in their cities, they have elected to remove them from the public sphere.

The benefits of advertising billboards are concentrated amongst the few - major advertising firms, corporations and the private owners of billboards - while the costs are carried by all. As people suffer from information overload, lose their connections with the natural environment and experience the feelings of inadequacy and craving that advertisements seek to instil, there is no sensible reason to consider relaxing the ACT's current prohibition on billboards. Canberra's unique status as the 'bush capital' is now threatened by a proposal to relax the regulations that prohibit fixed billboards in the ACT. This is not something that Canberrans have asked for.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to:

**Maintain the prohibition on billboard advertising in the ACT, and properly enforce the current rules that regulate public advertising in the Territory.**

*Pursuant to standing order 99A, the petition, having more than 500 signatories, was referred to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal.*

### **ACTION bus service—petition 15-17**

*By Ms Lee, from 4 residents:*

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly the need for an ACTION bus service to directly link Deakin, and Kingston via Manuka.

Your Petitioners therefore request the Assembly to call upon the Territory Government to establish an ACTION bus service to directly link Deakin, Kingston and Manuka.

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

### **Petitions—ministerial responses**

The following responses to petitions have been lodged:

#### **Public housing in Wright, Mawson, Holder and Chapman—petitions 8-17, 9-17, 10-17 and 11-17**

By **Ms Berry**, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, dated 14 June 2017, in response to petitions lodged by Mr Hanson on 10 May 2017 concerning public housing developments in Wright, Mawson, Holder and Chapman.

*The response read as follows:*

I refer to your letter of 10 May 2017 about petition numbers 8-17, 9-17, 10-17 and 11-17 lodged by Mr Hanson MLA, regarding concerns with public housing proposals on sites in Wright, Mawson, Holder and Chapman.

In accordance with Standing Order 100, I provide you with the following responses for presentation to the Assembly:

Canberra has some of the oldest public housing in Australia. These properties have provided homes for many vulnerable people and over many years. Several of these homes are now no longer appropriate for families and individuals, many with complex and diverse needs.

The Government's public housing renewal program will improve outcomes for public housing tenants, providing modern accommodation that better meets the needs of families and individuals, now and into the future.

In the ACT public housing is spread evenly so that we can reduce concentrations of disadvantage and provide better opportunities for us all to make a positive contribution and share the benefits of our local community.

Over the past couple of months we have actively sought community feedback which is continuing to shape the design, layout and style of the homes that we would like to build for some of our most vulnerable Canberrans.

**Petition 8-17**

The Public Housing Renewal Taskforce (the Taskforce) is aware of the issues raised in the petition and is undertaking consultation to better understand the community's view of potential development of Block 1 Section 29 in Wright. The Taskforce has invited members of the community to work together to explore potential arrangements that might achieve the objectives outlined in Part 2 of the petition.

**Petition 9-17**

The residents of Mawson have formed a consultation group and the Taskforce is supporting this group to refine their objectives. The Taskforce is also working with this group to provide additional information and to assist them to document shared objectives for Block 29 Section 36 in Mawson.

**Petition 10-17**

The residents of Holder have formed a consultation group and the Taskforce is supporting this group to refine their objectives. The Taskforce is also working with this group to provide additional information and to assist them to document shared objectives for Block 2 Section 21 in Holder.

**Petition 11-17**

Many residential sites in the ACT (including blocks adjacent to Block 1 Section 45) are in Bushfire Prone Areas. A bushfire analysis has been developed as part of the Site Investigation Report. The design and construction process would include a range of measures to ensure the development would meet the required standards for construction in a Bushfire Prone Area. This is consistent with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia and will be reflected in a final Development Application (DA). The Taskforce will continue to comply with all such requirements and advice. The Taskforce has offered to work with the community to resolve the "many other reasons" referred to in the petition.

Thank you for bringing these petitions to the attention of the ACT Government.

**Gold Creek Village development—petitions 3-17 and 6-17**

By **Mr Gentleman**, Minister for Planning and Land Management, dated 26 June 2017, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Le Couteur on 21 March 2017 concerning a KFC restaurant in Gold Creek Village.

*The response read as follows:*

Thank you for your letter of 21 March 2017 regarding petitions Nos 3-17 and 6-17 lodged by Ms Le Couteur MLA on behalf of certain Australian Capital Territory residents.

I understand the petitions bring to the attention of the Assembly that there is concern from some members of the community regarding the proposed KFC drive through at Block 5 Section 39 Nicholls, development application (DA) No 201630796 and requesting that the DA be stopped by the ACT Government. The petitions raise concerns about the proposed development (including associated signage) not fitting in within the existing character and ambience of Gold Creek Village (Village), and notes the Village also contains several heritage listed buildings.

I am advised by the planning and land authority (Authority), located within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate that the DA has attracted several representations against the development raising similar concerns to those raised in the petitions. The DA is currently under assessment by the Authority with a decision on the DA expected shortly. The Authority is responsible for assessing the DA against the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2007 and the Territory Plan, as I have every confidence in the Authority determining this DA, the Government will not be stepping in to determine the DA.

### **Arts funding—petitions 4-17 and 7-17**

By **Mr Ramsay**, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, dated 28 June 2017, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Cheyne on 9 May 2017 concerning arts funding.

*The response read as follows:*

Thank you for your letter of 9 May 2017 regarding petition numbers 4-17 and 7-17 lodged by Ms Tara Cheyne MLA and received by the ACT Legislative Assembly on 9 May 2017.

I understand the petition brings to the attention of the Assembly that funding for the arts is increased, that an arts advisory board is established and that the government works with the community in developing a funding model for 2018. The petitioners have requested the ACT Government commit to:

Honour its election commitment to increase annual Project Funding by \$500,000 so that each year recurrent Project Funding is budgeted at a minimum of \$1.25 million, commencing in the 2017-18 Budget.

Ensure that this increase in Project Funding be funded through an increase in the Arts Fund, and not taken from other parts of the Arts Fund.

Set up an Arts Ministerial Advisory Board by 1 September 2017, reporting directly to the Minister. This Board will be established to provide principled and transparent advice around arts funding and policy, and made up of arts practitioners nominated by the Arts Community.

Ensure that the Minister works with the Arts Community to create the best possible funding model for the Arts Fund that will best service ACT Artists, Organisations, and the Community, for implementation in 2018 and going forward.

Increase the overall Arts Fund by a minimum of \$1.25 million beginning in the 2017-18 Budget.

In accordance with Standing Order 100, I provide you with the following response to the petition for presentation to the Assembly:

On 15 May 2017, the Government announced a new funding package for the arts as part of the 2017-18 ACT Budget. The \$21.6 million package in the 2017-18 Budget will support the Government's vision for a more vibrant ACT, with better community facilities and services in the arts sector.

This package includes:

- \$500,000 for Project funding to ensure that a minimum of \$750,000 is available for Project funding for each of the next four years;
- \$100,000 funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists for each of the next four years;
- \$250,000 funding to the Australian National University for its new Advanced Music Performance Program for each of the next four years;
- \$130,000 for Art, Not Apart for each of the next three years;
- \$100,000 for DESIGN Canberra for each of the next three years;
- \$35,000 funding for Kulture Break for each of the next three years; and
- Funding for new pop-up arts events in Woden and Gungahlin commencing in 2018-19 for three years.

The Government has developed a new arts funding plan and intends to consult with the community on this plan and how it can be implemented.

The Government intends to consult with the community on a proposed advisory body for the arts through a series of roundtable meetings.

Thank you for bringing this petition to the attention of the ACT Government.

### **Criminalisation of a non-consensual sexual image—petition 5-17**

By **Mr Ramsay**, Attorney-General, dated 20 July 2017, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Le Couteur on 10 May 2017 concerning the criminalisation of revenge porn.

*The response read as follows:*

I write regarding Petition No 5-17 - Revenge Porn - Criminalisation, tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 10 May 2017 by Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA.

The petition proposes the 'criminalisation of the non-consensual disclosure of a sexual image (revenge porn).'

The ACT Government takes the issue of intimate image abuse very seriously. The sharing of intimate images without a person's consent is a violation of their privacy. These images are shared to humiliate, harass and traumatise the victim and impact their privacy and reputation. Section 12 of the *Human Rights Act 2004* provides that everyone has the right not to have his or her privacy

interfered with unlawfully or arbitrarily, and the right not to have his or her reputation unlawfully attacked.

On 19 May 2017 the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council (LCCSC), comprising Attorneys-General, Justice and Police Ministers from around Australia, discussed a national approach to intimate image abuse. LCCSC agreed to the *National statement of principles relating to the criminalisation of the non-consensual sharing of intimate images (Attachment A)*. The principles were developed as best practice principles to be considered as each jurisdiction continues to develop and review its criminal law, policy and practices to suit local needs, and for each jurisdiction to adopt and implement as they see fit.

The ACT Government is considering how to best give effect to the national statement of principles, and I anticipate providing further information on the Government approach in the August sittings of the Legislative Assembly.

*(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).*

## **Petitions**

### **Billboard advertising—petitions 14-17 and 17-17**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (10.51), by leave: I acknowledge the enormous efforts of Mr Sam Hussey-Smith, a fellow Kurrajong resident, the petitioner of this petition that I have presented to the Assembly today. I congratulate him on taking the initiative on a matter that clearly is of importance to him, as it is to a lot of Canberrans, and perhaps the greatest kudos must go to him and the other brave souls for their innovative approach in attracting publicity for it, especially on a cold winter's day on Black Mountain.

Earlier this year the Chief Minister stated that the ACT's policy of no advertising billboards was in need of a shake-up. In calling for a revision, the Chief Minister acknowledged that it did not mean turning Canberra into Times Square and that billboards should not be placed around the parliamentary triangle and other significant national areas. However, he did say that in other parts of Canberra it might be appropriate. The petition tabled today, and the record number of submissions the Assembly's planning and urban renewal committee received on its inquiry into billboards, would suggest that many Canberrans believe changes to the current rules are anything but appropriate.

It is to be remembered that Canberra is not entirely without billboards. There are exceptions, with large banners at the airport and signage at the Canberra Centre, which for all intents and purposes is a large billboard currently advertising, from what I gather, beer, with a clever play on comparing our apparent love of roundabouts to a round of drinks.

The government already accesses electronic screens outside the Canberra Theatre and on ACTION buses and at bus stops to promote various messages, and other businesses already access ACTION buses and bus stops for commercial advertising. These exceptions are currently just that, exceptions, and should not and cannot be

interpreted to mean that Canberrans would be happy to have the no-billboard rules relaxed or abandoned.

Concerns raised by constituents on relaxing the no-billboards policy are varied and come from a diverse cross-section of our community—concerns about subject content and location, concerns about them being introduced purely as another source of revenue, concerns about whether the light rail corridor will be turned into prime billboard real estate, concerns that the large, expensive and impressive “Welcome to Canberra” signs may be turned into an opportunity for adjacent or even replacement commercial messaging, concerns about the impact on small businesses who most likely will not be able to afford to advertise on billboards, concerns about international companies taking advertising revenue from local radio stations, local print media like the *Canberra Times*, *CityNews* and the *Canberra Weekly*, and local websites like the RiotACT and HerCanberra, and concerns that billboards will be exploited by organisations with deep pockets at election time to promote misleading messages like the Medicare campaign. These are important policy questions that must be considered in any change to the current rules.

I have great confidence that the Assembly’s planning committee will diligently and faithfully carry out its duties in undertaking this inquiry, and these issues may already have been considered or are being considered. Mr Hussey-Smith is well aware of the work currently being undertaken by the committee, having made a submission. Even in the throes of a current inquiry, with a record number of submissions, the fact that this petition has garnered almost 800 signatures speaks volumes for how strongly many Canberrans feel about the proposed changes to the current rules.

The petition states, inter alia:

Cities around the world - from Paris and Sao Paulo to New York and Chennai - have moved to ban or significantly reduce the number of billboards in their cities, an acknowledgement of the negative effects that billboards have on the urban landscape.

...

The benefits of advertising billboards are concentrated amongst the few ... while the costs are carried by all.

We all know and love the unique beauty of Canberra and its place in Australia as our nation’s capital. Some of my constituents have expressed the view that our no-billboards policy should be seen not as a reflection of our city not being big or sophisticated enough but as a reflection of our city’s commitment to preserving our bush capital culture.

I look forward to the Assembly’s planning and urban renewal committee report on this inquiry by the last sitting date in October, and I thank the 779 petitioners, the much smaller number of brave Canberrans who got their kit off on Black Mountain, and of course Mr Hussey-Smith for his dedication in ensuring that the voices of many Canberrans on this important community issue are heard by the Assembly.

## **Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee Reference**

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (10.56): pursuant to standing order 99, I move:

That the petitions requesting that the Assembly allocate resources to develop a strategic plan to enhance community facilities in Farrer be referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services for inquiry and report.

These two petitions call for a strategic plan for enhanced community facilities in Farrer, including a playground and other community infrastructure. Earlier this year, in June, the community came together at Fox and Bow to discuss advocacy around community facilities and a playground for the Farrer shops. It was a very constructive discussion, and it was great to see the community come together to support this issue with their enthusiasm and ideas. They decided a petition was a good start, and I was happy to sponsor the e-petition and the hard copy petition.

The principal petitioner, Rollo Brett, who is in the gallery, has worked tirelessly with the community and has helped accumulate over 500 signatures overall across the two petitions. The community has also developed an initial proposal to government about what they would like to see for the Farrer shops.

According to the 2016 census there were 3,231 people in Farrer, with children zero to 14 years of age making up 18.3 per cent of the population. There are many families and children living in Farrer, and while there is a single swing at the shops, families would like to see an improved community space. According to the Australian early development census released in March last year, children in the ACT are more likely to be vulnerable in the area of physical health and wellbeing, which includes growth and fine motor skill development, and 9.8 per cent of Farrer children were developmentally vulnerable in that domain, which is higher than the Woden average and the national average.

Quality play spaces are crucial to encourage children's physical growth and fine motor skill development, and they allow families to come together in a safe and inviting space to socialise while activating this important community focal point. I would like to extend my thanks to Rollo for his work in advocating with the community for this playground to improve community facilities in Farrer. I would also like to extend my thanks to Alex Piris, the owner of Fox and Bow, for hosting the June meeting at his cafe in the Farrer community. It was his original idea to advocate for better community infrastructure in the area.

The hard copy and e-petitions have garnered over 500 overall signatures, and it has been great to see such genuine support build around this issue. However, because one of the petitions has not by itself reached 500 petition signatures, they will not be automatically referred to the committee for environment, transport and city services. This is only because the two petitions, which are almost identical in wording, cannot

be combined under our standing orders. Therefore, based on the Farrer community's wishes, I seek the Assembly's support to refer the petitions to the standing committee to consider in the context of their overall work program.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (10.59): I am very pleased to support the intent of the petition and the referral to the committee. It is really great that the local community is getting together and saying, "Yes, this is what we think our community needs." I was also very happy to be at that meeting in June, which was one of the best run local meetings I have had the pleasure of attending

There are, of course, lots and lots of issues with this. Clearly we all would like to see better community facilities; there are no two ways around that. This brings up considerable issues of where the government allocates its scarce resources. I note that this afternoon our MPI is on the importance of open and consultative democracy, and I think the Farrer example is a good one of why we need open and consultative democracy. The people of Farrer quite reasonably want better playground facilities, but even in the electorate of Murrumbidgee another group is doing a lot of work on the same subject, of which other Murrumbidgee members, including Mrs Jones, are well aware.

We clearly have issues of priorities of government expenditure. Part of the message out of this is that we need better, more transparent ways of deciding where we spend our money, particularly on city services. All of us know from our days of doorknocking that everyone wants more money spent on their footpaths and most people would like more money spent on buses and roads. Clearly we are not going to be able to spend the sort of money that people want on all of these, but I think this is a real issue we need to look at for Farrer and for the entire community.

We also need a process to enable communities to, where possible and appropriate, help themselves. I am not a Farrer resident and there is probably a lot more history to this that I do not know. Farrer has an excellent cafe. When I was preselected for Murrumbidgee I thought that one of the things I would do to make sure I knew all the suburbs of Murrumbidgee was to go round to each of the local shops coffee shops and I figured I would have a coffee every day. I went with a friend of mine for most of these, and Fox and Bow was the clear lunchtime winner I would have to say.

The next time that Fox and Bow came to my attention was, of course, the basketball hoop. Quite recently a common basketball hoop that many people have in their driveways was put on the side of the road over from the Fox and Bow. It had been there for some months when somebody, I understand, reported it to TCCS who came out and said, "Oh my God. This is not approved. It's next to a road. This is a safety issue." It got a big sticker on it and it is now round the back of the shops.

Without wanting to prosecute the ins and outs of that particular incident, one of the things we need to do as a community, particularly as people who are part of government, is work out how we can empower local communities to do things in their own best interests in a way that works for them and for the bigger community as a whole. There is no possibility that the ACT government will ever be able to provide

every community facility that is wanted. Whatever we may talk about—rates—it is simply not a possibility.

So there are two messages. Farrer clearly would love to see better facilities and there is a clear need for better facilities near the shops. The other message out of this is that we need a better process for balancing government priorities. Participatory budgeting is something that comes to mind, and I may well talk about this in the debate this afternoon. We also need a better process for people helping their own neighbourhoods. Quite a few people, for instance, have built little local libraries, little book cupboards, and I think they are great. There is one in Hughes, there are a number in the inner north and there is even one in Molonglo, which is great, on the Charles Weston School site. These are the sorts of things we need to work out how best to encourage in a way that supports local communities, and the community as whole. I thank Mr Steel and the community of Farrer for their involvement in this issue.

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (11.05): I congratulate the community of Farrer for making their views known in this place and taking the initiative to be part of the solution. I acknowledge the hard work of retired colonel Rollo Brett, distinguished Army veteran mentioned in despatches, head of 4 RAR and member of the 8th/9th Battalion. Everywhere around the country former military people are making a difference because they know how to get up and work hard for their communities.

I also want to acknowledge Alex Piris, the owner of Fox and Bow. Not only is he a great local advocate but he is a down to earth member of the community who is always willing to do something to see things improve. He has also been a part of fundraising for the Tara Costigan Foundation. Good on Alex. I also want to acknowledge the president of Neighbourhood Watch, Margaret Pearson, who has been involved in this process as well because she knows that the better our communities are functioning the safer they are.

I draw attention to the ridiculous situation we have found ourselves in, where a cafe cannot put up a little basketball hoop for kids to increase community involvement and create a positive experience for their local community. It encourages exercise and being out in the local community, rather than always jumping in the car to go somewhere further away. I encourage the government to consider, as Ms Le Couteur has mentioned, allowing communities to buy into their own playgrounds. I am well aware that the ACT has a huge number of playgrounds, many of them very small.

In last year's campaign I worked very hard for a policy that we brought forward which would have seen communities able to fundraise and get equipment from a list which would then be installed and maintained by government. This is a way of really reducing the cost to government for new playgrounds to be established without having to balance it with that painful decision about where money should be spent.

If people are motivated, want to put their hands in their pockets, want to fundraise or want to form an alliance with a local charity or a community group like Rotary or something like that, we should facilitate and enable that to happen instead of just having to say no all the time to motivated community groups who can imagine a

better future for their community. I am glad the minister is here and can have a think about that.

We will support putting these two petitions to the committee because an ancient form of having your opinion heard in a parliament is to have people sign a petition in the community. I hope it is very clear to the government that the people of Farrer would like investment in their local community. It is just a matter of finding a pathway for this to occur; it does not have to cost a lot of money. Thank you to the people of Farrer, and I hope the government is listening.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Estimates 2017-2018—Select Committee Report**

**MR WALL** (Brindabella) (11.09): I present the following report:

*Estimates 2017-2018—Select Committee—Report—Appropriation Bill 2017-2018 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2017-2018, dated 26 July 2017, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings and a schedule of outstanding answers to questions taken on notice and questions on notice, dated 1 August 2017.*

I move:

That the report be noted.

Now that my role as chair has finished, I offer my thanks, first and foremost, to the committee secretary, Nicola Kosseck, for not only all the great work she did in putting together the final version of the report for us but also the preparation work that went into commissioning the external reviewer, scheduling the witnesses and the relevant ministers and coordinating the community surveys and the community groups that presented. I thank Hansard for their work, the attendants for shepherding guests and witnesses in and out of the hearings through the two weeks of the estimates committee, the many community groups that appeared and my fellow members on the committee, Mr Coe, Ms Le Couteur, Ms Cody and Mr Petterson.

In contrast to past years of hearings of the estimates committee, I think it was a very constructive process, particularly through the deliberation stages. Most of us sought to find the areas where we could agree rather than focusing on the areas where we disagreed. Hopefully that is reflected in the report that has just been circulated.

This is the first time that the estimates process has been run since the expansion of the Assembly to 25 members, and I think it brought a change to the way that estimates was run previously. There was certainly much more involvement from backbenchers, from the opposition side but also from the government's own backbench. At times it saw the number of visitors to the committee outnumbering the committee members themselves—as did the number of witnesses present before the committee at one

time—and this added some complexity to the time and the opportunity members had to ask questions.

To that end, I draw members' attention to recommendations 3 and 4, which are focused on improving the process of estimates and, in particular, trying to limit opening statements by ministers so that they are more succinct and also limiting the length of answers various directorate officials give. Often it is a case that one minor question can take in excess of 20 minutes for one answer, and the committee feels improvements can certainly be made in that space. As the outgoing chair I have written to the Speaker, in her capacity as the chair of admin and procedures, requesting a broader review of the way questions on notice are handled, not just in the estimates period but across the committee system.

I will speak very briefly on a number of key recommendations. Recommendation 28 is an example of trying to improve transparency. Often line items are combined into one output class and it is very difficult for the estimates committee and members and the general public more broadly to decipher the priorities in that output class. The committee recommends that Transport Canberra and City Services maintain separate budget line items for sports grounds facilities and management and maintenance so that things like maintenance, lighting and other user charges, irrigation, capital upgrades and capital expenditure are broken down into separate line items. It adds an additional layer of transparency and accountability. Likewise, recommendation 38 asks the government, when preparing the budget, to identify the source of data used for the accountability indicators so that they have some meaning and stature.

The committee made a number of recommendations that focus on cost of living and housing affordability, specifically recommendation 42. In the last couple of weeks my office has certainly had a good deal of correspondence with regard to the utility concessions and the changes that have been made there. In recommendation 42 the committee recommends that the government ensure that eligible residents with low electricity bills still receive the full concession by being given the option to choose the utility to which the concession applies, for example. That issue came about because some residents have indicated that they have solar panels on their roof, have a very modest electricity bill—considerably lower than the concession—and have the desire to apply that where required.

Recommendation 43 focuses on housing affordability. The surprise changes to the lease variation charge that came in as part of the budget have caused a great deal of concern, not just amongst the construction industry but also in areas of the community where housing affordability is a key issue. The increase of the lease variation charge by over 400 per cent without industry consultation is certainly not a step in the right direction in trying to address housing affordability.

Recommendations 47, 49 and 50 seek to unpick the ambiguous relationship between government and the government-owned entity of Icon Water and, through it, the ownership of and stake in ActewAGL. There need to be further rulings on the role of this Assembly in scrutinising those entities and, more broadly, where our responsibility for oversight of that commercial relationship exists. I am sure Mr Coe will go into some further detail on that, if not today then tomorrow, in his motion.

Recommendation 59 focuses on benchmarking around health and that future budget papers include the national efficient price for the provision of health services to give a genuine benchmark on how we compare with other jurisdictions and other measures on the cost of providing health services.

Recommendation 98 is key, in my view, as a member of not just the committee but the Assembly, as it recommends that the government consult with relevant recreational groups such as mountain bike riders, anglers and other environmental groups and stakeholders to seek a resolution of issues arising with regard to the management of and access to reserves. I note that the cost-saving measure the government had in the budget relating to shutting the gate at Googong Dam would see many recreational users severely disadvantaged simply because the government thought it was too much of an effort to send a ranger around there to carry out the work they are supposed to do in managing our parks and nature reserves.

Recommendation 112 is very important to me—student access to mental health services. I had a call on Friday about a student in a non-government school reliant on government support services in the mental health space and the wait times that are simply too long. All too often we hear of students in schools, regardless of which sector, that are struggling to get adequate and suitable access to mental health services, so recommendation 112 touches on that area.

Some concerns were raised about the changing of the city centre marketing improvements levy and the spending of that coming in house, into government. Recommendations 107 and 108 focus on making sure there is accountability in the government's performance in spending the levy raised from property owners in the CBD area.

Before I wind up, I will raise an issue that certainly is a concern to me, as the chair of the committee this year, but to the opposition more broadly—that is, the attitude that seems to have crept in on the part of executive members of the government that the estimates process is an inconvenience and that subjecting themselves to scrutiny is a hindrance to their day-to-day role. That was evident in a number of aspects: first and foremost were the ministerial absences during the estimates period. The sitting schedule is made available at the beginning of the year and, as has always been the case in this Assembly, the last two weeks in June are the estimates period. To have four ministers absent for all of or a great chunk of the estimates period adds great difficulty to scheduling hearings. The late notice of some of those absences required a rewrite of the schedule in about three instances. Of particular note is Mr Rattenbury's absence for the entire hearing period for what I understand was a period of personal leave and not work-related travel.

The other concern related to Minister Fitzharris, in her capacity as the health minister. Again, this underlined the concern of the opposition that the estimates process is seen as a hindrance rather than part of good governance. The committee was very accommodating with Ms Fitzharris's appearance before the estimates committee in her capacity as the health minister. She was quite unwell that day and the committee recognised that and agreed to quite a contracted hearing for her.

As you would expect, a number of questions were unable to be asked during the hearings and were put on notice. As the chair of the committee I received a letter where the minister unilaterally decided that only 32, or various parts of them, of the 325 questions she received on notice related to the health portfolio and she requested an increase in the time frame allowed for answering those questions on notice so that the committee could meet its 1 August deadline. She also noted in her letter that she had instructed ACT Health to prepare responses only to those questions that could reasonably be assumed to be part of the budget papers and/or related discussions at the hearings. It very disturbing that members of the executive feel they can unilaterally rule in or out questions that members of the Assembly put in on notice as part of the scrutiny process. That underlines a very concerning culture emerging within the executive.

Tabled today with the report is a schedule of unanswered questions that were taken on notice. I draw members' attention to the fact that the final version of the report shows that 28 questions were unanswered at the time of the committee report being agreed upon. The schedule provided today only outlines 10 questions that remain outstanding, as a number of the questions on notice came in after the committee had agreed on its report. This, too, adds greater complexity to the committee's ability to deliberate over a report. If a substantial number of questions on notice have not been answered within the time frames agreed and required, they cannot form part of the deliberation or the consideration of the report as it is prepared. That goes quite some way to making the committee's role of scrutinising the functions of government and the budget process much more difficult. I conclude my remarks there and look forward to the opportunity to speak further in the appropriation debate next week.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (11.22): I also start by thanking the committee secretary, Nicola Kosseck, plus the army of other secretaries who helped us in this task. I think that it was a particularly well-run estimates process this time. We ended up with 158 recommendations, which is not a record. You will be very pleased to know that I do not intend to speak on them all. However, I will speak on some of them.

I cannot resist starting where Mr Wall also started, which is recommendations 3 and 4. They go to the conduct of the committee hearings and, you could say, at some times the excessively boring repetitiveness of answers that were given to questions. I think there was an awful lot to get through; there were an awful lot of committee members. As Mr Wall mentioned, there are a lot of non-committee members who were interested in various parts of the estimates. I think it really would be useful to try to be succinct and not to be repetitious. It is really great to have a chance to have a conversation with the people that are actually doing things. That is the beauty and the plus of estimates. I would like to see that continue, rather than, at times, our just going over and over the same things.

Moving right along, recommendations 18, 19 and 20 in fact deal with what we are talking about this afternoon: democracy, consultation, how we get deliberative democracy. I am very pleased that the budget has money—about \$2.8 million—set aside for that.

One thing I would say, though, is that the government has foreshadowed that the topic for this is going to be third-party insurance. I recognise that this is important. I suspect that probably everyone in this room has a third-party insurance policy. However, I also suspect that very few people in Canberra are passionately interested in this. So I am hopeful that we can think of some more exciting topics to talk about than third-party insurance. Otherwise we really do run the risk of boring the people of Canberra.

I move on to recommendation 22, which states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the priority and resourcing given to complaints about non-compliance with approved Development Applications and report its conclusions to the relevant Standing Committee during 2017 annual report hearings.

It is with some melancholy that I read this out, because I am in fact chair of the relevant standing committee. We went through all of this already in annual reports earlier this year. Since then, I have continued to have a trickle of complaints coming to my office. I am confident that many other MLAs are in the same situation. The public are feeling that their complaints about non-compliance with DAs simply go nowhere. This is just not good enough. I do not know why the problem is there, but the problem certainly is there. It does not appear to be getting better in any way. I look forward to the government's report to the planning committee, but even more than that I look forward to the government doing better in this regard.

I turn to recommendation 30. This is an area that the ACT Greens have been banging on about for some time. The committee recommended, and the Greens have been fighting for this for some time, that the ACT government set a minimum level of local content for all events facilitated by EventsACT to ensure that Canberra-based artists and producers actually benefit from government investments in events. The government does spend a substantial amount of money on events that are great for local residents and also great from a tourism point of view. But there is no reason why much of the artistic content of that cannot be local. We would like to see the government set a minimum level of local content for this so that the benefits from these events are long lasting within the community.

I will next move to the lease variation charge changes, which Mr Wall also touched upon in his comments. I would like to note, to start off, that over the last five years there have been 127 applications for lease variations, which would then be codified. In the three weeks between when the budget was put out and the end of June there were 147 applications for the same class of lease variations to increase the number of residences. I think there are quite a number of things that went wrong with the government's proposed changes to the lease variation charge. Recommendation 45 is relevant not just for the lease variation charge. It states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should not make significant changes to the taxation system without public consultation and modelling of the impacts of the change. This modelling should not just include financial impacts.

The lease variation charge is one area where modelling clearly should not just include financial impacts. For a long time we have been discussing in this place and in the community how our city is changing—whether we want urban consolidation at all or whether we are happy to see Canberra continue in the greenfields forever and ever. I think there is a reasonable degree of consensus that we want at least some urban consolidation. I think there is still an ongoing debate as to how much and where, but I think there is clear consensus that we would like to see it.

In respect of the lease variation charge, it has certainly been put to me that the government's proposed change to the lease variation charge will mean that small-scale redevelopment of existing blocks—be they RZ1, 2 or 3—becomes economically impractical. It has been suggested that the only redevelopments that will happen will be either very large ones in commercial areas or ones that will construct very large luxury accommodation—as it were, townhouses.

In a community that is ageing and where there is a real need for appropriate accommodation in local suburban areas that people can downsize to, it is somewhat hard to see that it is the public policy we want that people might downsize from an ex-govie, which is probably about 100 or 110 square metres, to a townhouse which is larger. It just has a smaller amount of garden. “Crazy” sort of comes to mind. I call upon the government to look clearly at what the results, both financially and to the development of our city, will be or could be from this proposed change.

The next recommendation I would like to talk about is again a planning-related change. Recommendation 88 states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government works with the owners of the Ginninderry development and Dr Jason Sharples to reassess the bushfire risk at the Ginninderry site and undertake the necessary planning adjustments in response to the findings of Dr Sharples' 2017 report.

Bushfire risk is a really important issue. I am particularly mindful of this, having listened to the condolence motion and speeches about Val Jeffery earlier today. Bushfires are an issue for the environment around us. Ginninderry is part of that. It really behoves us to make sure that we do not construct residences in areas which are likely to be burnt. Dr Sharples has done a very useful report. I think it is very important that this be taken into account in the Ginninderry development.

Next I turn to recommendations 95 and 96, which are both about heritage. My major comment on these recommendations is this: in the Seventh Assembly, which I was a member of, we basically made the same recommendations about heritage. Nothing has changed. We need to put the resources in to try to progress heritage, rather than have a never-ending backlog that goes nowhere.

The next recommendation, recommendation 100, is one that we would not have considered in the previous Seventh Assembly. It states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider how they plan to maintain 100 per cent renewable electricity post 2020.

I must say I am really pleased that the issue for the ACT in renewable electricity is maintaining 100 per cent rather than getting there. Nonetheless, maintaining is an important issue. It is important that we plan, because 2020 is not that far away. It looks like our transport system is likely to become more electrified, with light rail and electric cars. Certainly, our population is growing, so it is entirely possible that our electricity demand will grow, and we need to plan for it.

Recommendation 105 is something that is very dear to my heart. It is saying that, once the public housing renewal program is completed, the ACT government should have an ongoing program of public housing renewal and public housing building so that the proportion of public housing does not fall. We all know the angst in the community over the last couple years as a result of the public housing renewal program. I do not wish to revisit that issue. I just want to say that public housing is important. It is down to only about six per cent of the housing in the ACT. When I was first in the Assembly, it was closer to eight per cent. We as a community need to ensure that there is housing for the people of Canberra, and public housing is one way this will happen. We need to ensure that the proportion at least stays stable within the ACT.

Recommendations 109 and 110 both talk about the LDA and its recent purchases of rural land in the western ACT. Once upon a time we had the NCDC. They had a Y plan. The short part of the Y is in southern Canberra. Then the two arms of the Y go up fairly indefinitely into northern Canberra and New South Wales. What we seem to have now is not a Y plan. We have a blob plan. If you look at all the land that the LDA has purchased over the last couple of years—I think it is about \$25 million worth of land—it is blobs to the west of Canberra. Again, as a member of the planning committee, we have been asking questions about this for some time. It is, to put it mildly, very unclear what planning justification there is for this.

Certainly, there needs to be a lot more planning work and a lot of serious, genuine community consultation on what the purpose of this land is. I understand that the Auditor-General may also be looking into this. I am not quite sure what particular issue she has in mind here, but these acquisitions need to be looked at, certainly from a planning point of view and possibly from other points of view.

Recommendation 124 talks about the NDIS and how it is interacting with existing not-for-profit organisations that are not being funded by the NDIS. It asks what the ACT is going to do. It calls on the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion to work with other directorates to develop a clear strategy for going forward. I would hate to see another debate like the SHOUT debate. We all want to see our disabled community well supported. With the NDIS transitions, it is clear that there are some gaps and it is clear that we do not seem to know what we are going to do about it.

My last comment relates to recommendation 142, which is a plea for a lot more data about social and public housing. As I said earlier, this has been an aspect of considerable debate. I think the debate could be better informed and more respectful if there was more information. I commend all 158 recommendations to the Assembly.

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (11.36): I too would like to thank the committee secretary and all the other committee secretaries that helped out along the way. As Mr Wall commented, this is our first estimates report as an extended Assembly. I was very privileged to be part of that committee, to listen to the wonderful recommendations that the committee discussed and to be part of the work we did together to produce the report. We worked well together. We worked strongly and provided some very good recommendations that the government will hopefully take on board.

I also want to extend my thanks to the Minister for Health, Minister Fitzharris, for attending when she was clearly very unwell, for providing us with as many responses as she could when she was feeling so unwell and for talking about the questions taken on notice in respect of the Health portfolio. There were a number of questions for that particular portfolio. As we know, it is of interest to all of us. The ACT health system is one that we all use and use well. It is an area that we all like to know as much information about as we possibly can. Minister Fitzharris was very good at providing as much clarity as she possibly could on that day. I would like to thank her again for all of her work.

I would like to bring recommendations 35 and 36 to the attention of the government. I hope that the government continues to adhere to its fiscal strategy to ensure that we are working forward and that the ACT budget remains headed in the right direction.

The first part of the estimates hearings, as we are all aware, related to the community and industry representative groups. I would like to thank them for appearing and taking time out of their busy days. They are often not-for-profit groups or they are run by volunteers. I am very grateful that they came before the committee and gave up their time to allow us to talk to them and to ask some questions. I am sure the committee would agree.

There are a couple of other things that I wanted to raise. As a new member of the government, I found the committee hearings very thoughtful and insightful. I would like to thank all of the members, ministers and government officials who appeared. They did provide us with sometimes very detailed responses to questions that were asked. It certainly made life a lot easier for me and gave me a great insight into how those areas of government are working.

Something that was also close to my heart was the discussion that we had with the education directorate about ensuring that we have a safe and supportive school environment. The work that the government is currently doing to ensure that that is the case is also something that was very good to hear, and interesting, throughout the committee hearings.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for organising for the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence to appear. Apparently, the evidence that Minister Berry gave provided only the second opportunity to listen to what the government is doing on the prevention of domestic and family violence. I would like to thank the secretariat for organising some time for the minister to appear. I also

draw attention to recommendations 69, 70 and 71. We should all work together to ensure that we are stamping out the prevalence of domestic, personal and family violence.

I wrap up by thanking all of the committee. I think we all worked very well together. We were locked in a room for a few weeks. It was definitely an interesting time but we certainly came out of it still smiling and no-one was maimed or injured, which I say is always a positive outcome. Thank you to all my committee member colleagues. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I commend the report to the Assembly.

**MR COE** (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (11.41): I am not going to go through the committee report and pick out “the best of”. I would encourage all members to thoroughly read it as soon as they can. But I want to extend my particular thanks to Nicola Kosseck, the secretary and to all the others from the Assembly office who supported her, be that in the secretariat, the committee secretariat, in Hansard, the attendants and all the others who helped to facilitate the hearings of the committee.

I also want to extend my thanks to the community groups who participated, but in particular I want to thank the public servants who came and gave us a huge amount of information. I know that it takes a lot of work to prepare for estimates. I know that all directorates and all public servants put a considerable amount of energy into prepping for the hearings and then with the follow-up questions on notice. For that, the opposition is very grateful. We do think it is an important part of the Assembly process. We think it is an important part of governance in the territory and ensuring that the ACT government is held to account. We are unapologetic about the questions that we asked, be they in person or be they on notice, because it is an important function of the opposition to ask these questions and to ensure that the government is accountable.

Finally, I want to say that I think the spirit in which the members of the committee approached the deliberations was particularly good. Whilst it may not be the dream report from everyone’s perspective, I think it does reflect a lot of compromise. I think this is evident from the fact that the deliberations were relatively short and the attitude with which the members approached them was one of conciliation. Because of that, I think we have got a report that pretty fairly reflects a midpoint in the committee members’ views. Again, I would like to particularly thank Nicola Kosseck but also all the staff who helped to facilitate the committee’s activities.

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

## **Leave of absence**

Motion (by **Ms Berry**) agreed to:

That leave of absence be granted to Ms Burch for today’s sitting due to family reasons.

## **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 7**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (11.44): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 7, dated 18 July 2017, together with the minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

**MRS JONES:** Scrutiny report No. 7 contains the committee's comments on five bills, 20 pieces of subordinate legislation and three government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

## **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Statement by chair**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (11.45): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety relating to the release of a discussion paper.

Members will recall that the committee informed the Assembly on 30 March 2017 that it had resolved to inquire into domestic and family violence as it relates to policy approaches and responses. The committee released the discussion paper on Wednesday, 26 July 2017 to assist individuals and organisations to prepare written submissions to its inquiry. Domestic and family violence causes physical and psychological harm, destroys families and erodes communities. The committee recognises that preventing and responding to domestic and family violence is a complex and challenging area of law, policy and service delivery.

Preventing and responding to such violence requires a variety of policy approaches and can include: primary prevention and community attitude campaigns; integrated intervention programs; mass-screening programs; programs for violence perpetrators; programs for victims who have been subject to domestic violence; and legislative and criminal justice approaches. It is useful that the adequacy and effectiveness of policy approaches and responses is examined.

The committee acknowledges the considerable efforts of people working in policy development and at the front line of service delivery in this complex and challenging area. The committee also acknowledges that frontline services are often delivered under significant pressure and demand. The committee encourages interested individuals and key stakeholder groups and organisations to make a written submission to this important inquiry. The call for submissions closes on Friday, 22 September 2017. I present the following copy of the committee's discussion paper:

Domestic and Family Violence—Policy approaches and responses—Discussion paper, dated 26 July 2017.

### **Statement by chair**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (11.47): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A. Continuing resolution 5A was agreed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 August 2012.

The requirements of the resolution set out a transparency mechanism to promote accountability in the consideration of statutory appointments. The resolution requires relevant standing committees which consider statutory appointments to report on a six-monthly basis and present a schedule listing appointments considered during the applicable period. The schedule is required to include the statutory appointments considered and, for each appointment, the date the request from the responsible minister for consultation was received and the date the committee's feedback was provided.

For the reporting period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017 the committee finalised its consideration of 31 statutory appointments. For the reporting period 1 July 2016 to 31 December 2016 the committee tabled its return on 21 March 2017. I wish to advise of an addendum to that return, specifically that the committee considered three statutory appointments, not one, as previously stated. Therefore, in accordance with continuing resolution 5A, I present the following paper:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Schedules of Statutory Appointments—

8<sup>th</sup> Assembly—Period 1 July to 31 December 2016—Amended.

9<sup>th</sup> Assembly—Period 1 January to 30 June 2017.

### **Government priorities—spring 2017**

#### **Ministerial statement**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (11.48): I am very pleased to outline the government's policy and legislative priorities for the second half of 2017. At the start of the year I said that the government would get on with the job of doing what Canberrans elected us to do. Canberrans continue to want a progressive government. They endorsed the government's plan to make the Canberra we love even better, and that is what we are delivering.

Since the election we have delivered a progressive and sensible budget, investing in all areas of our territory and funding many of the government's election commitments. We have made significant progress on stage 2 of light rail, whilst construction of stage 1 continues to be on schedule. We have created the City Renewal Authority and the Suburban Land Agency, consistent with our election commitments, which will deliver

our city a CBD that Australia's capital deserves. We will develop people-focused residential areas and a range of urban renewal projects across our suburbs. We have introduced smoke-free public transport waiting areas to help make Canberrans healthier. We have committed to the ACT's first container deposit scheme, which will start in early 2018. The Deputy Chief Minister has started the conversation across Canberra about the future of education in our city. And we are continuing engagement with communities on the future of public and affordable housing across the city.

In this place we have done what we said we would do to deliver a better Canberra. We have passed significant legislation to strengthen the government's response to domestic, family and sexual violence. We have removed red tape to make our city's nightlife more vibrant and safe. We have become the first jurisdiction to restrict access to lever action shotguns. And legislation to enable the smooth operation of light rail on our road network is on our agenda today.

The budget I handed down in June is progressive and responsible and is grounded by a strong and diversified economic base. The territory's economy is consistently amongst Australia's strongest. Our unemployment rate remains the second lowest in the country. One of the government's proudest achievements is that we have got unemployment down and we have kept it there. People are continuing to come to our city because of secure, well-paid jobs. The census data that was released last month shows that long-term planning for growth in Canberra's population is crucial in transport, in health, in education and in secure jobs.

Our long-term plans have also proven to bring short-term benefits. Two weeks ago, a report from Deloitte found our economy to be in a "sweet spot", with strong population growth and job creation across all sectors of our economy. Our budget position is also strong, and this provides a firm basis from which confidence can grow. As outlined in the budget, we will continue our commitment to return to a balanced budget in the next fiscal year.

To continue to deliver for a better Canberra, the Assembly will consider a range of important pieces of legislation during the second half of this year. Community safety is at the heart of the government's plans, whether it is through making our workplaces safer or through making our city's bars and nightclubs better places for Canberrans to enjoy. Every child has the right to access education and every worker has the right to be safe at work. As a result, the Deputy Chief Minister will bring forward occupational violence legislation that outlines our commitment to ensure staff remain safe at work within Canberra's schools.

Problem gambling impacts people right across our city and we took a number of clear commitments to the election to reduce harm in our community. We are going to implement these policies. In separate bills, the government will seek to tighten the rules and the amount of cash withdrawn from EFTPOS machines in licensed gaming venues, following feedback from stakeholders. The government is not shying away from reform in this area. I repeat: we will not shy away from reform in this area. We will introduce legislation to support small and medium clubs to diversify away from gaming machine revenue, through tax rebates and grants to support investment in

other sources of income, whilst also making it easier for the community to access the social impact assessments required for new gaming machine venues.

Public safety is of major importance to the government, and combating outlaw motorcycle gangs is ACT Policing's top priority. We will better protect Canberrans by establishing fortification removal laws to give police greater powers to access premises to execute search warrants. The government will also bring forward a discussion about new crime scene powers and firearms prohibition orders to help police make Canberra even safer. We will also make our city's night-life safer and the Attorney-General will introduce a new drink-spiking offence.

The ACT has some of the strongest laws in the country to manage dangerous dogs, but the government is seeking to make our legislation even stronger. Minister Fitzharris will outline further improvements and provide animal welfare and responsible pet ownership updates by the end of September, to keep Canberrans safe.

The government will continue to stand up for Canberra's workers. Minister Stephen-Smith will improve access and increase the statutory benefits available to injured workers under the ACT's private workers compensation scheme. The government will also seek to modernise workplace chemical safety and improve health monitoring of employees who work with strong substances, whilst we will also protect workers in the construction industry through regulatory reforms.

The government continues to be at the forefront of reconciliation. During this sitting period, after community feedback last year, we will amend the Holidays Act to declare a Reconciliation Day public holiday. And with the strong support of the community, as reflected in last year's election, Minister Ramsay will introduce legislation to transition to an end of the greyhound industry in the ACT by 30 June 2018. We said during the election campaign that we would work with the industry during the transition process, particularly to help workers reskill and retrain to get employment in more sustainable and rewarding industries, and the government is continuing that approach.

Canberra is one of the world's most livable cities because of the natural beauties that surround our city. The government is committed to conserving our environment and mitigating the impacts of climate change. During this sitting period, Minister Gentleman will introduce legislation to improve the safety and classification of our waterways, whilst Minister Rattenbury will introduce legislation to enhance energy supply and affordability, as the ACT heads towards our 100 per cent renewable energy target by 2020.

The government is focused on what Canberrans value most and what they want from their city. Our full legislative program is proof that we are getting on with the job that Canberrans elected us to do in October last year. The government will work with all in this place to ensure that this ambitious program is legislated. We will continue our approach to renewing our city's schools, hospitals and healthcare system and transport network, while continuing to support secure jobs and the provision of high quality city and community services.

My commitment as Chief Minister is to ensure that the government remains on track to deliver this ambitious legislative program and the election commitments we took to the people of Canberra—which were so resoundingly endorsed by the voters of Canberra last year—so that we continue to deliver for a better Canberra for the future. I present the following paper:

Government priorities—Spring 2017—Ministerial statement, 1 August 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **Community facility zoned land—public housing Ministerial statement**

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (11.57): On 7 June this year the Legislative Assembly called on the government to provide information about public housing on community facility zoned land on or before the first sitting day in August 2017.

I have spoken before about the process that we go through to identify suitable sites for public housing. This is a detailed process with consideration of a range of criteria. It applies to sites with all kinds of zoning, including community facility zoned land. The process commences with an analysis of vacant and available territory-owned land, that is, the land is suitably zoned in the Territory Plan and has not been identified for any other purpose. An assessment is then made of each site, based on its size and features, such as the slope, existing trees, proximity to public transport, shops and services, and other public housing. This analysis also considers the possible number of dwellings that could be constructed on a site, consistent with the Territory Plan.

A key objective of the community facility zoning is to facilitate social sustainability and inclusion through providing accessible sites for key government and non-government facilities and services for individuals, families and communities. As such, the use of community facility zoned land for public housing is considered in conjunction with other public uses and demands for the land. Generally, the use of community facility zoned land will be determined by current or future demand for different uses and the population catchment.

At this time there are more than 60 unleased blocks of community facility zoned land available for use across Canberra which can be used for many things, such as schools and childcare centres, hospitals, supportive housing, residential care, emergency services, recreation facilities, community centres, public agencies, retirement villages, libraries and places of worship. Facilities which may require larger sites, such as schools or aged-care accommodation, will be targeted to specific areas. Other more

flexible and commercial community uses, such as medical centres and childcare centres, are more likely to be able to respond to market demand and be located on smaller sites.

As at July 2017, Housing ACT held 341 dwellings on community facility zoned land. This includes two developments completed by the public housing renewal task force in Chisholm and Monash. These were completed in June and November 2016 respectively. The task force also has a site on community facility zoned land in Nicholls which is nearing completion. All three of the public housing renewal projects already completed or in progress on community facility zoned land were identified in late 2014 and were part of the earliest stages of the government's program of renewing and improving the quality of public housing in Canberra.

The motion also sought the government's agreement to continue its commitment to pre-development-application consultation for all public housing development proposals on community facility zoned land and to continue to improve community engagement processes across the government. I can say that in both of these areas the government is already working hard to make sure the community is informed early and provided with a range of opportunities to engage as we progress our pre-development-application planning and design process.

Feedback from the community continues to inform the design and layout of public housing proposals on community facility zoned land in Monash, Mawson, Chapman, Wright and Holder. The public housing renewal task force has met frequently with residents' groups from Chapman, Wright, Holder and Mawson. In some cases this has involved close to one meeting a week for a number of months while the issues and possible solutions have been discussed.

The task force has sought extra studies to get the information that the community wants and has provided outcomes of these meetings to the broader community. Representatives of community organisations and community councils have also been involved. My office continues to be involved in ongoing discussions as this matter progresses towards an outcome. The public comments period for development applications on these sites will be extended to five weeks to provide all community members with the opportunity to comment on the revised designs being produced from this process.

As members will also know, money was allocated in this year's budget to look at bolstering our engagement processes across government. Already this year, the government has developed draft guidelines to set out minimum community engagement requirements for developers. We are looking for feedback from the community until late August on these guidelines as part of our plans to strengthen engagement with the community and allow the community to provide important feedback early on.

As minister, I recognise the value that the community can add to planning and design processes, particularly through their local knowledge and experiences, and I look forward to continuing this engagement. I am pleased to provide this information to the Assembly. I present the following paper:

Community facility-zoned land—Public housing—Ministerial statement,  
1 August 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Youth justice update Ministerial statement**

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH** (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (12.02): On 9 May I updated the Assembly on the blueprint for youth justice in the ACT. Members will be aware that the blueprint is a 10-year strategy that provides a framework for significant youth justice reforms. It responds to the 2011 Human Rights Commission report into the ACT youth justice system and was developed by a task force with broad representation from the government and community sector. In May I indicated that as we near the halfway mark it is important to take stock, celebrate our achievements and focus on the next five years. I announced that I will establish a new task force of key youth justice stakeholders to establish the direction we need to take.

I am pleased to say that the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner, Ms Jodie Griffiths-Cook, has agreed to co-chair the new task force alongside the Executive Director of Children, Youth and Families within the Community Services Directorate, Dr Mark Collis. Ms Griffiths-Cook's position as co-chair of the task force continues the legacy of the previous task force; that is, to build a human rights focused youth justice system. I am proud that the ACT was the first state or territory in Australia to establish and pursue this goal. The task force will hold its first meeting in the next week or two. Its terms of reference will focus on continuing to improve and sustain outcomes for young people engaged with the youth justice system.

We want young people in this community to be safe, strong and connected. The task force has a strong base to build from. In May I outlined a significant fall in young people coming into contact with the youth justice system, including a 63 per cent reduction between 2011-12 and 2015-16 in the number of nights young people spent in custody. We should celebrate this success but we should not rest on our laurels. Over the last few months we have seen an increase in the number of young people in detention. That is something the task force will look at. In addition, the official visitors for children and young people have recommended that we consider how to better support young people's transition back to the community, particularly those who have spent significant periods on remand. I have asked that this be a specific area of focus for the task force.

A second area of focus is the continued over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. In this context it is important to note that the ACT has

the second lowest rate of over-representation for young people under youth justice supervision in the country. Since 2011-12 we have seen the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention fall by 47 per cent and in recent months there have been times when no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young person was in Bimberi. But we know there is more we can do to reduce the disproportionate number of Indigenous young people who are in trouble with the law. That is why we are engaging Gugan Gulwan, the Aboriginal Legal Service and the elected body in the task force process.

The third specific issue I have asked the task force to consider is the experience of young people with disability in the youth justice system. As members would be aware, the government is committed to the development of a disability justice strategy, and the task force will inform that work as well as considering any measures that could be implemented independently. The task force will provide me with a mid-term report against the blueprint's objectives and advise me on the priorities for the final five years of the strategy.

While I am updating the Assembly on the blueprint and the work of the task force, I would also like to touch on the operation of Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. There is always a limit to what can be said publicly about specific incidents. However, I am committed to being as transparent as possible about Bimberi's operation and performance. To this end, I have asked the Community Services Directorate to develop a standard report on Bimberi's performance so that a range of indicators can be objectively scrutinised each year. I will table the first of these reports at the earliest opportunity, to include data from 2016-17.

In the meantime I would like to share with you some of the information that is currently available. For example, members will be pleased to hear that the use of strip searches has been reduced dramatically since young people were detained in Quamby, down by 90 per cent and continuing to fall. Assaults by young people on other young people fell by 80 per cent between 2009-10 and 2015-16. In 2015-16 there were eight assaults by young people on other young people. Since the commencement of operations at Bimberi use of force incidents have decreased by 60 per cent. There were 36 use of force incidents in 2015-16. This reflects improved training in critical incident management but also demonstrates how challenging the work remains. Along with official visitor reports, and compliments by visiting experts from the Northern Territory royal commission and our Western Australian counterparts, this data confirms that Bimberi continues to move in the right direction.

As I have said before, young people in Bimberi are some of the most troubled and challenging of any young people in the ACT. The offences that have resulted in their detention are serious and have often included significant violence. Bimberi staff understand this challenge and that is why they continually work to improve practices and culture within the centre. The professional practice of Bimberi staff creates a safe place for young people to learn new skills, accept responsibility for their behaviour and rebuild relationships in the community. Continuing our commitment to young people in the ACT, the task force will ensure we maintain a strong focus on achieving the best outcomes for young people and therefore the best outcomes for our community.

While the task force does this important work, the oversight of Bimberi Youth Justice Centre will continue, as carried out by two official visitors, one of whom is a designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander official visitor, and the ACT Human Rights Commission. The role of the official visitors is to visit and inspect Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, receive and manage complaints from young people and others about the centre and report directly to me as Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, providing information on individual matters raised by young people and any service or system issues of concern.

Ms Narelle Hargreaves OAM, JP and Ms Tracey Whetnall undertake this critical work. During the last financial year the official visitors visited Bimberi on 46 occasions. In their last quarterly report the official visitors specifically noted positive results and outcomes being achieved for young people at Bimberi through the Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre, METC. They attended the end-of-term presentation and noted that it was an excellent example of staff working together with young people. Ms Hargreaves also attended parent-teacher interviews conducted by the METC. Seven parents attended these interviews to hear of their child's progress through the education program. These interviews also provided an opportunity for parents to meet Ms Hargreaves and hear about the official visitor role.

As members would be aware, there has been further media reporting about Bimberi in recent weeks. This reflects ongoing community interest across Australia in youth justice systems. In this context I reiterate comments that I made in May that the safety of young people and staff at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre is always the directorate's and the government's highest priority. Where allegations are raised regarding an employee's conduct in this setting, they are taken seriously and investigated appropriately while affording all parties procedural fairness. They are referred to ACT Policing where appropriate. A number of matters have also been brought to the attention of the Human Rights Commission, which is undertaking its own investigation.

Of course this scrutiny affects morale. But what is particularly hurtful is the airing of unsubstantiated allegations that cast aspersions on all Bimberi staff. This type of reporting also impacts on the emotional safety of families and young people in Bimberi, causing anguish and anger. I have been advised in the clearest terms that no evidence has been found by CSD or brought forward by others to support recent sensationalist headlines about such things as illicit drug use and organised fighting in Bimberi. The directorate remains committed to investigating all allegations. I repeat what I have said before: if anyone has evidence of misconduct within Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, this should be brought to the attention of the directorate, the police or the Human Rights Commission.

I mentioned earlier that the ACT was the first state or territory to commit to a human rights focused youth justice system. In line with that commitment I am pleased to announce that I released the charter of rights for young people in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre earlier today. I present the following paper:

Charter of Rights for Young People in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

The charter of rights has been developed to reflect the principles contained in the Human Rights Act and the Children and Young People Act 2008. It aligns with the strategic objectives of the blueprint and complements the charter of rights for children and young people in out of home care in the ACT. The charter aims to further strengthen the protection of young people in Bimberi by developing awareness of their rights and responsibilities. Based on international agreements to which Australia is a signatory, it provides children and young people with an accessible guide to their rights, responsibilities and entitlements while at Bimberi. The charter was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner and the ACT Chief Magistrate. Seventeen young people in Bimberi provided feedback to inform the final charter.

Importantly, the charter makes clear that young people in detention have special rights related to their need for protection, rehabilitation and support. These are in addition to the basic needs shared by all people, such as the right to food, shelter and health care. The charter outlines 12 rights to be protected, including the right to be treated equally with respect and dignity and the right to access education and training. The charter also sets out responsibilities for young people while in detention. These recognise a shared responsibility to respect and uphold the rights of other people at Bimberi.

The charter requires staff at Bimberi, police officers and other workers, including health and education staff, to embed the identified rights in day-to-day practice. This will further strengthen the human rights lens applied to service delivery and decision-making. To support this, the charter will be incorporated into human rights training and induction received by Bimberi staff. Importantly, the charter will be made available to all young people in Bimberi and will be displayed throughout the centre. Assistance for young people to understand and engage with the charter will be provided by the METC.

Before I finish today I would like to recognise the range of community and government partners that work alongside Bimberi staff to provide services and support to young people. This is a vast group, and it is impossible to name them all, but it includes education staff from the METC; specialist health and mental health staff from ACT Health; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from Gugan Gulwan and Winnunga Nimmityjah; the Canberra Raiders; PCYC; drug and alcohol specialists from the Ted Noffs Foundation and the ACT Drug and Alcohol Service; Relationships Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counselling and young men's group; Australian of the year finalist Alan Tongue, who delivers the dream, believe, achieve program; and the shine for kids program.

I would again like to reiterate my support for the staff at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and those in the services I have just mentioned. There are few other workplaces that attract the level of community interest and oversight that occurs at Bimberi, but the Bimberi staff are dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for young people and for our community, and I commend them for their work. I present the following paper:

Youth Justice in the ACT—Update—Ministerial statement, 1 August 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (12.14): I would like very much to thank the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth for her update today. It is very, very pleasing to hear that the youth justice blueprint is broadly achieving its aims in reducing the number of young people, including, importantly, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, in detention.

I would like to congratulate the minister on the formation of a task force to focus on improvements and sustainable outcomes for young people engaged with the youth justice system. This will ensure that it remains an important focus, and I believe the appointment of the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner will ensure that human rights are at the centre of deliberations.

It is clear that young people engaged with the youth justice system need help and assistance to get back on track with their lives. Too often there has been violence, abuse and neglect as a feature of the family background of these young people, and we must prioritise their education and rehabilitation goals. We must not demonise them and subscribe to unhelpful stereotypes about those who engage in criminal behaviour.

This is why I am particularly pleased today that the minister has released the charter of rights for young people in detention. This is something I called for back in April. So I am very pleased that this has been prioritised and I am very hopeful that it will be something which will help to ensure that young people are treated with respect and dignity during their time in detention and are guaranteed the right to education and are assisted with their rehabilitation.

The Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians released a model charter of rights for young people and children detained in youth justice facilities in July 2014 and called for jurisdictions to develop tailored charters of rights at that time. The model charter is based on international agreements to which Australia is a signatory and is designed to provide children and young people in custody with an easily understood guide to their rights and what they are entitled to while in custody. I am pleased that, even though it took some years to develop, the ACT charter aligns with this work, as it will ensure that a human rights focus is forefront.

We must promote the wellbeing, care and protection of children and young people in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment. Parents, children, the community and the whole ACT government each have a responsibility in achieving this, which is also a key objective of the ACT Children and Young People Act 2008. I am pleased that consultation occurred with the young people currently in detention, as this upholds the principle that young people should be consulted on issues that affect them. I believe that the charter of rights will be an important tool to ensure that workers and young people are aware of obligations under both the Human

Rights Act and the Children and Young People Act and will ensure that young people can reach their full potential.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2017**

Debate resumed from 8 June 2017, on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR COE** (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (12.18): The opposition will be supporting the Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The bill amends a number of acts and regulations relating to segways and light rail, including licensing provisions for drivers of light rail vehicles. It is essential for there to be consistency of approach for all operators and drivers of public transport.

The opposition believes that the safety of light rail commuters is of paramount importance. Currently the bill provides that drivers of light rail vehicles need only hold a full Australian drivers licence and complete accredited training. While the Canberra Liberals support this bill as the first step in regulating light rail within the ACT, there are a number of questions that need to be answered in following legislation.

These questions include: will there be a number of years a person must hold a full Australian drivers licence before they can be recruited as a light rail driver? Will drivers need to hold particular qualifications or have specific experience? Will light rail drivers need to hold a working with vulnerable people registration like taxi drivers, bus drivers, hire car drivers and rideshare drivers? What tests will applicants have to pass before they can become a light rail driver? Will there be a suitable person test as part of the application process, including whether a person has been found guilty in a criminal or civil court? Will the test include the applicant's knowledge of public safety, road safety or background checks? What will the training given to drivers of light rail vehicles entail, and will it be reviewed by the ACT government before it is rolled out? What audits will be undertaken by the Office of the National Safety Regulator and Canberra Metro on the training and licensing of drivers? Finally, what reporting requirements will the government impose on Canberra Metro to monitor the practices and processes of Canberra Metro once they are training operators?

I understand that a second bill next year will detail those finer points. Given that light rail will be run by a private company, the opposition believe that it is very important that this Assembly set out the expectations of the Canberra community in statute. The opposition will be looking for the answers to these questions and many more when review of the next bill comes before the Assembly. The Canberra Liberals may bring further amendments to the legislation in the future to ensure that the safety and expectations of Canberra residents are enshrined in legislation.

In conclusion, the Canberra Liberals will be supporting this legislation, but there are a number of questions that will need to be answered in order to actually have an operating light rail system in the territory.

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (12.21): The results from the 2016 census are in: Canberra is officially growing faster than any other state or territory in Australia. For those of us living here, this comes as little surprise. We have seen our city flourish over recent years, with our suburbs growing and town centres filling with new businesses. And we are not slowing down. Over the next four years we can expect to pass 421,000 Canberra residents by 2020. It is the government's responsibility to ensure our infrastructure keeps pace with these changes so that Canberra continues to live up to its name as an innovative and livable city.

We know that light rail is part of doing just that. The Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 is the next step in bringing the light rail into full and safe operation. With construction of stage 1 of light rail well underway, new apartments and precincts are popping up along Northbourne Avenue. When finished, Dickson station and Civic terminus will be improved urban hubs, attracting more shops, cafes and activity to the local area. Light rail will provide the infrastructure that these renewed urban hubs require. Residents living near the light rail corridors will have quick and reliable public transport at their doorstep. For those not living on the light rail line, stage 1 of the light rail alone will free up more than a million bus kilometres each year. This means that additional services can be directed to places like my electorate of Ginninderra, covering most of Belconnen, improving the connections across our city.

Stage 2 will extend these benefits. The future of public transport and urban renewal in Canberra is exciting, and we are already seeing the benefit of light rail in our growing economy. The project is bringing more investment opportunities into our city, and Canberra Metro is consistently meeting or exceeding its local employment targets. The Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 signposts the fact that light rail is close to becoming a reality.

Since light rail will operate on our existing roads, this bill provides the mechanisms for it to do so in a safe and accountable manner. In order to become accredited as a light rail driver, a person will need to hold a full Australian drivers licence, demonstrate knowledge of our road rules and meet the requirements issued by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator. The bill establishes that light rail operators will be subject to the same blood alcohol limits as other public passenger drivers. These licensing requirements reflect the safety standards that passengers and road users expect of vehicles on our roads.

The bill also amends certain definitions so that traffic infringement notices, such as for speeding, can be issued to light rail drivers. Light rail vehicles will also be included under certain offences—for example, joy-riding. This protects the public from unauthorised drivers and prevents damage to bystanders and, importantly, the light rail vehicles. Each light rail vehicle will be clearly identified with large numbers located internally and externally which will serve the same purpose as numberplates

on cars. These measures will ensure that light rail drivers are held responsible and play their part in promoting safety on our roads.

This bill also deals with insurance matters for light rail. Light rail will be brought within the scope of the compulsory third-party insurance scheme that we are all familiar with. I expect it will only be in the rarest of circumstances, but if an accident involving a light rail vehicle occurs it will be dealt with in the same way that car accidents are currently dealt with. This approach ensures consistency and provides greater certainty for all parties.

This bill brings light rail one step closer to being operational. It ensures that light rail will be driven safely and responsibly on our roads, amongst cars, cyclists, buses and pedestrians. Driving down Northbourne Avenue we can all see that construction of light rail is in full swing and new developments are taking shape. Our city is changing, and it is changing for the better. It is essential that our infrastructure and, in turn, our relevant laws, keep pace as Canberra becomes more vibrant and more connected. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

*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 12.27 to 2.30 pm.**

## **Ministerial arrangements**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (2.30): Mr Gentleman will be absent from question time this week. I will be taking questions on Mr Gentleman's portfolios, and will do my best to assist members in that regard.

## **Questions without notice**

### **Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assault allegations**

**MR COE:** My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, I refer to your update on youth justice in the ACT tabled today, in which you spoke of “unsubstantiated allegations” and “recent sensationalist headlines” about Bimberi. Minister, is the *Canberra Times* report of 25 July on an alleged assault arising from a brawl between detainees on 16 July an example of “unsubstantiated allegations” and “sensationalist headlines”?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** That particular incident did occur. It occurred in the context of a youth justice centre that is, like all youth justice centres around the country, a complex environment where the young people coming in are some of the most difficult and challenging young people in our community. Almost all of them have experienced some level of trauma and many have learnt to use violence to express their anger, their frustration and when they have concerns. From time to time incidents will occur in Bimberi. In each case they are managed. What went on in the incident is reviewed to see if procedures can be improved. My understanding is that in this particular instance the incident was also referred to ACT Policing.

**MR COE:** On what date was this matter referred to the AFP, and what evidence does Bimberi provide to the AFP as a matter of course?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I will take that question on notice.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Have the police concluded their investigation and, if so, what have they found?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for her supplementary question, and apologies to the Leader of the Opposition for not thanking him for his earlier questions. I will take that question on notice also.

### **Environment—waste management**

**MS LE COUTEUR:** My question is to the Chief Minister. It relates to the proposal for a waste-to-energy plant in Fyshwick. The *Canberra Times* reports that the plant would be 50-50 joint venture with ActewAGL. Chief Minister, given that ActewAGL is 50 per cent owned by Icon Water and the government would therefore be a 25 per cent owner of the plant, what support, financial or otherwise, has the government provided or committed to provide?

**MR BARR:** None that I am aware of.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** How and when will the ACT government in its role as the 50 per cent owner of ActewAGL give approval to the project proceeding to statutory approvals?

**MR BARR:** As Ms Le Couteur would know, the government does not actively intervene in the decisions of the joint venture. We have representation in relation to the joint venture through board members from Icon Water. Board members from Icon Water act in accordance with the Territory-owned Corporations Act. Mr Gentleman and I are shareholders. It is important to distinguish between shareholders and board members.

**MS LEE:** Chief Minister, what assurances can the ACT government provide to the Canberra community about the due diligence that can be undertaken on this project to ensure that any potential impacts on health and the environment or otherwise are being addressed?

**MR BARR:** The project will be assessed in accordance with the ACT's very strict environmental and planning laws.

### **Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assaults**

**MRS KIKKERT:** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, the statement that you tabled today notes that there were eight assaults by young people on other young people in the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre in 2015-16. How many assaults by young people on other young people occurred in 2016-17?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for her question. As I said in my statement this morning, I have asked my directorate to prepare a standard report on KPIs for Bimberi on various indicators that can be tabled on a regular basis. I did say in my statement that as soon as those figures are available to complete that report for 2016-17 I will table that and make another statement to the Assembly.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Are young people in Bimberi informed that they run a very real risk of being assaulted by another young person whilst in detention?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for her supplementary question. Young people coming into Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, as I have said previously, are some of the most difficult and complex young people in our community. These are young people who have often learned to use violence to express themselves. From time to time, therefore, it is not entirely unexpected that they would seek to express themselves in that way within Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

At all times the staff at Bimberi, the directorate and the government act with the safety of young people and of staff at Bimberi as our utmost consideration. I also noted in that statement that since, I think, 2009-10 there has been a reduction in the number of assaults at Bimberi of 80 per cent. I specified in my statement that that was a reduction of 80 per cent in assaults of young people on other young people. Overall the number of assaults occurring at Bimberi has reduced by 80 per cent. We are continuing to seek to improve performance at Bimberi.

**Mr Coe:** Point of order.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** Point of order, Mr Coe.

**Mr Coe:** My point of order is on relevance. The specific question was whether incoming detainees are informed that there is a risk of violence in the centre. To date I do not think the minister has addressed it.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** Considering that a minute and 20 has gone in answering the question, I ask the minister in accordance with the standing orders to be directly relevant and come to the subject of the question.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** As I announced this morning, we have just released a charter of rights for young people at Bimberi that outlines what they can expect—both their rights and their responsibilities—in coming into Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. Of course one of their rights is to stay safe in the centre, and one of their responsibilities is to ensure that other children and young people are safe in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, as well as, of course, the right of staff to be safe in that environment.

**MR WALL:** Minister, of the eight young people who were assaulted by other Bimberi detainees in 2015-16, for how many of them was this their first experience of being the victim of an assault whilst in custody?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Wall for his supplementary question and I will take it on notice.

### **Government—economic management**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, the most recent Deloitte Access business outlook report described the ACT economy as being in “a sweet spot”. What actions has the ACT government taken that have led to these findings?

**MR BARR:** Deloitte has rightly drawn attention to the strength of the ACT economy. Our very strong construction activity across residential, commercial and engineering construction has been highlighted in their report. Their analysis points to double-digit growth in housing construction over the past year, \$1.5 billion worth of commercial construction projects underway, and an exceptionally strong civil works pipeline for the coming few years as the light rail project continues to progress.

They have also pointed to the strength of our labour force, with job vacancies up more than 16 per cent over the past year, which is well above the national result. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that average unemployment through the year to June is significantly lower than it was at the same time last year. It is also worth noting that when it comes to finding a new job, Canberra now has the shortest median duration of job search of any Australian capital city apart from Darwin.

State final demand is up five per cent through the year, which is the second highest growth rate of any Australian jurisdiction. We are continuing to see strong growth in demand across all the sectors that drive the territory economy: private consumption, private investment, commonwealth spending and ACT government activity.

The fiscal strategy that the government has adopted in past budgets, and again in 2017, has played an important role in helping the territory’s economy to reach this “sweet spot”. Our own investments in infrastructure, in economic diversification and in backing local jobs kept Canberra out of recession during the Abbott years and have created a strong foundation for the nation-leading growth that we are seeing at this point.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Chief Minister, how are retail trade and small business confidence tracking, and what does this say about the broader ACT economy?

**MR BARR:** Confidence amongst the territory’s 26,000 businesses is currently the highest in the country and, in fact, is at a seven-year high. Confident businesses are ones that invest and employ more, so this points to a very positive future for our city’s economy.

Part of this confidence no doubt comes from the fact that retail trade continues to grow well above the national average, increasing by 5.7 per cent over the past year. Given the levels of wage growth, that is a remarkable outcome for this territory. Canberrans are feeling optimistic enough about their own prospects and family

budgets to maintain a very high level of discretionary spending. We are seeing this particularly in areas like household goods and expenditure in cafes, restaurants and other areas of hospitality.

Consumer spending and business confidence are two very good indicators of how well people feel the economy is working for them, and a sustained period of strong retail trade and consistently high business confidence since the last territory election indicates that Canberrans agree with Deloitte's assessment that we are, indeed, in a sweet spot.

We will, of course, continue to monitor all economic indicators closely, including wage growth, because we know that secure jobs and wages make the biggest difference to Canberrans sharing the gains of economic growth.

**MS CODY:** Chief Minister, What are the strongest performing sectors of the ACT economy, and how is this contributing to the growth of local jobs?

**MR BARR:** I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary. We are seeing very strong growth across a diverse range of sectors. The property sector grew by seven per cent last year. Construction expanded by five per cent. Together these sectors employ almost 19,000 Canberrans. Strong growth will help safeguard these jobs and create new ones in these industries.

Importantly too we have seen exceptionally strong growth in our export oriented sectors, tourism and higher education being two very good examples. Domestic overnight expenditure is up more than 16 per cent on last year. Spending by international tourists is up 28 per cent. The tourism and recreation sector, as a component within the broader sector, employs nearly 7,000 Canberrans, up from 3,000 only three years ago.

Our higher education and research sector has been the standout, though, now accounting for a third of our city's service exports and supporting around 16,000 local jobs. Our plan, which we are delivering through the 2017 budget and with the policies we are adopting, is to continue to diversify the territory's economy and to invest in areas where we have strong growth potential. I highlighted on budget day, and I highlight again today, that the higher education sector has the strongest capacity for rapid growth into the future.

My government will do everything it possibly can to support the expansion of our city's universities. We are seeing that at ANU, we are seeing it at UC, we are seeing it through the work we are undertaking at the Canberra Institute of Technology and we will continue to support the rapid growth of higher education in this city so that Canberra can rightly be Australia's education capital.

### **Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—safety**

**MRS JONES:** My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, the *Canberra Times* reported last month that the investigation into the

6 May 2016 incident at Bimberi was ongoing. Has the review been completed? If it has, why has it not been released?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Jones for her question. I think there are two issues here. There is an investigation into conduct around that incident. My understanding is that that investigation if not finalised is close to finalisation at this point. That is not the kind of investigation that I would normally expect would be publicly released.

I know that there has been a review of the circumstances that occurred there and a number of lessons have been learnt. As I said in my statement in May, training has been rolled out in response to feedback from staff in response to that 6 May incident. If there is specifically a review that led to that, I will investigate whether that is available.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, why would the details uncovered in the investigation not be released?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Jones for her supplementary question. The investigation into that matter relates to a number of staff and there will have been allegations raised through the course of that investigation that may or may not prove to have evidence to support them. As a matter of procedural fairness for staff involved in these kinds of investigations, it would not normally be expected that such investigations would be made public. I will investigate what can be made public in relation to that, but these are the kinds of internal investigations that would not normally be made public for reasons of privacy and procedural fairness to staff.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, why has it taken more than 12 months to respond to matters that go to the heart of the safety of staff and residents of Bimberi?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for her supplementary question. As I said, there is a significant procedural fairness issue that goes to these kinds of staffing matters. Sometimes these processes within the context of public service investigations do take some time, to ensure that there is procedural fairness for everybody involved.

### **Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—staffing**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Are all positions at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre currently filled? If not, how many positions are currently vacant and what areas have the most problems with staffing?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Milligan for his question. I would like to assure the Assembly that Bimberi Youth Justice Centre is appropriately staffed, but I will take on notice the detail of the question around the numbers of staff.

**MR MILLIGAN:** When do you expect that all positions at Bimberi will be filled, once you find out what is available?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I would note that I have not confirmed whether there are vacancies at Bimberi. However, I would note that in a lot of public service areas there is an ongoing recruitment process. So I will take that question on notice.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, what impact have the ongoing problems at Bimberi had on the recruitment of staff?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Thank you Mrs Kikkert for your supplementary question. The directorate has recently been conducting a recruitment round for new youth workers at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. My understanding is that we have a tranche of workers who have either just started or are due to start. But I will take the question on notice in terms of that timing.

### **Health—nurse-led walk-in centres**

**MS CODY:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, can you explain to the Assembly why the government has committed to provide more walk-in centres?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Cody very much for her question. I am delighted to explain to the Assembly exactly why the government has committed to provide more walk-in centres for the Canberra community. They provide easy access to affordable health services in our community. That is exactly why we have begun planning and funding the expansion of the nurse walk-in centres as part of the 2017-18 budget, just as we said we would do at the 2016 election.

We will deliver three new walk-in centres to add to those that already exist in Tuggeranong and Belconnen. We will begin with Gungahlin then the Weston Creek region and then plan for aligning the work we already have underway on the city health centre with an inner north walk-in centre. With strong population growth right across our city, and especially in each of these regions, there is a need to increase access to timely health care in these areas.

The establishment of these new walk-in centres will provide people with increased options for accessing health care for less serious conditions closer to their homes. It will complement existing health services and especially provide access to out-of-hours and weekend primary health care.

Labor governments are renowned for their commitment to affordable health care for all, and I am pleased to remind members that health care provided at our walk-in centres is, indeed, provided at no cost. Expanding the network of walk-in centres across Canberra further supports affordable health care and ensures there are no financial barriers to accessing this type of care.

I take this opportunity to remind members of the Liberals' track record on health care: slashing hundreds of millions of dollars from state and territory health budgets in the now infamous Hockey budget; establishing a failed GP copayment providing little relief to GPs on the MBS freeze; of course last year's disastrous pretend hospitals

floated throughout the election campaign; and not to mention what is clear, that is, the Liberals' contempt for affordable accessible care through walk-in centres—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Hanson:** Question 10: first interjection.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** with you, Madam Acting Speaker, confirming just last week your view that they are simply just too expensive. And that was it.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** Just before I call Ms Cody, as a point of clarification, we are up to question 7, Mr Hanson.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** Ms Cody, who I would like to hear.

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, Mr Hanson!

**MS CODY:** Minister, how does providing more walk-in centres contribute to community health care?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Walk-in centres provide fast, free, one-off care for minor injury and illness on a no-appointment basis 365 days a year, from 7.30 every morning to 10 pm every night. Walk-in centres are designed to fill a gap in the current Canberra health services market, particularly after hours. They do complement existing services.

The services provided by walk-in centres are often distinct from those provided by other services, including GPs who are able to provide ongoing treatment and advice for more complex issues. Walk-in centre patients can see a specialist nurse for advice, assessment and treatment for minor illnesses and injuries such as cuts and bruises, minor infections, strains, sprains, skin complaints and coughs and colds.

Where required, walk-in centre nurses provide referrals and updates back to a patient's GP or specialist so that they can receive ongoing care. Walk-in centres also provide an alternative to Canberra's busy emergency departments, particularly after hours and on the weekends, helping to relieve pressure on our very busy emergency departments.

Walk-in centres also provide the community with health promotion information and resources that can enable them to better manage their own healthcare needs. Walk-in centres complement the existing range of healthcare services by providing a no-cost service in a market that has the lowest bulk-billing rates in Australia. They are critical to supporting the health needs of our community.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, what feedback has been received from the community and relevant stakeholders about walk-in centres?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** The walk-in centres continue to generate very high levels of feedback from Canberrans, with that feedback being overwhelmingly positive. The themes include professional and impressive service, best quality service, excellent advice and information, and many thanks to commend the government innovation of establishing walk-in centres.

Some of the suggestions received by ACT Health have been to improve street signage, changes to registration processes and suggestions to reduce waiting times between patients. However, I am pleased to advise members that, as many may know, the average wait time that a patient will experience in a walk-in centre is less than 15 minutes. Complaints received ranged from being unable to receive a vaccination and suggestions for improving the availability of equipment.

ACT Health has recently received feedback also from a number of GPs. In that vein, an information session organised by the Capital Health Network will be established for those GPs currently operating in or near the Gungahlin town centre to discuss the Gungahlin walk-in centre that was funded in this year's budget. That meeting will take place on 31 August. I have had a number of discussions, including with the AMA and the royal college of GPs, and with some GPs one on one, including at a recent meeting during family doctor week, to discuss with them the opportunities to further integrate our health services, and the opportunities that the expansion of the walk-in centre network provides for that.

### **Health—alcohol, tobacco and other drugs strategy**

**MR WALL:** My question is to the Minister for Health. The Government's peak tobacco, alcohol and other drugs strategy was meant to be completed by the end of 2015. It has still not been completed as of 1 August—today. Why has the review of the tobacco, alcohol and other drugs strategy not been completed more than two years after it was due?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Wall for his question. He may have been listening when I was on ABC radio yesterday with Mr Coe discussing this very matter. It is the case that significant community-based consultation was undertaken throughout 2015 on the draft new version of the alcohol and drugs strategy. That was then provided to me in the first few months of my term as the assistant health minister. I asked for some further work to be done and also for consideration to be given to the current alcohol and drug services we provide directly through ACT Health. As a result, that work was continuing during the ACT election campaign.

We then of course were re-elected and established the parliamentary agreement, which contained a very important new initiative: to establish a drug and alcohol court. As I said yesterday, it is very important that the government's initiative to establish a drug and alcohol court is considered in conjunction with the drug and alcohol strategy. It also needs to reflect the recently approved national drug strategy, which

was endorsed by ministers around the country only in June this year and released publicly just a few weeks ago.

There is considerable work underway. There are many people within ACT Health and many community-based organisations that continue to deliver alcohol and drug services. I note that in last year's budget the then Minister for Health announced significant investment in our drug services in the community. All of that work continues. I am continuing to talk to stakeholders both within ACT Health and within the community sector about progressing the drug and alcohol strategy.

**MR WALL:** Minister, why have you or your directorate not completed this strategy, given the rapidly growing problem with addiction to substances such as methamphetamine not just in the ACT but also across Australia?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I refer to my previous answer to answer Mr Wall's subsequent question.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, why has the committee that is meant to oversee the policy not met this year?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mrs Jones for the supplementary question. A range of stakeholders involved in drug and alcohol service delivery continue to meet in a number of different ways. I am unclear why they have not met this year. So I will take that question specifically on notice.

### **Canberra Hospital—kitchen equipment**

**MR DOSZPOT:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, on 6 July 2017, ABC radio news broadcast a story claiming that the Health Services Union had called on the Canberra Hospital to install equipment in its kitchen that was delivered almost five years ago. This equipment would create efficiencies in food storage. In the report, the Health Services Union noted that a number of staff have been on casual or temporary contracts during that five-year period while they waited for the equipment to be installed and that this is causing uncertainty. Minister, why has new equipment lain idle for five years after it has been delivered?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Doszpot for the question. I will take the question on notice and provide further advice to the Assembly.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Minister, why have you allowed employment uncertainty for hospital staff to continue for five years because you have failed to install new equipment?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I will take that question on notice as well. I also do not think some of the assumptions made in Mr Doszpot's question are correct but I will provide further information to the Assembly.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, is any other equipment lying idle and uninstalled at the hospital, and is any other equipment in such a state causing uncertainty for staff?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Not to my knowledge, but I will take the question on notice.

### **Education—future strategy**

**MR STEEL:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, can you update members on the status of work towards a future of education strategy?

**MS BERRY:** I thank the member for his question. After kicking off the process with my ministerial statement in February there has been a whole lot of activity in schools and across the community on this big conversation that the government is keen to have. I have brought together a team of community leaders to partner with the government, as critical friends and experts, to keep the conversation on track and to make sure that a broad conversation happens that is accessible for anyone who has an interest, from academics all the way across our community to the youngest of our students. As the process continues and a strategy is formed experts such as these will provide advice based on the themes and the issues raised.

Work has begun on the conversation, with the Education Directorate working closely with stakeholders including community sector organisations, parent and community bodies, non-government schools, professional organisations, unions and others. The conversation with this group focused on seeking their views as well as supporting them to have a conversation with their stakeholders. Materials to facilitate the conversation have been distributed widely and the project team has been working hard to support it wherever it is needed. To date the directorate has received over 60 written submissions, with more anticipated as the conversation continues and more discussion papers are released.

The directorate has made visits to over 60 schools to help the local communities plan activities and capture feedback. Student representatives from all public schools have been asked to engage, and I had a chance to be a part of their discussion at the student congress a few months ago. I have also visited individual schools to participate in classroom conversations that are taking place across all colleges in the ACT. Schools are using a variety of engagement methods including video booths, graffiti walls, surveys and a request for student wishes for the future.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, how is the first discussion paper supporting the conversation?

**MS BERRY:** I thank the member for the supplementary question. At the beginning of July I released the first discussion paper as part of the future of education work, which will help to continue to guide the conversation and some of the key issues that need to be considered. The paper continues the government's focus on equity in education that I outlined in my ministerial statement.

In passing, it might be useful to remind members about what a focus on equity means. Education is transformative; it changes lives. A child's potential to harness the change that education brings is not defined by their gender, religion, sexuality, class, culture or wealth. Gifts and talents flow to children with no discrimination and when

education is made available to all, according to their individual needs, life opportunities are unlimited.

The first discussion paper considers this issue by identifying the journey of children through their education. It asks our community to consider: are we ensuring that all children are ready to start school? Are children enabled and supported to learn each day? Are children gaining a year's learning from a year's schooling? Does the education provided set children up for work and for life?

I am looking forward to hearing about the insights that our community brings forward on these questions. There have already been some very clear themes emerging that will play an important part in laying out the strategy, and I am keen to build on these and confirm that the government understands the conversation so far.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, what are some of the emerging themes being raised by the community?

**MS BERRY:** I thank the member for the supplementary question. Through the conversations so far some consistent and very important themes are being raised by students, parents, carers, teachers and the wider community. Broadly categorised, there has been interest in some of the more practical issues of how schools are structured and operate. This has emerged in feedback from all groups, except young people themselves, about the level of variation between schools across a range of issues. There is a clear desire and need for the community to turn its mind to the respective roles and responsibilities of individual school principals and teams as well as the education support office and related to this is the issue of how student transitions between stages of schooling are managed.

The government is also being told about the extent to which schools are seen as centres of the community and how important it is that the whole community works together to support the needs of children. So while we cannot expect teachers and schools to meet every need on their own, by building strong partnerships across sectors, students will be better supported.

By far the most frequently raised theme is that students need to be supported with learning for the future with key competencies in areas such as resilience, communication, critical analysis and thinking, and cultural awareness and understanding. Students have brought an alternative facet to this theme, raising the importance of their need to be equipped for life after school, which some college students I have spoken to have described as being taught how "to adult". This extends beyond being provided real life skills to being better equipped for alternative pathways to work or to further study aside from university.

### **Health—election commitments**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Minister for Health. In the past week we have learnt that a review of methadone guidelines is five years overdue. The commitment on publicly funded bariatric surgery is three years overdue. The review of alcohol and

other drug services is two years overdue. Minister, how many other commitments in the Health portfolio has the government promised but as yet failed to deliver?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Lee for the question. I reject some of the assumptions she has made in her question. I certainly explained in public and recently in the last question I received in the chamber about the specific delay to some of those. Each of those has been explained.

In terms of commitments that this government has made to health, I note that in the most recent budget we have started funding many of the major commitments that we took to the Canberra community last year that they re-elected this government for. So the commitments that we took to last year's election are being funded and are being delivered. Of course, all of the three examples that you gave: the opioid replacement therapy guidelines, the alcohol and drug strategy and the bariatric surgery will be implemented.

**MS LEE:** Minister, how many other reviews and studies in the health portfolio are years overdue?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** The question is an interesting one. Certainly, I have had discussions with Health over the past few days and there are a number of strategies that were developed by Health. The fact that they had a lifespan does not mean that they are now out of date. Many health policies remain static. There is a lot of change at the national level in terms of health policies and guidelines. I have asked, in conjunction with Minister Rattenbury, as the Minister for Mental Health, for ACT Health to provide to us a fuller explanation of the range of policies that ACT Health is responsible for. I note that by the end of this year there are a number of accreditation-related policies that ACT Health is required to complete in order to receive accreditation at Canberra Hospital. I am advised that those will all be completed within the correct time frame, which is by the end of this calendar year.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Minister, what level of confidence can the Canberra community have in your ability to deliver commitments in a timely manner, given the long delays we have seen in the health portfolio?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** The community can have a great level of confidence in the ability of this government to deliver health services to the Canberra community. The community clearly had confidence in this government's ability to deliver health services, given the result of last year's election and given the number of people who access our services every day, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. We have, in the past 12 months alone, opened a paediatric emergency department stream at Canberra Hospital. We have significantly upgraded the Canberra Hospital emergency department, which I note is one of the 10 busiest emergency departments in the whole country. Despite this, we are seeing—

**Mr Doszpot:** The longest waiting times?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** No. We are seeing our waiting times coming down. We have seen an expansion in the services available at Canberra Hospital, including the very

important paediatric emergency department stream. We have seen over 40,000 people having access to nurse walk-in centres—which the Canberra Liberals would like to shut down—over the past three to four years. We will continue to expand the network of walk-in centres across the city. We funded in this year's budget, for example, more nurses, beginning the expansion of the very successful hospital in the home program. Anybody in this place who knows anyone who has accessed the hospital in the home program will know that it is a fundamentally important health service to enable people to get back on their feet and get back to their daily lives. We have provided bulk-billing grants to a number of bulk-billing services on the south side of Canberra. And we will continue to deliver the high-quality healthcare services that Canberrans expect of a Labor government and know they will not get from a Canberra Liberals government.

### **Crime—motorcycle gangs**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Attorney-General and relates to outlaw motorcycle gang activity in Canberra. The President of the Australian Federal Police Association stated on Radio 2CC on 11 July with regards to anti-consorting laws that, "It is the last part of the suite of resources we need to battle outlaw motorcycle gangs. I've been going on like a broken record. We're an island in NSW. We've become a safe place to operate." He concluded by saying, "For goodness sake, bring these laws in." Attorney-General, why are you leaving police without the last part of the resources they need to battle outlaw motorcycle gangs?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Mr Hanson for his question. I note that we have been working and we continue to work closely with ACT Policing and the community in relation to safety. Public safety is, of course, a strong commitment and a high priority of this government. Canberra remains a very safe city to live in. We know that we are not immune to the presence and activities of OMGs, and we are working closely not only through existing laws but also on the development of laws.

Currently we have an approach that has been focusing on strengthening traditional law enforcement responses. That includes the application of bail and sentencing laws and matters such as association and place restrictions on people to prevent further offences.

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Acting Speaker, on a point of order of relevance, the question related to anti-consorting laws and why these were not being brought in by the government, not on other laws that have been brought in by the government.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. Although the minister is, I think, coming close to dealing with the issues, I remind the minister that the standing orders say he should be concise and directly relevant to the subject matter of the question. The subject matter of the question was anti-consorting laws. The question specifically was: why have you not implemented anti-consorting laws.

**MR RAMSAY:** I would say that the consideration of what laws should be introduced is directly impacted by the laws that already exist and the laws that are being considered at the moment.

I note that there has been consideration by Mr Hanson of laws that are based heavily on the New South Wales laws. I note and draw to the attention of the Assembly the review that has been taken by New South Wales into the laws which form the particular model for Mr Hanson. The New South Wales Ombudsman had this to say about the very similar legislation:

We have concluded that the act does not provide police with a viable mechanism to tackle criminal organisations, and is unlikely to ever be able to be used effectively.

The Ombudsman made one recommendation about the laws which form the model of Mr Hanson's draft legislation. That recommendation is that they be repealed.

**MR HANSON:** Attorney-General, why do we continue to be an island that has become a safe place for outlaw motorcycle gangs to operate in and an unsafe place for Canberrans to live in?

**MR RAMSAY:** I reject both premises of his question.

**MS CODY:** Minister, what evidence is there in other jurisdictions about the effectiveness of these kinds of laws?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cody for her supplementary. As I say, it has been looked at. There has been a review in relation to the New South Wales laws and, as I have noted, the way that they have been reviewed at the moment suggests that they are not effective, that they do not provide police with a viable mechanism and that they are unlikely to be able to be used effectively.

In addition, the report outlines how six of eight states and territories have enacted similar legislation in response to high-profile crime incidents. Again, let me quote from the report:

Despite high expectations ... in practice no police force in Australia has been able to successfully utilise the legislation.

This government will introduce laws that are based on evidence and effectiveness and we will continue to work with the priority of making Canberra city even safer, and safer again, without spending time on matters that have been demonstrated to be ineffective.

### **Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—political engagement**

**MS CHEYNE:** My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Minister, what is the ACT government doing to ensure that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT reach decision-makers in government?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Cheyne for her question. In 2008, as members are aware, the ACT government established in legislation the Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander Elected Body. Members of the elected body represent the interests and aspirations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community. The ACT is the only Australian jurisdiction to have an elected representative body like the elected body embedded in the governing process through legislation.

Since 2008 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body has been a strong voice for the community as it advocates for the rights, goals and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans. The elected body also ensures greater interaction between the ACT government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community more broadly. The elected body continues to play a major role in government decision-making and in the development of government policies affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

As members would be aware, a new elected body has just been elected, and the government looks forward to working with them as we continue to implement the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement 2015-18, with its focus on stronger families and connected communities. During the next few months we will start a conversation with the elected body and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to develop a new agreement on the expiry of the current one. The conversation comes at an important time, as the federal government seeks to refresh the closing the gap framework, and the nation and our community debate constitutional recognition and a national representative voice.

In June this year I attended the Aboriginal affairs ministers roundtable, where we discussed and shared ideas and aspirations in the portfolio. I was able to discuss with my colleagues the work of the elected body, how they are assisting the ACT government in the development of our service provision, providing advice to me as minister and their monitoring role through the hearings process.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, what are the results of the most recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body election?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Cheyne for her supplementary question. Polling for the 2017 ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body took place during NAIDOC Week from 1 July to 8 July 2017. For this election we doubled the number of polling places to provide for increased voter participation. Four hundred and thirty two formal votes were cast for the election, which was a 15 per cent increase on the number of votes cast at the 2014 election, not as big an increase as I would have hoped, but an increase nevertheless.

The election results were declared by the Acting Electoral Commissioner on Thursday, 20 July 2017. The new members of the fourth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body are Carolyn Hughes, Katrina Fanning, Jo Chivers, Ross Fowler, Maurice Walker, Fred Monaghan and Jacob Keed.

These members were elected from 25 candidates who stood at the election. This was by far the largest number of candidates in the four elections held since 2008. This new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body brings a mix of experience and

new energy to representing the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community for the next three years.

I look forward to catching up with the new elected body at their induction next week, working with them over the term and continuing to consult and engage with Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community about the issues that matter to them.

Part of the elected body's role is to maximise the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT to voice their concerns to decision-makers as well as to maximise participation in developing and implementing government policies.

The amendment act we passed recently established a requirement for the new elected body, within six months of the election, to develop a consultation plan to outline how it will work to maximise the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT. I look forward to the development of that plan and to working with them through that engagement.

**MS ORR:** Minister, how will the ACT government engage and consult with Canberra's broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary question. As I mentioned in my previous answer, recently this Assembly passed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Amendment Bill 2017, which expanded the role of the elected body and strengthened its functions to consult and provide advice on systemic or whole-of-government issues. As part of this, it enshrined the elected body's ability to hold public hearings to evaluate government service provision. But it also sought to maximise the role of the elected body in engaging the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to give them an opportunity to voice their concerns to decision-makers.

The role of the elected body does not therefore restrict the ACT government's ability to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT more broadly on any issue that affects them. It enhances it. Such consultation must also be part of our normal day-to-day business of government. This government understands that it is critical to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans who are immediately affected by our policies and programs, and we do this on a regular basis.

The elected body, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled organisations and businesses, and individuals in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community all have a part to play in informing government.

I was fortunate recently to attend a number of NAIDOC Week events where, of course, polling was taking place. It was also an opportunity to spend time listening to members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. What I am hearing from them is about the importance of engaging in those informal conversations, as well as in conversations with the community through formal bodies like the elected

body, who really want to understand what is going on in the community. I will continue to do that, as will other members of the government.

### **Government—heritage policy**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Chief Minister, acting for the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. Chief Minister, I refer to tomorrow's auction of a range of historical artefacts owned by the Australian Railway Historical Society. How is the government managing its own heritage rail assets, including the steam locomotive 1210, given that the historical society is not operating?

**MR BARR:** I will confess that I do not have the answer to that immediately available. I will have to take that on notice.

**MS LAWDER:** Chief Minister, will the government be participating in or attending tomorrow's auction?

**MR BARR:** Very unlikely that we would.

**MR COE:** Chief Minister, what is the point, given that all the carriages are being sold tomorrow, of having a train with no carriages in government possession?

**MR BARR:** It would depend, of course, on the purpose for which the government maintained possession or part thereof. If the intent is for an operational capacity then clearly an engine can operate without carriages. The exact detail in relation to these assets is not something that, I confess, I carry around in my head as a matter of day-to-day business—

**Mr Coe:** That little folder there, from heritage.

**MR BARR:** No, I don't have a folder from heritage in front of me.

**Mr Coe:** Why not?

**MR BARR:** I don't need it. I will take the question on notice.

**Mr Coe:** What if you do need it?

**MR BARR:** I will take the question on notice.

### **Planning—Tharwa**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Chief Minister representing the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Chief Minister, in Val Jeffrey's maiden speech last year he noted that since self-government not one kilometre of rural gravel roads had been sealed; the Tharwa bridge had been ignored until having to be closed for seven years for rebuilding; Smiths Road bridge had been set up to wash away; the Angle and Point Hut crossings had never been raised; the 50-year old water supply had been left

to fail; and the school had been closed. Chief Minister, when will your government finish the Tharwa master plan?

**MR BARR:** In the fullness of time.

**MR PARTON:** Chief Minister, what is the government doing to finally fix the old water supply in Tharwa?

**MR BARR:** The government has in place a range of measures to address those issues.

**MS LAWDER:** Chief Minister, when will this government start taking our rural communities, and in particular Tharwa, seriously?

**MR BARR:** I reject the premise of the question.

### **Government—support for veterans**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister Veterans and Seniors. Can the minister outline what plans the government has to better understand the issues faced by veterans in the ACT so we can more ably support them?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Orr for her question. I have always said that I believe that good policy starts with good listening, and one part of good listening is ensuring that you have surrounded yourself with people who are experts in the field and willing to engage broadly on the issues. It is for this reason that I am happy to be currently selecting the next veterans advisory council. The council will have an expanded membership and broadened terms of reference which will allow it to provide advice on a greater number of issues.

As part of the new terms of reference the newly appointed VAC will be required to undertake at least one round of community consultation a year on a specific issue to perform a deep dive into how the issue affects veterans in the ACT and what steps the ACT government might take to address it.

I will initially be tasking the council to provide me with advice on a number of issues early in their term, including how it is that we can help those who are separating ADF members transition to civilian employment in the ACT, how we can best ensure that the mental health of veterans in Canberra can be supported and how we can ensure that we provide the appropriate level of recognition to those who have served. I will also be asking their advice on the best ways we can support the community sector and ex-service organisations on their support of veterans in the ACT.

I have been ably supported by the current council and I look forward to them continuing in this role for the remaining few months of their tenure. I thank them for their service, their insights and the continuing valued work they do to improve the life of veterans here in Canberra.

**MS ORR:** Can the minister advise what he is doing to help organisations that aid veterans in the ACT?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary question. The government is in the final stages of putting together this year's community participation grants program for veterans and seniors. I expect that it will be advertised through the Community Services Directorate by the end of the month.

We will be seeking applications from organisations that can utilise project funding to support veterans in the ACT. This year we will be particularly focusing on programs that ensure that veterans remain actively engaged in our society. Whether it is through sport, the arts, skills development and training or other programs promoting social connectedness, we are seeking to help those organisations that aim to ensure that our veterans are integral and active participants in the ACT community.

We will be seeking applications for programs specifically targeted at supporting families of veterans. I am also currently investigating creating separate grants rounds from next year to allow the government to separately target seniors' and veterans' initiatives. Obviously, while some of our veterans may be seniors, this is not always the case. I look forward to receiving applications that seek to help our younger and recently separated veterans.

I believe that we are a strong society when everyone belongs, when everyone is valued and when everyone has the opportunity to participate. Through these grants the government intends to help those organisations to ensure that our veterans are exactly that. This government will work to ensure that the remarkable skills and abilities of our veterans are, and remain, an integral thread in the woven fabric of Canberra.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, how is the government working to help ensure that those seeking to separate from the Defence Force are able to find employment in the ACT?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Mr Pettersson for his supplementary. While the veterans portfolio is a relatively new one in the ACT, the government certainly has big plans for how we can support those in the ADF who may wish to transition back into civilian life.

I have had initial conversations with the Head of Service on ways that we can identify how many veterans we currently have working in ACT government and what their experience was in making this transition from military life to life in the ACT public service. As we gather this data, I will then be looking for ways to make it easier for those who wish to do this, whether it is through information sessions, resources to identify what military skills might translate well into jobs in the ACTPS, or possibly even targeted recruitment. We will also consider whether further specific support can be provided to help support veterans once they have started the transition.

The Defence Industry Advisory Board is also investigating whether the government can facilitate a pathway from the ADF into the cybersecurity areas of the civilian defence industry here in Canberra. Whether it is upskilling, retraining or even just lighting the path, the government is developing this concept to provide a case-managed service to help link our highly skilled defence members with a definite

area of skills shortage in the capital. This will not only help veterans manage this transition but also help continue the work that the government is doing to continue to diversify and strengthen the ACT economy.

The ACT has some of the best living standards in the world and the Australian Defence Force has one of the most highly skilled workforces in the country. The ACT government intends to do what it can to honour the commitment our Defence Force members have already made by ensuring that, when the time comes when members may wish to separate, we have the systems in place to help both members and their families transition into civilian life in this great city. (*Time expired.*)

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

### **Supplementary answers to questions without notice**

#### **Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assaults**

#### **Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—staffing**

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I took a question on notice earlier today regarding an incident that occurred at Bimberi on 16 July. I can confirm that the incident on 16 July was referred to the AFP on the day of the incident as part of the regular incident reporting process where an offence may have been committed. The AFP have access to all relevant information, including incident reports, staff statements, statements from young people and CCTV footage. In providing that answer I should also clarify that, in confirming that an incident occurred on 16 July, I did not necessarily confirm that the details of the incident were as reported in the *Canberra Times*.

I also took a question on notice regarding recruitment at Bimberi. I advise members that the immediate previous round of recruitment recruited six youth workers. These youth workers commence independent work at the end of next week. There are five nominal vacancies at Bimberi: three youth workers and two unit managers. Bimberi has already commenced another round of recruitment, scheduled to be completed with induction commencing on 26 September. Thirty-nine individuals showed an interest in these youth worker positions by attending the information sessions held last week.

### **Answers to questions on notice**

#### **Questions 177 and 312**

**MR COE:** I seek an explanation from the Chief Minister and Minister for Economic Development regarding answers to questions 177 and 312 that are overdue.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** The Chief Minister is not here at the moment, so we might have to pass on that and come back to it tomorrow.

#### **Question 235**

**MR COE:** The minister for education has not answered question 235.

**MS BERRY:** Before I came down here I signed a question on notice. If it is the one on the list, then it is signed and on its way to the office of the person who asked the question.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, that is not an explanation as to why it is late. I understand from what Mr Coe said that the expiry date was some time ago. Would you like to give an explanation as to why it is late?

**MS BERRY:** Can I clarify which question it was?

**Mr Coe:** Franklin enrolments.

**MS BERRY:** Yes, I signed that question on notice just before I came down today. We had a number of questions on notice. We tried to get them all to the ministers on time, and this one lapsed. I apologise for that, but it is signed and on its way.

**Questions 181, 244, 245, 328, 329, 330, 331, 333, 336 and 338**

**MR COE:** For the Minister for Transport and City Services there are a whole host of them: numbers 181, 244, 245, 328, 329, 330, 331, 333, 336 and 338.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Like Ms Berry, I also sought advice on this, prior to coming down to question time, when I saw the notice paper this morning. Those are delayed. Some of those have been as the result of further follow-up from me to the directorate before providing a full answer to the member. I think all of them are from Mr Coe.

I note earlier discussions around the estimates inquiry and Mr Wall's assertion about a lack of transparency. The specific reason I wrote to Mr Wall after both emailing him and offering in person to return for a full day of the estimates inquiry on the call-back day, was to acknowledge that my office and my directorates had received extensive questions which we were aiming to reply to in the appropriate time frames. I indicated to him that I was very aware of the time frames and the time pressures on the estimates committee in order to finalise its report for tabling in the Assembly today, as it did. Members opposite should take a moment to reflect on the extensive, repetitive questions that were asked by members opposite. I apologise for any delay, but we have gone out of our way to provide full answers to all members opposite, in the interests of transparency for the Assembly and for the community.

I signed off a number of the questions this morning, and Mr Coe should receive those in his office shortly. I understand there are five I have not yet signed, and I have asked for those to be expedited. I expect them to be delivered to his office by tomorrow.

**MR COE:** I note the comments from the minister about the health portfolio. All the ones I am talking about relate to Transport Canberra and City Services. Some of them were lodged on or around 9 June, several weeks before questions went in for estimates. The reason for the 30-day allowance is so that there is ample time for the answering of these questions. I note that she has not given an answer as to why the questions for Transport Canberra and City Services have been delayed.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** I remind members of the provision of standing order 118A—that is, a member can seek at the conclusion of question time, after 30 days of not having received an answer, an explanation. The minister may give an

explanation and the member can then move that the Assembly take note of the explanation or the member can move that the explanation is not satisfactory. I refer members to that so that they can use the standing order appropriately.

## **Canberra Hospital—infrastructure**

**MR WALL** (Brindabella) (3.42), by leave: I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that the independent arbiter has not upheld the Government's claim of executive privilege over the ACT Health Infrastructure Asset Condition Report and Minor Works Priorities (the report), prepared by AECOM Australia Pty Ltd;
- (2) calls on the Clerk to table the report in accordance with standing order 213A, by the conclusion of this sitting day; and
- (3) upon the report being tabled, authorises its publication.

I will speak very briefly to this. The motion is fairly straightforward and relates to the document that was called for under standing order 213A a number of months ago, which is the report prepared by AECOM Australia: the ACT Health infrastructure asset condition report and minor works priorities. Whilst there was a claim of privilege made by the government relating to this document, that claim was not upheld.

Standing order 213A (10) states:

If the independent legal arbiter does not uphold the claim of privilege, the Clerk will table the document(s) that has been the subject of the claim of privilege. In the event that the Assembly is not sitting, the Clerk is authorised to release the document to any Member.

My understanding is that the interpretation of that standing order is that if the Assembly is not sitting when the determination is made it is not automatically tabled. Therefore, this motion simply calls for, as the standing orders intend, the document to be presented to the Assembly and authorised for publication.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Papers**

**Madam Acting Speaker** presented the following papers:

Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, pursuant to Continuing Resolution 6A of the Assembly of 10 April 2008, as amended 21 August 2008—Report for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, dated 7 July 2017.

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 17(5)—Auditor-General's Reports  
Nos—

5/2017—Maintenance of Selected Road Infrastructure Assets, dated  
9 June 2017.

6/2017—Mental Health Services—Transition from Acute Care, dated  
23 June 2017.

7/2017—Public Housing Renewal Program, dated 27 June 2017.

Standing order 191—Amendments to:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Amendment Bill 2017,  
dated 13 and 14 June 2017.

Planning, Building and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, dated  
13 and 14 June 2017.

Acting Speaker—Instrument of Appointment, pursuant to standing order 6A—  
Assistant Speaker Cody (5 to 7 July 2017), dated 2 July 2017.

## **Review of housing built by University of Canberra Paper and statement by minister**

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (3.45): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Providing Affordable Housing to Students—An ACT Government review of  
housing built by the University of Canberra under the National Rental  
Affordability Scheme, dated June 2017.

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

Leave granted.

**MS BERRY:** In 2015, in response to an Auditor-General report, the government committed to reviewing the impact of the national rental affordability scheme—NRAS—on student rental affordability at the University of Canberra. We committed to do this when the University of Canberra had finished construction. They have done so, and I am now pleased to table the review and outline its findings for the Assembly.

Housing affordability is a challenge that faces many university students, and this government's investment in affordable student housing is bringing many social and economic benefits to our city. Overseas and interstate students contribute around \$900 million to Canberra's economy every year and support over 6,000 jobs. Ensuring that our universities can offer students adequate affordable housing is essential if we are to continue to attract the best minds to study in our city and to grow this important sector.

On-campus accommodation is also good for university students. Students living on campus enjoy the convenience of not having to travel to get to classes and being close to the support provided by their peer and friendship groups. In addition, student housing allows students from outside Canberra to secure housing before their arrival. Many students who move to Canberra to study are living away from home for the first time and benefit greatly from the safe and supportive environment that good quality student housing provides.

The government supported the UC's expansion of student housing under the NRAS by providing the UC with \$80 million in loans and credit facilities to finance the construction and refurbishment of student dwellings. As a result, the UC has opened three new student housing facilities under the scheme since 2012. Combined, these three facilities contain 957 units with the capacity to house almost 1,400 students. These facilities include Weeden Lodge, opened in two stages in 2012 and 2014 and housed within the newly refurbished Cameron Offices buildings next to the UC campus. These historic buildings, formerly home to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, have been given a new lease of life as accommodation for the next generation of thinkers and leaders. The remaining facilities comprise Cooper Lodge and UC Lodge, opened in 2014 and 2017 respectively. These all-new buildings in the centre of the UC campus include spacious common areas, private study spaces and convenient ground floor shops.

The government has now completed a review of the new accommodation's impact on student rental affordability at UC. The review found that the government's investment in the new facilities has had a positive effect on student housing affordability. The 957 new units have nearly doubled the total number of student dwellings at UC. Further, the new dwellings have made the overall price of student accommodation at UC lower. Since the first new dwellings were introduced, the median price of student accommodation at UC has fallen six per cent. Student uptake of the new dwellings has also been high, with 91 per cent of NRAS accommodation places at UC occupied in 2017. This is considerably higher than the occupancy rate for older, pre-NRAS accommodation at UC. The new dwellings are clearly giving students a product they want.

University students often face a choice between living on campus and renting privately. For this reason the review also compared the prices of the new NRAS accommodation to comparable properties offered on Canberra's private rental market. It found that since 2012 almost all of the new dwellings have consistently been priced below equivalent private rental properties. The review noted that some larger multi-bedroom dwellings are currently priced above the market but also that the price of many of these larger dwellings had decreased over the period and was now lower in 2017 than in any other year. Overall, more than 90 per cent of the new NRAS accommodation at UC was priced below the market in 2017. When taken with the unique advantages of living on campus, it is clear that this new accommodation represents excellent value for students.

This is an exciting time for the UC. Next year the University of Canberra public hospital will also open at the UC's main campus. This state-of-the-art medical

research and training facility is a centrepiece of the government's health infrastructure program and confirms the UC's position as a centre of excellence in medical education. This year the UC also achieved a top 100 place in the Times Higher Education young university rankings for the first time—evidence of its growing international influence and reputation. As the review confirms, the government's investment in affordable housing at UC will help the university attract and retain the best young minds as it continues on its upward trajectory. I commend the review to the Assembly.

## Papers

Ms Berry presented the following papers:

### **Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)**

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act—ACT Teacher Quality Institute (Certification Renewal Fee) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-83 (LR, 8 June 2017).

Adoption Act—Adoption (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-185 (LR, 30 June 2017).

Agents Act—

Agents (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-68 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Agents (Qualifications for Auditors) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-137 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Animal Welfare Act—Animal Welfare (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-181 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Architects Act—Architects (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-147 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Associations Incorporation Act—Associations Incorporation (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-84 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act—Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-69 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Building Act—Building (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-148 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Canberra Institute of Technology Act and Financial Management Act—

Canberra Institute of Technology (Institute Board Member) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-167 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Canberra Institute of Technology (Institute Board Member) Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-168 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Canberra Institute of Technology (Institute Board Member) Appointment 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-169 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Canberra Institute of Technology (Institute Board Member) Appointment 2017 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-170 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Casino Control Act—Casino Control (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-88 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act—

Cemeteries and Crematoria (Perpetual Care Trust Percentage and Perpetual Care Trust Reserve Percentage) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-47 (LR, 8 June 2017).

Cemeteries and Crematoria (Public Cemetery Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-46 (LR, 22 May 2017).

Children and Young People Act—Children and Young People (Family Group Conference) Standards 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-108 (LR, 8 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act—City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (Transitional Provisions) Regulation 2017—Subordinate Law SL2017-18 (LR, 29 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act and Financial Management Act—

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (City Renewal Authority Chair) Appointment 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-125 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (City Renewal Authority Deputy Chair) Appointment 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-126 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (City Renewal Authority Member) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-127 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (City Renewal Authority Member) Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-128 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (City Renewal Authority Member) Appointment 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-129 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (City Renewal Authority Member) Appointment 2017 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-130 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (Suburban Land Agency Chair) Appointment 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-120 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (Suburban Land Agency Deputy Chair) Appointment 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-121 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (Suburban Land Agency Member) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-122 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (Suburban Land Agency Member) Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-123 (LR, 22 June 2017).

City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (Suburban Land Agency Member) Appointment 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-124 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act—

Civil Law (Wrongs) Law Society of South Australia Professional Standards Scheme 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-55 (LR, 25 May 2017).

Civil Law (Wrongs) South Australian Bar Association Inc Professional Standards Scheme 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-56 (LR, 25 May 2017).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Professional Standards Council Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-118 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Civil Unions Act—Civil Unions (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-70 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) (Enforcement) Act—Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) (Enforcement) (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-71 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Clinical Waste Act—Clinical Waste (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-109 (LR, 19 June 2017).

Community Title Act—Community Title (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-149 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act—Construction Occupations (Licensing) (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-150 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Court Procedures Act—

Court Procedures (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-93 (LR, 7 June 2017).

Court Procedures (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-110 (LR, 14 June 2017).

Court Procedures Amendment Rules 2017 (No 3)—Subordinate Law SL2017-17 (LR, 7 July 2017).

Dangerous Substances Act—Dangerous Substances (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-102 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Domestic Animals Act—Domestic Animals (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-177 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Electoral Act—

Electoral (Electoral Commission Member) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-100 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Electoral (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-114 (LR, 19 June 2017).

Electoral Commission (Chairperson) Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-57 (LR, 1 June 2017).

Electricity Safety Act—Electricity Safety (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-151 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Emergencies Act—Emergencies (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-98 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Environment Protection Act—Environment Protection (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-152 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Fair Trading (Motor Vehicle Repair Industry) Act—Fair Trading (Motor Vehicle Repair Industry) (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-72 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Financial Management Act—

Financial Management (Statement of Performance Scrutiny) Guidelines 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-66 (LR, 1 June 2017).

Financial Management (Territory Authorities prescribed for Outputs) Guidelines 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-65 (LR, 1 June 2017).

Financial Management (Territory Authorities) Guidelines 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-63 (LR, 1 June 2017).

Firearms Act—

Firearms (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-99 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Firearms (Use of Noise Suppression Devices) Declaration 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-61 (LR, 29 May 2017).

Fisheries Act—Fisheries (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-153 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Freedom of Information Act—Freedom of Information (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-94 (LR, 7 June 2017).

Gambling and Racing Control Act and Financial Management Act—Gambling and Racing Control (Governing Board) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-80 (LR, 5 June 2017).

Gaming Machine Act—Gaming Machine (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-89 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Gas Safety Act—Gas Safety (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-154 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Guardianship and Management of Property Act—

Guardianship and Management of Property (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-95 (LR, 7 June 2017).

Guardianship and Management of Property (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-111 (LR, 14 June 2017).

Heritage Act—

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-48 (LR, 24 May 2017).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-49 (LR, 24 May 2017).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-50 (LR, 24 May 2017).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2017 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-51 (LR, 24 May 2017).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2017 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-52 (LR, 24 May 2017).

Heritage (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-155 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Juries Act—Juries (Payment) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-115 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Land Titles Act—Land Titles (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-85 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act—

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Members' Salary Cap Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-119 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Speaker's Salary Cap Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-117 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Liquor Act—Liquor (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-92 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act—

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Community Sector Levy Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-182 (LR, 30 June 2017).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Contract Cleaning Industry Levy Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-183 (LR, 30 June 2017).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Security Industry Levy Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-184 (LR, 30 June 2017).

Lotteries Act—Lotteries (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-106 (LR, 8 June 2017).

Machinery Act—Machinery (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-103 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation—Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods (Vaccinations by Pharmacists) Direction 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-116 (LR, 21 June 2017).

Nature Conservation Act—Nature Conservation (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-156 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Partnership Act—Partnership (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-86 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Pawnbrokers Act—Pawnbrokers (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-73 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Planning and Development Act—

Planning and Development (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-157 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Planning and Development (Lease Variation Charges) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-176 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Plant Diseases Act—Plant Diseases (Importation Restriction Area) Declaration 2017, including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-101 (LR, 8 June 2017).

Prohibited Weapons Act—Prohibited Weapons (Noise Suppression Devices) Declaration 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-62 (LR, 29 May 2017).

Prostitution Act—Prostitution (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-74 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names (Pialligo) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-131 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Public Pools Act—Public Pools (Active Leisure Centre Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-175 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Public Trustee and Guardian Act—

Public Trustee and Guardian (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-96 (LR, 7 June 2017).

Public Trustee and Guardian (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-112 (LR, 14 June 2017).

Public Unleased Land Act—

Public Unleased Land (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-180 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Public Unleased Land (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-186 (LR, 30 June 2017).

Race and Sports Bookmaking Act—Race and Sports Bookmaking (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-90 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Rates Act—Rates (Deferral) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-143 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Rates Act, Land Tax Act and Land Rent Act—Rates, Land Tax and Land Rent (Certificate and Statement Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017 145 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Registration of Deeds Act—Registration of Deeds (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-75 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Retirement Villages Act—Retirement Villages (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-76 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) (Pay Parking Area Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-166 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2017 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-54 (LR, 22 May 2017).

Road Transport (General) Driver Licence and Related Fees Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-133 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Road Transport (General) Fees for Publications Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-136 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Road Transport (General) Numberplate Fees Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-134 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Road Transport (General) Refund and Dishonoured Payments Fees Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-135 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Road Transport (General) Vehicle Registration and Related Fees Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-53 (LR, 18 May 2017).

Road Transport (General) Vehicle Registration and Related Fees Determination 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-132 (LR, 22 June 2017).

Road Transport (General) Act, Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act and Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Act—Road Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation 2017 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2017-14 (LR, 13 June 2017).

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act—Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Regulation 2017 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2017-16 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Act—Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Amendment Regulation 2017 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2017-13 (LR, 1 June 2017).

Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Act—Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Amendment Regulation 2017 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2017-12 (LR, 1 June 2017).

Sale of Motor Vehicles Act—Sale of Motor Vehicles (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-77 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Scaffolding and Lifts Act—Scaffolding and Lifts (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-107 (LR, 7 June 2017).

Second-hand Dealers Act—Second-hand Dealers (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-78 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Security Industry Act—Security Industry (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-87 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Stock Act—

Stock (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-160 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Stock (Levy) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-162 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Stock (Minimum Stock Levy) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-161 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Surveyors Act—Surveyors (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-158 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Taxation Administration Act—

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Duty) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-79 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Fire and Emergency Services Levy) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-139 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Home Buyer Concession Scheme) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-81 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Land Rent) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-140 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Land Tax) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-141 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Pensioner Duty Concession Scheme) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-82 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Rates) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-142 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Rates Discount Rate) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-144 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Taxation Administration (Special Arrangements—Lodging of Returns) Revocation 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-138 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Taxation Administration Act and Duties Act—Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Interest Rates) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-146 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act—Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-113 (LR, 30 June 2017).

Tree Protection Act—Tree Protection (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-179 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Unit Titles (Management) Act—Unit Titles (Management) (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-97 (LR, 7 June 2017).

Unit Titles Act—Unit Titles (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-159 (LR, 26 June 2017).

University of Canberra Act—

University of Canberra Council Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-171 (LR, 29 June 2017).

University of Canberra Council Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-172 (LR, 29 June 2017).

University of Canberra Council Appointment 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-173 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Unlawful Gambling Act—Unlawful Gambling (Charitable Gaming Application Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-91 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Veterinary Surgeons Act—Veterinary Surgeons (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-64 (LR, 25 May 2017).

Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act—

Waste Management and Resource Recovery (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-178 (LR, 29 June 2017).

Waste Management and Resource Recovery (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-187 (LR, 30 June 2017).

Water and Sewerage Act—Water and Sewerage (Fees) Determination 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-163 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Water Resources Act—Water Resources (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-164 (LR, 26 June 2017).

Work Health and Safety Act—Work Health and Safety (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-105 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Work Health and Safety Act and Legislation Act—

Work Health and Safety (Work Safety Council Acting Employee Representative) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-60 (LR, 29 May 2017).

Work Health and Safety (Work Safety Council Acting Employer Representative) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-58 (LR, 29 May 2017).

Work Health and Safety (Work Safety Council Acting Employer Representative) Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-59 (LR, 29 May 2017).

Workers Compensation Act—Workers Compensation (Fees) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-104 (LR, 6 June 2017).

Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act—Working with Vulnerable People Background Checking (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-174 (LR, 29 June 2017).

## **Open and consultative democracy**

### **Discussion of matter of public importance**

**MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Ms Lee): Madam Speaker has received letters from Ms Cheyne, Ms Cody, Mr Coe, Mrs Kikkert, Ms Lee, Ms Orr, Mr Parton, Mr Pettersson, Mr Steele and Mr Wall proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, Madam Speaker has determined that the matter proposed by Mrs Kikkert be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of an open and consultative democracy.

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (3.52): I am delighted to bring this matter of public importance in my name to the Assembly today. As Australians, we are fortunate to live in one of the world's most successful democracies. Democracy, of course, means rule by the people. The word comes to us from ancient Greek. The term was coined during the fifth century BC, at a period in Greek history when the city of Athens experimented with a new form of government. In stark contrast to the then prevailing system where one person or a small group of people made all the decisions, in democratic Athens all citizens participated directly in the making of laws and even judgments.

Two conditions were necessary for this kind of direct democracy. First, the population had to be small enough to allow for all citizens to attend debates and votes on issues. Second, these citizens needed to have enough leisure time that they could participate fully in politics. In ancient Athens, this was possible only because non-citizen slaves did most of the work. In our day, we have circumvented these two constraints through the innovation of representative democracy.

Under this system, the people elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. At its best, representative democracy creates as robust a system of debate as direct democracy. At its worst, representatives lose touch with the people who elected them and arrogantly return to feeling entitled to rule however they see fit. Perhaps because of this tendency, scholars over the past few decades have noted what one leading researcher, John Dryzek, has called "a renewed concern for the authenticity of democracy: the degree to which democratic control is substantive rather than symbolic".

One of the central ways to make sure that democracy is authentic and substantive is by guaranteeing that government is open and consultative. An open and consultative government is one that listens to the people, not just when they pick their representatives on election day but throughout its entire term of service. We live in a day when most governments want to appear to be open and consultative. Problems arise, however, when listening to the people becomes merely a symbolic exercise.

As Les Robinson explained to a local government public relations conference held in Wollongong in February 2003, "Many public consultations are shams. Many are nothing more than elaborate defence mechanisms designed to protect the decisions of barely accountable power-holders." When this occurs, Robinson noted, people eventually figure it out, and this results in cynicism towards governments and their hidden agendas.

Damage to public trust in government can also occur when elected representatives openly refuse to listen to certain segments of the public. As Victoria's Good Governance Guide notes, governments "should always try to serve the needs of the entire community". This means that those to whom leaders listen should, according to one parliamentary guide on consultation, constitute a "mini public that mirrors the broader society". Things go wrong, as noted by *Huffington Post* writer Wendy Bradley, when governments decide that they are only going to listen to those they

deem to be sensible people. Unsurprisingly, sensible people in such instances nearly always end up being people who conveniently already agree with the government.

This discussion helps to highlight why the Canberra Liberals and so many of our fellow Canberrans were disturbed by the development earlier this year when Chief Minister Andrew Barr decided that Clubs ACT, which represents 70 per cent of the territory's clubs, no longer comprises sensible people; though I think his exact words were that it is "a wreckage and a joke". This means that, conveniently, the ACT government, including Attorney-General Gordon Ramsay, no longer even need to pretend that they are willing to listen to people who disagree with them.

Of course, this is one small part of the entire ACT community, but it makes me personally worried. If the Chief Minister is willing to openly write off an entire organisation because they have dared to disagree with him, what does that suggest about the rest of the consultations that the ACT government still wishes to engage in?

The government has created a number of consultative bodies that are supposed to represent various segments of the territory's population, but how are we to know whether these hand-picked bodies are the "mini publics" that they need to be in order to be truly representative? In fact, in recent weeks I have spoken to members and former members of various consultative bodies in the ACT who have expressed concern to me that they have been—to repeat the very word that one used—"shackled" in their responsibilities to speak out. They know that they, in essence, belong to the government and that there are things that the government simply does not want to hear.

This kind of consultation has been labelled by The Australian Collaboration as mere tokenism. At a minimum, it decreases community interest in consultation, and it can also result in community anger and frustration. What is necessary for good governance here in the ACT is not ministers refusing to listen to people, and it is not the tokenism of sham consultation with hand-picked representatives either. In order to set the stage for the development of this territory over the next several years, all of us, and especially those who form the government's executive, need to be willing to listen to real people. And by listen I mean really listen, which means that, through consultation, decisions will be reshaped for the better, not shaped to satisfy or protect the decision-makers.

Not one of us in this chamber is an expert at everything. The best check on our collective lack of expertise is to listen to those who deeply care about this community and have something to say. The Canberra Liberals value the involvement of ordinary people. We encourage the people of this beautiful city to take ownership of it and not let the few make all the decisions for them. And we hope that those who have been elected to lead will act with integrity.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH** (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (3.59): The ACT government is firmly committed to open and consultative democracy. During the election, we made it clear

that one of the many things a re-elected Labor government would deliver was better, more representative consultation. In the 2017-18 budget, we funded a community engagement reform project to deliver on the commitment and to drive this change across government.

Work has already begun on fulfilling this promise. These reforms will ensure that the government is able to reach a representative sample of Canberrans so that our decisions reflect what the community really thinks.

This government has been clear. We do not believe that, just because you are too busy to directly engage with the process, or are put off by the conflict or are simply relaxed about what is proposed, your opinion does not count. This government wants to hear from a wider range of people, and that is what the reforms will ensure.

That means looking at different ways to engage so that someone is not excluded because they are too busy with family responsibilities, work or study when public meetings are traditionally held. It means ensuring that people will not be left out because they find a confrontational town-hall meeting intimidating. It means ensuring that people's voices are not muted because they do not have the time to submit detailed written submissions as part of a formal process. We want these people still to have their say. It means ensuring that we do not give undue weight to some in the community simply because their representations are noisy enough to grab media attention.

We want more Canberrans to be able to play a role in shaping their city every day. This is not necessarily about doing more consultation; rather, it is about doing it better and smarter. We have also heard from the community that in some areas they feel over-consulted. In the past two years, the ACT government consulted the community on more than 570 issues or topics. That is almost one government engagement for every business day. Lack of consultation is not the problem. What we need to think about is the way we consult; at what stage in the development of a project or policy it is most appropriate to engage people, and how we do that.

The government's reforms are about changing the nature of the conversation we have with the community and when we have it. What we are talking about here is practical engagement. We will be clear with the community about what is open for debate, so Canberrans will know how their feedback will influence a decision. We will also be clear when we are sharing information to keep the community up to date on the implementation of key policies we took to the election.

To support this change we need to invest in training and new staff to build expertise in community engagement within government. A new team in the Chief Minister's directorate will look at building this capability and better coordination across government so that across directorates there is a joined-up, consistent approach to community engagement, so that, instead of different directorates consulting over the top of each other, we are planned and coordinated in our approach. The team will support directorates by creating the guidelines and tools they need to better gauge the opinion of the entire community.

In my own portfolio, I have already announced that the development of a new carers strategy will be part of the government's commitment to reforming community consultation and trialling new methods of engagement. The 2017-18 budget includes \$200,000 for the development and implementation of an ACT carers strategy, in addition to \$50,000 that was committed between the election and the budget. This work will be done with Carers ACT and democracyCo.

Every day, almost 50,000 ACT carers provide vital support to people who have a disability, experience mental illness or have a chronic health condition. The ACT carers strategy will improve support and recognition for Canberra's carers, including young carers, older carers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers. Supporting carers and ensuring they are able to maintain their caring role while achieving their own life goals is an important part of building a stronger and more inclusive community. A critical element of this work will be designing a process to ensure that we reach those whose voices may not otherwise be heard. The community consultation will enable the government to hear the views of all stakeholders, particularly those of carers and people who receive care.

The use of engaging democracy processes demonstrates the ACT government's commitment to strengthen community consultation processes so that diverse views are taken into account in major projects. These can be a range of measures, from participative and deliberative democracy through to kitchen table conversations and street stalls: going out there in the community and showing them what we are doing and what we are proposing, and getting their feedback.

The government's ongoing commitment to community consultation also means looking at new and innovative ways of engaging with and providing information to the community.

In my own electorate of Kurrajong, the government has shown its clear commitment to community consultation and engagement with the Haig Park master plan process. The government understands the importance of Haig Park to the community. We want to hear how the community would like to use the park in the longer term, and for this reason have established a process to seek community input and local knowledge to help shape the Haig Park master plan.

Through this process we have had feedback from 252 people via the online survey, spoken to 62 people at three drop-in consultation sessions, received comments from 39 people participating in the online discussion board, received a further 38 email submissions, and discussed draft designs with 74 people at workshops. This community feedback on the draft design ideas is being compiled and analysed into a community engagement summary, which is expected to be available this month. This will all be used by the architects of the plan to further progress the master plan design and implementation timing.

This process has engaged people in the area and the wider city about their vision for the park. An important part of the process has been sharing of information and reporting to those participating in the consultation. We recognise that an important

part of promoting an open and consultative democracy is the provision of information. The community needs to know what services the government is providing for their taxes.

We have made significant improvements in how we inform the Canberra community. Introduced in November 2015, the *Our Canberra* newsletter goes to 180,000 households each month, giving our constituents information on services and government programs in their region. This month's editions are now hitting letterboxes with stories saying how we are making the University of Canberra Public Hospital clean and green, letting people know that they can pay for their car registration online, and promoting the Youth InterACT grants program and a consultation to allow Hughes residents to inform an artist's brief for a new artwork at the local shops. This is complemented by the digital newsletter, which goes to a database of 38,000 subscribers.

The ACT government is also now very effectively using social media to promote our programs and services. With almost 12,000 followers of the ACT government's Facebook page and almost 10,000 on Twitter, this is growing every day. We know this is an important channel to reach busy professionals as well as mums and dads and everyday members of the Canberra community.

We are working on innovative new ways to inform and engage the community, including engaging younger Canberrans. Engagement with younger Canberrans is a particular challenge for government. It is one which requires significant effort.

The Youth Advisory Council in my own portfolio is just one avenue the government has to give young people a voice in the ACT government. The Advisory Council provides young people aged between 12 and 25 years with an opportunity to take a leading role in participation and consultation activities on issues that affect their lives; raises awareness of the aspirations, needs and concerns of young people within government and the community; and facilitates interaction between young people, the ACT government and the wider community.

Membership of the Advisory Council reflects the diversity of young people residing in the ACT, including a gender balance, people with disabilities, and people from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The members conduct a number of consultation processes including think tanks, open meetings, face-to-face consultation and youth surveys. Council members also participate in other committees, working parties, task forces and government agencies. They are a very impressive group of young people.

Advisory councils such as this one are yet another avenue to allow community members, experts, people with lived experience and organisational representatives to engage with and inform government.

Within my own portfolio, as I mentioned, I benefit from the advice and representations of not just the Youth Advisory Council but also, as I spoke about earlier today, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the Disability

Reference Group, the tripartite Work Safety Council and the soon-to-be-appointed Multicultural Advisory Council.

Ultimately as a government we need to build stronger trust and partnerships with our community, to be open to their ideas and their views on the future of our city. The Labor government is absolutely committed to that ideal.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (4.09): The Greens have always been committed to open and consultative democracy. Grassroots democracy is one of our four pillars. I am very pleased to be able to speak to Mrs Kikkert's motion today. Clearly, we believe that strong community participation in decision-making leads to better outcomes for the government and for the community as a whole, which is why strengthened community consultation was included in our parliamentary agreement with the Labor Party.

Ms Stephen-Smith has talked about what this is going to mean in practice to some extent. I will talk a bit more about some more innovative options which may be part of it. We think that we do need some change in how we do our consultation, as Ms Stephen-Smith has mentioned. There are two areas where we think we should be trialling this in Canberra: citizens juries and participatory budgeting.

I have talked about both of these already today. I talked about citizens juries in relation to the estimates report. I commented that I think citizens juries have very great potential, but that it is possible that the majority of Canberra was not as excited about third-party insurance, as clearly some members of the government were. I am hoping that, given the amount of money allocated to this, there will be possibly more citizens juries topics and that we will have some good and interesting outcomes.

The other thing I mentioned briefly was participatory budgeting in terms of the response to Mr Steel's petition about Farrer. We have real issues in terms of where the government puts its money. This is one of the fundamental choices that we, as an Assembly and as a government, make: How are resources spent? This in many ways can be even more important than the legislation we pass. If we decide to build a light rail, build a hospital, build a whatever, that choice has consequences. In particular, that choice often means that something else is not funded. These choices are really important.

Yes, the Greens are very pleased that \$2.8 million has been committed in the budget to do a citizens jury process. We think that in doing this the government should look at the lessons from South Australia. Members may well be aware that recently in South Australia the South Australian government set up a statistically representative citizens jury to report on a nuclear waste dump proposal. This was after the royal commission on the issue found that public support for the waste dump was crucial if the proposal was to be successful.

The premier promised that the jury's findings would influence his final decision on the waste dump. Then, despite the jury voting overwhelmingly against the nuclear waste storage proposal, Premier Weatherill declared that he intended to set up a

non-binding plebiscite on the issue. Presumably, this is what was felt: he was hoping to arrive at a different outcome via the plebiscite.

He has subsequently abandoned this proposal, which I think was very sensible on his part. But what has happened in South Australia is that there was an initial promise to take it seriously. Then the results of the consultation process—the citizens jury—were dismissed. I think this has seriously damaged the trust of the South Australian community in a citizens jury process.

In the South Australian case, for the consultation to be meaningful the government really needed to commit to supporting the findings of the citizens jury. I think this is going to be one of the things that will be really important for the ACT government in examining the citizens jury process. What are the things where government can be clear about the level of commitment that will be given to the outcome of consultation?

This is something that is an ongoing source of community concern. The community will often say, “We were consulted. We went to the meeting. We filled in the thing on the website”—whatever, whatever—“but we think the decision was already made beforehand. It was sham consultation.” This is the sort of thing that really annoys the public, that really means consultation does not work. That is one of the things that is important. Consultation must be real. I am very pleased that Ms Stephen-Smith talked about information as distinct from consultation, because this is really important.

People need to know when they are being informed and when they are being consulted. I have just mentioned participatory budgeting as a potential option. I note that the parliamentary agreement talks about a review of the budget process for this year and this is a potential way the review could happen.

There is something else I would just like to mention in terms of open and consultative democracy that I have very recently been involved in. Tomorrow morning I hope to table a revised draft of my bill, the Crimes (Invasion of Privacy) Amendment Bill. I was very fortunate that I was able to send out letters to 60 different organisations and individuals and received 17 substantive responses on this. I am saying this to highlight that while clearly consultation is easier for organisations with the resources of government, it is something that all of us in our day-to-day lives as MLAs need to look at. It is something that in this instance has been incredibly important to us.

The lease variation charge is another area where we have been talking today about consultation, or, in the instance of the lease variation charge, total lack of consultation. The government has recently decided to impose a fourfold increase in the LVC charge, but there was no industry consultation and there was no modelling done on it. This is why we saw that huge flurry just at the end of June. I think there were 149 applications for lease variations in those three weeks, which was equivalent to about five years of normal traffic.

Clearly, that is not the way to do open and consultative democracy. It is also not the way really to do taxation, where I think you need to look at the impact of taxation decisions. While clearly the Greens support the government in raising taxation and support the idea that windfall gains should at least partially accrue to government, we

also need to look at what the broader impact of government decisions is. In this instance, we are concerned about the impact of these decisions on housing affordability and infill.

The industry has certainly been very clear to us that this is likely to lead to a major reduction in townhouse development in existing suburbs. I am concerned that the perverse outcome of this will be more McMansions rather than the missing middle, which we know people are looking for: sensibly-sized smaller houses like townhouses and terraces. We know that is what the people really want in our community.

I could go on and on about this. There are many instances, but I can see there is at least one other MLA who would like to speak on this subject. I think I have said enough. Over to you, Mr Parton.

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (4.18): Open and consultative democracy; government of the people, by the people, for the people and, in particular, open and consultative democracy. I do not think we can really survive without one. Let us cut to the chase. We are talking today about this. We are talking about open and consultative democracy, or lack thereof today, because so many Canberrans have called us, have emailed us, have come banging on our doors bitterly complaining that their voices have not been heard. They have been ignored. They have been shut out of the conversation.

Many of them tell us that they believe they have been lied to. Some of them spend way too much time reading the words of former Labor Chief Minister Jon Stanhope and others. They believe that they have been misled by the current government. It is difficult for us to argue with them.

Minister Stephen-Smith spoke to us today of all of the innovative new ways that her government is engaging and consulting. Most of these engagements are one way. I think most of them are to be commended, but most of them are one way engagements. It is very clear that if you disagree with the government, the government does not want to hear from you: talk to the hand.

This week the minister for banning things will introduce legislation pertaining to gaming machines in Canberra clubs. In his media statement on this topic he declared that he had consulted with the clubs industry. We know for a fact that this is not the case. We know because the minister and the Chief Minister have publicly announced that they will be ignoring 70 per cent of the clubs industry. They have publicly announced that they refuse to consult with those who disagree with them.

Open and consultative democracy means that you consult with everyone. It means that you have the courage to speak to those who disagree with you. It means that you dare to spend time with those whom Unions ACT may find undesirable. What a disgrace that Unions ACT, the organisation which, let's face it, really runs our town, have written to every Labor MLA asking them to seek permission from the union body before meeting with anyone from the Master Builders Association.

It seems the only anti-consorting laws that we have in this town are unwritten laws decreed by Unions ACT. They are the only anti-consorting laws. You have to seek permission, and these are very, very strong anti-consorting laws. I am not sure what the penalties are now for noncompliance but I am sure Simon Corbell can you tell you all about it. If you want to call Simon and ask him, he will tell you. How can you possibly pretend to uphold the standards of open democracy by publicly cutting out a peak body like Clubs ACT which represents 70 per cent of the industry, by cutting them completely from the conversation?

I have had dozens of conversations with residents of Wright, Chapman, Holder and Mawson who believe that they were ignored, who believe that they have effectively been lied to. That is what they believe because of this government's decision to steal their community facility zone for the purposes of dispersing public housing residents as far away from the light rail corridor as they possibly can. They all know now what happened in December of 2015. They all know about the sneaky underhanded process of making a technical amendment to the territory plan to allow the government to have its way with their suburb.

When the public conversation commenced on this after the sites were announced, we had this absurd situation where initially elected members and officials refused to meet with the public. Meetings were cancelled. Then some were cobbled together with no warning so that stakeholders could not really attend.

Soon after we had the minister come out and inform those communities that the location of the new sites was not up for debate. It was not up for debate. In this open and consultative democracy the communities of Chapman, Wright, Mawson and Holder were told very clearly that by hook or by crook the government would build public housing developments on their community facility zones and there was nothing they could do about it. The only option they had was to try to get the Greens to vote against the government. Good luck with that one. Good luck finding a backbone on the crossbench.

Far be it from me to start rumours in this place but I have to put this on the record. I have had a conversation with some community members who were engaging with the government in Weston Creek. As it was explained to me, exasperated government representatives told a Weston Creek resident in a private meeting that if his residents group continued to oppose this development, the government would simply hand pick some Labor-friendly residents, establish their own residents group and just deal with that new group. I obviously cannot confirm that conversation but surely this government would not be in the business of ignoring a particular interest group and just creating its own. Surely they would not do that. They would not be doing that, would they? There is no way!

As we have watched aghast at how this process has unfolded here in the chamber and out in the suburbs, we, the Canberra Liberals, have gone to great lengths to provide some certainty for all Canberrans in regards to their community facility zones. We have given the government every opportunity to get ahead of the game, to be open and transparent and to reveal to the people of Canberra the location of all of the

community facility zones that have been or are being considered for the construction of public housing developments.

Despite trumpeting transparency and openness, this government has closed those secret files as tightly as they possibly can and gone to extraordinary lengths to stop Canberrans from knowing what is planned in their street, in their park and in their suburb. The chamber will recall that I presented a motion calling on this government to reveal the detail on use of community facility zoned land and to explain the need for secrecy in relation to issues of public concern.

The motion also asked the government to demonstrate proper transparency and commitment to a genuine open government. The minister and her government promptly hit this motion for six and substituted their own version of what they see as transparency and openness. The chamber will also recall that on 7 June it adopted a resolution seeking the release of the redacted elements of documents issued in response to an earlier FOI request. In response, the Chief Minister claimed executive privilege, with this claim upheld by the independent legal arbiter.

I certainly do not challenge the decision of the legal arbiter. But you can understand why those out in the suburbs have formed a view that this government is not open and does not wish to genuinely consult. I am sure the Chief Minister could have found a middle ground that would have given the community insights into the thinking in relation to the selection of sites for the public housing renewal program. But, no; the Chief Minister said that it was not in the public interest to do so.

All we can do is wonder about exactly whose public interest is at stake here. This government still has a chance to redeem itself as we are led to believe that there are still some greenfield sites to be announced for the public housing renewal program. I note that the minister has circulated a statement regarding public housing on community facility zoned land and delivered it today in this chamber. It is a well crafted statement of some three pages which demonstrates the minister's continued passion for secrecy, because the statement says very little.

We do welcome the minister's decision to extend the public comment period on development applications by five weeks. The minister's statement also speaks of minimum community engagement requirements for developers, which makes a useful contribution to the engagement process. What is badly needed now, though, to complement this is demonstrable action by the government itself for genuine openness and transparency, something that is totally lacking at the moment.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (4.26): I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing this matter of public importance before us today. This MPI provides the government with an opportunity to talk about how we are continuing to consult with Canberrans. The key tenet of democracy is participation. The government has already taken great strides to improve participation in government decisions. I would be very happy to outline how our government is engaging and consulting with the community. The government is constantly working to be more consultative. This can be seen in a range of new measures being undertaken early in this term of government.

I have previously talked in the Assembly about how the ACT's planning processes, which I believe are generally good, have some limitations. The planning process fails to reach many people in our community, like young people and working families, who have a legitimate stake in consultation. While the planning process offers the community some input into development, this can be late in the process.

That is why the government has proposed new guidelines for comment which will encourage developers to meaningfully engage with the community on a proposed development before a DA is submitted. The announcement on 17 July sets out guidelines for developers, such as making documents like site plans and landscaping plans available for public viewing, conducting face-to-face engagement sessions with a diverse cross-section of the community, and submitting their consultation report to the planning and land authority as part of any subsequent DA documentation.

On top of encouraging developers to consult with the community, the ACT government has also made it easier for community members to view current development applications. Version 2 of the DA finder app allows users to receive notifications on proposed developments in their area. The latest version allows users to search not only DAs but also environmental impact studies and Territory Plan variations. This makes the system significantly easier to navigate for people in the community.

We are also engaging in community consultation as part of the new community panel process for Kippax and Curtin centre master planning. Community panels are considered to be a helpful way to consider development proposals, and this is a method of consultation that the ACT government wants to get behind and to help facilitate.

I know, with Curtin in particular, in my electorate, many residents of the community had very legitimate concerns over the scale of a proposed development at the shops. Many residents got in touch with me as their local government member. Many residents submitted an objection through the official DA process and voiced their concern online, through petitions and through their local community groups. Under the new community panel process, that last segment of people will also officially be able to have their voice heard on this ongoing matter.

Community panels will bring together the community and developers, with the ACT government facilitating. The process will allow for an open discussion to consolidate views on proposals, and the ACT government will work to keep the broader community informed of the outcomes.

Earlier, on 25 May, we had the Woden roundtable, to bring together stakeholders in the Woden town centre community to start work on the regeneration of Woden. Consultation on the Territory Plan variation for Woden town centre was also extended to enable the feedback from that process to be fed in. That was released last week in its final form.

These new elements of consultation on DAs complement our current process through the your say website, which allows people to engage online. Your say is key to

ensuring time-poor Canberrans can have a say on the issues that matter to them. Your say currently receives anywhere between 4,000 and 8,000 unique visitors a month, depending on the engagements available on the website. The government is continuing to work to build this audience, the tools and techniques, along with the visibility of the platform, so that more and more Canberrans know this is a place where they can have their say heard.

I agree with Minister Stephen-Smith that perhaps lack of consultation is not the problem, but we can certainly improve the way that we consult. That is why I think Mrs Kikkert's mention of an open and consultative democracy is important, because the ACT government is looking at exactly this issue.

On 19 January this year, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy about ways that we can make our democracy more inclusive, representative and open. Subsequently, I wrote to the Chief Minister suggesting that a proposal that they had raised with me around citizen juries could be an effective way for the ACT government to give people a direct say on big decisions affecting them.

In budget estimates the Chief Minister renewed his commitment to improving engagement in the community, and I commend him for it. There is certainly a great deal of excitement and interest in this place, and across government, about how deliberative democracy could work, and the proposal around citizens juries in particular. I would have to disagree with Ms Le Couteur in regard to the cost of insurance on our vehicles. That is actually an issue that some people in our community, particularly young people and vulnerable people, might have a say on.

It is important to note that these juries are not a "shiny new toy" to be rolled out for every decision. The government has committed to identifying an issue for a pilot project where citizens can shape a complex policy and officials will be able to learn new engagement skills to use in the future.

The government is currently seeking advice from the experts on what best practice engagement might look like in our unique jurisdiction, including how we can utilise deliberative democracy to further involve the community in decision-making. Canberra is home to world-recognised leaders in the field of deliberative democracy, and it is time we made the most of this.

Fundamentally, our government wants to see more Canberrans able to play a role in shaping the city that we all live in. We cannot just rely on the bureaucracy for that purpose. All of us, as elected members of this place, have a duty to be open and accessible to the constituency that elected us. Indeed I made a commitment to CAPaD during the election to promote and support participatory, representative and deliberative methods for policy planning and legislative decisions. I note that Mrs Kikkert did not do that. She chose not to sign that pledge. I know Mr Parton did, and Ms Le Couteur did as well.

Better constituency representation was one of the reasons why we increased the size of the Assembly and, as a government member, it is something that I take very seriously. Since being elected last year, I have placed the utmost importance on going

out and being accessible to my community, by meeting as many people living in Murrumbidgee as possible as a government member. This includes regular mobile offices at shopping centres throughout the electorate—I am doing one on Friday in Lyons and one on Saturday in Kambah—and attending community council meetings as well. People will not always be at the shops and most people do not attend community councils, especially when they go for three or four hours into the night. That is why I am making a concerted effort to directly reach out to people, by knocking on doors across all the suburbs, introducing myself and making sure that I am seeking people's feedback through surveys as well.

Whether it is improving our planning system, new forms of deliberative democracy like citizens juries or through our existing successful consultation hubs like your say, the government is listening and consulting, and we are working hard to improve our open democracy here in the ACT.

*Discussion concluded.*

## **Papers**

**The Clerk** presented the following papers:

ACT Health Infrastructure Asset Condition Report and Minor Works Priorities (2 volumes), prepared by AECOM Australia Pty Ltd.

## **Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2017**

Debate resumed.

**MS FITZHARRIS** (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (4.35): I am pleased to speak to the Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, the first of two bills to support the introduction of light rail as Canberra's newest form of public transport. To facilitate the introduction of this new form of sustainable public transport, changes to the existing road transport legislation are required to recognise light rail in Canberra. The construction of Canberra's light rail is well underway with works progressing well along the entire corridor between the city and Gungahlin. Therefore the passing of this bill is very timely.

The first light rail vehicle is expected to arrive in November this year and will be stabled at the new depot located in Mitchell. The light rail vehicles will undertake on-track testing during the first and second quarters of 2018, ahead of light rail operations starting in late 2018.

This bill aims to achieve a consistent approach to the application of transport laws across different forms of public transport in the territory and to provide consistency with laws in other Australian jurisdictions that also operate light rail.

The changes this bill brings will support the operation of light rail vehicles on ACT roads in accordance with the Australian road rules. This will ensure that all road rules will apply to drivers of light rail vehicles. The bill standardises the definition of a motor vehicle to include a light rail vehicle to be consistent across ACT legislation. It also clarifies that the concept of “rail” or “railways” in other legislation is extended to include light rail and that a number of existing provisions, including offences that apply in relation to motor vehicles or rail vehicles or rail operations, will also apply to light rail vehicles. It is absolutely necessary to reform the ACT road transport legislation right now to ensure that our new light rail network operates as a seamless element in the overarching integrated public transport network that Transport Canberra is delivering for all of our city.

Our government is providing the community with a modern network that includes a number of transport modes that allow for connected travel around the city. It is, and will continue as it grows, to be a convenient, efficient, affordable and reliable alternative to driving.

This bill is part of the complex process that has taken our commitment to invest in light rail to a reality on the ground. Features of this bill include a requirement for light rail drivers to hold a valid Australian full car driver licence and a provision that should any injuries arise from a collision with a light rail vehicle it will be covered by the compulsory third-party insurance scheme.

Transport Canberra and City Services is moving ahead with light rail stage 2. Since our re-election we have committed \$20 million to carry out detailed scoping and route planning on the city to Woden corridor and provided further provisions for procurement activities. Light rail to Woden will create a public transport spine for our city, connecting employment hubs, community services and commuters and travellers from north to south. The Woden to city corridor also gives the ACT government an opportunity to facilitate other infrastructure investments, including urban renewal initiatives in the south and a revitalisation of the Woden town centre.

Public transport is critical to connecting our suburbs to new compact urban centres. Light rail represents more than simply a form of transport. It is transformative for Canberra and will help to increase density and revitalise parts of Canberra where it is located. Light rail supports greater density in our urban centres and stimulates new housing types including medium density housing, student, affordable and social housing offerings.

Canberra’s population is projected to increase significantly over the next 20 years to over half a million people. To plan for Canberra’s growth, reduce congestion and enhance our livability, we need to improve our public transport system, which includes buses, light rail and active transport options such as cycling and walking, as well as other imminent transport innovations. We need to make it easier for residents and visitors to move around our city and make public transport a real alternative to the car.

Later in 2018 a second stage of reforms will be introduced to support the operation of the light rail as a public passenger transport mode. The second stage of legislative reforms will ensure that there are appropriate powers in relation to setting and collecting fares, including powers to deal with fare evasion. It will prioritise the safety and amenity of light rail passengers, ensuring a seamless customer experience across transport modes.

This is an exciting time for Canberra. This bill is another significant step in our journey towards a truly integrated public transport system. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (4.39), in reply: I am pleased to speak to the Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. As I mentioned when I presented this bill on 8 June, this is a significant step in the delivery of a modern and sustainable public transport network for Canberra. The amendments made by this bill will deliver the first stage of reforms to the territory's road transport legislation to support the safe operation of light rail vehicles in the territory's road environment.

This bill ensures that drivers of light rail vehicles are subject, with a few exceptions, to all road rules applying to drivers of other vehicles. If a driver is detected breaking a road rule, such as running a red light or speeding, they can be issued with an infringement notice, face a fine and potentially lose their licence. All drivers of a light rail vehicle will be required to have a full car driver licence. Introducing a light rail driver licence would be unnecessarily bureaucratic and not consistent with the approach adopted in other jurisdictions. Extensive training will be provided to all light rail drivers on operating a light rail vehicle.

People involved in an accident with a light rail vehicle where the driver of the light rail vehicle is at fault will be covered under the ACT's compulsory third-party insurance scheme in the same way as any other person injured in the territory by an at-fault public employee driver. A driver of a light rail vehicle is subject to the same requirements that apply to drivers of other vehicles that are involved in an accident. A police officer can require the driver to be tested for alcohol, drugs or both.

This bill extends the offence of taking a motor vehicle without consent to include all vehicles. This is a lesser offence than theft and is commonly used where a person has taken a vehicle for a joyride. An essential element of the offence of theft is that the person intended to permanently deprive the owner of use of the vehicle. The track-based nature of light rail means that it is extremely difficult for a person to remove or conceal a light rail vehicle. This makes it difficult to prove the offence of theft and there are limited alternative offences available. These are the legal niceties of these offences, colleagues, and I guess these are the things we need to sort out. The extension of this offence to all vehicles addresses the potential harm caused by the act of joyriding and ensures that appropriate sanctions exist for the taking of all vehicles without the consent of the owner, whether a car, bus, a truck or light rail vehicle.

The bill also extends to light rail vehicles existing offences relating to placing leaflets on vehicles. This amendment reflects the safety risks associated with people seeking to place messages on the outside of a light rail vehicle.

As part of the territory's proactive approach to emerging forms of personal transport, the regulation permitting the private and commercial use of a segway-type device in the ACT commenced on 1 July this year. To support this change, the 2018 edition of the ACT road rules handbook will include content about segway-type devices and new questions about these devices will be added to the road rules knowledge test. As I mentioned when this bill was introduced, to support the use of these devices more broadly and this government's commitment to addressing alcohol-related crashes, the bill extends existing offences about drinking and intoxication while driving or riding to users of these devices to ensure they are used in a manner that is safe for the user and other road users.

This government is committed to developing a light rail network across Canberra that will provide an integrated public transport network. An integrated and efficient transport system improves the livability of Canberra. It also allows people to move about the city more easily, creating opportunities through development of new business along the light rail corridor.

Light rail is integral to this government's planning, transport, climate change and health strategies and I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Assembly of the government's commitment to sustainable transport policies and their role in improving road safety. These policies include a commitment to active travel modes like walking and cycling that have positive impacts on the environment and the health of Canberrans. With the highest car dependency of any Australian capital city and a growing population, a reliable public transport network is essential to reducing travel times and congestion on our roads and addressing the demands of a growing city. A reliable public transport network from which Canberra can grow will ensure that Canberra is a prosperous and livable city with people-friendly communities.

The first stage of the light rail is being delivered to the area within Canberra that is experiencing the highest growth. With that growth comes increasing congestion. Without light rail, it is estimated that the commute from Gungahlin to the city would take more than 50 minutes by 2031. The inclusion of an effective light rail network in a city has proven to be a catalyst for change on land value, development of activities around the light rail and better use of urban spaces. You do not need to look too far to see the heavy emphasis on transport-oriented development in Sydney, Melbourne and the Gold Coast where business and residential opportunities around the light rail are highly sought after. This trend is being reflected in the developments along the Northbourne corridor.

I would like to put on the record my thanks to the Minister for Transport and City Services, our respective directorates and Canberrans for their support and understanding at this exciting time in our city. The government is committed to making Canberra a sustainable and modern city and further legislation will be

introduced in 2018 to support the operation of the light rail as a public passenger service.

I noted Mr Coe's questions in the earlier discussion. He posed a series of them, which I took some notes on. I believe the comments I have offered today will have addressed a couple of them but I will pursue the rest of them. I am happy to either brief Mr Coe or assure him that they will be considered where necessary in next year's legislation as well.

I would also like to notify members that I have written to the Leader of the Opposition and to the chair of the scrutiny committee to advise my intention to move government amendments shortly. The amendments are technical in nature and are aimed at ensuring consistency in terminology across jurisdictions in respect to alternative modes of transport. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

### **Detail stage**

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (4.46), by leave: Pursuant to standing order 182A(b), I move amendments Nos 1 to 7 circulated in my name together [*see schedule 1 at page 2311*]. These amendments are minor and technical in nature. I table a supplementary explanatory statement to the government amendments.

I will make a few brief remarks regarding the amendments. We have discussed today that the bill makes amendments to the Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1977 to make it an offence for a rider of a segway-type device to be under the influence of or drinking alcohol while using the device and this amendment is part of reforms to the road transport regulations to allow private use of segway-type devices on public land in the territory.

I am moving amendments to the bill which are of a minor and technical nature. The amendments primarily replace the term "segway" with "personal mobility device". This ensures consistency with the approach taken in other jurisdictions and by the National Transport Commission. It also resolves any potential issues associated with referring to a specific brand of personal mobility device.

There are also minor and technical amendments to the compulsory third-party insurance provisions of the bill to update references to CTP regulations as amended by the Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Amendment Regulation 2017 No 2.

I think that summarises it and I would be happy to answer any further questions on those amendments. I commend the amendments to the Assembly.

**MR COE** (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (4.48): I can confirm that the opposition will be supporting these technical amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

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

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

## **Adjournment**

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

## **Ms Jenny Deves**

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (4.49): I rise to acknowledge Jenny Deves, a remarkable woman and a passionate supporter of the arts in Canberra. It is with great sadness that I inform the Assembly that in May this year Jenny passed away after suffering injuries sustained during a fall. Jenny leaves behind her devoted partner, Michelle Frost, whose presence I acknowledge here today, along with Jenny's mother. Jenny also left behind her children, Jack and Claudia, and her extended family.

Her extensive involvement with and impact on the arts in the ACT and beyond are well known. Jenny was a lifelong passionate advocate for visual and performing arts, and she continued her deep engagement with the ACT arts community despite suffering a cerebral haemorrhage in 2000. Michelle's loving support and care for Jenny were important factors in enabling her to continue to contribute so extensively to the Canberra arts community.

Jenny had a rich and varied career in the arts, encompassing music, theatre, craft and design. She worked for Musica Viva, studied music at the Sydney Conservatorium, gaining an Associate Diploma of Music in 1976, and worked for the Nimrod Theatre Company. She studied print, design and typography at the Sydney College of TAFE, and she achieved a Graduate Diploma in Arts Management from the Queensland University of Technology. She was also qualified in events management and marketing.

Jenny worked as the deputy administrator of NIDA from 1985 to 1993, before she and her then partner moved to Canberra to raise their children. In 1994 Jenny took up the position of executive director of Craft ACT, moving seamlessly from the performing arts to the visual arts. Her commitment to seeing our craft sector realise its full potential turned Craft ACT into a highly recognised professional organisation.

Jenny initiated Craft ACT's move to its present location in the city, involving many years of negotiation, and giving the organisation an even greater profile. She was instrumental in working with Klaus Moje and others in creating the first feasibility study for what has become the Canberra Glassworks.

After her cerebral haemorrhage and a long period in hospital and recuperation, Jenny began, in 2003, volunteering and eventually working at Craft Australia, establishing, among other things, the peer-reviewed journal *Craft + Design Enquiry*. Later, Jenny worked as the journal's managing editor when it moved to the ANU School of Art. She was still there when its last issue was published in 2015.

Recovering from her illness was a long and slow journey, taking extraordinary determination and tenacity, and loving support and encouragement from her many friends, family and her partner, Michelle.

Jenny served on the boards of many organisations in the crafts, the museum and heritage sectors, sharing her skills in leadership and advocacy. She was the deputy convenor and then the convenor of the Canberra Theatre Centre Advisory Committee and she served on the ACT Cultural Council. She was seen regularly, with Michelle by her side, at exhibition openings, performances and concerts, and she was held in particularly high regard and affection by artists all around Australia.

Canberra, and the craft scene in particular, has lost a great arts advocate, one who showed great courage in dealing with the considerable challenges in her own life, while also giving so much back to her community. She will be dearly remembered, and certainly missed, by many.

I extend my deepest sympathies to Jenny's family, friends and colleagues at this time. And I extend my gratitude to Jenny for the generous and extensive legacy she leaves, not only for the arts community here in Canberra but far beyond.

### **Dainere's Rainbow—gala dinner**

**MR COE** (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (4.53): On 17 June I was pleased to attend the gala dinner for Dainere's Rainbow at the Ainslie Football Club. I note that Elizabeth Lee and Senator the Hon Zed Seselja were also in attendance.

Many Canberrans were moved by the story of Gungahlin teenager Dainere Anthony, who courageously blogged about her extended battle against cancer after she was diagnosed with what is formally known as high risk medulloblastoma. Dainere's blog was subsequently published as a book, *You Have To Go Through A Storm To Get To A Rainbow*. Dainere sadly passed away in June 2013 but her memory and legacy live on through Dainere's Rainbow.

The Dainere's Rainbow Brain Tumour Research Fund was established with the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation to support the research of Dr David Ziegler and his team who are working towards improving the outcomes for all children

diagnosed with brain tumours. A hundred per cent of all funds raised or donated goes to paediatric brain tumour research at the Sydney Children's Hospital.

As well as raising much-needed funds for research, Dainere's Rainbow raises awareness about paediatric brain tumours and, through the publication *By My Side*, reaches out to other families also impacted by the devastation of paediatric brain tumours.

The gala dinner is an annual event and is the major fundraiser for the research fund. The evening was dedicated to all children diagnosed with paediatric brain tumours and to remember and honour those children who have lost their lives, as well as those who are presently fighting this disease and those who have survived but have been left with devastating side effects.

The 2017 dinner was a sell-out and raised over \$39,000. The evening was made possible due to a number of major partners for Dainere's Rainbow, including Group One, Tatts On Tatts Off, Rolfe Property Services, Qcity Transit, Regional Wholesale Fruit Market, and Simeco Electrical Contractors. The event was also supported by corporate community partners Transit Graphics, QCity Transit and My Gungahlin, as well as many community partners.

The 2018 gala dinner will be held on 16 June 2018 at the Abbey Function Centre at Gold Creek. I would encourage Canberrans to register for this event or to donate to the fund. Information on donating is available on the Dainere's Rainbow website at [www.daineresrainbow.com.au](http://www.daineresrainbow.com.au).

I commend Dainere's family for their ongoing efforts to raise awareness about paediatric brain tumours and funds for research. I would like to conclude my remarks with an inspirational quote from Dainere herself:

When a shadow comes across your life, hold your face to the sunshine, then your shadow will fade into the distance and your life will only be filled with warmth and light.

### **Greyhound racing—Canberra Greyhound Racing Club**

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (4.56): Today I rise to reiterate the ACT Greens' support for a ban on greyhound racing in the ACT. As has been publicly reported, the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club have begun defamation proceedings against me after I commented on radio that there are animal welfare issues associated with the greyhound racing industry. Not only do I stand by the comments I made, I condemn the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club for repeatedly trying to slap lawsuits on those who speak up against this exploitative industry. Defamation suits are a classic tactic used to stifle criticism by those who cannot or will not engage in public debate and address the issues at hand.

This is not the first time we have seen these sorts of bullying tactics from the Greyhound Racing Club. They have also threatened legal action against the RSPCA multiple times. As an MLA I am privileged to be able to speak freely about

these issues in this place. This is a privilege not afforded to the wider community and groups like the RSPCA, so today I take this opportunity to outline the key issues and criticisms that the Greyhound Racing Club have attempted to silence through baseless legal actions.

The Greyhound Racing Club cannot deny the fact that their own steward reports show over 300 recorded injuries in Canberra since 2012, including 26 catastrophic injuries which led to greyhounds being euthanised. There is considerable publicly available evidence in the McHugh and Durkin reports on the greyhound racing industry showing serious injuries, dogs being euthanised and positive tests for using banned substances in Canberra.

The Durkin report also provides a list of 42 greyhounds that raced at the Greyhound Racing Club that never competed in another race or trial following their last race in Canberra. Thirty-one dogs are recorded as euthanised or dead from natural or unknown causes. Seven of these greyhounds were euthanised trackside following vet inspections. Seventeen of these deaths occurred within one or two months of the dog's last race.

I am also aware of a formal complaint that is currently being investigated by Access Canberra regarding over 30 uncleared drug swabs from greyhounds racing in the ACT from 2012 to 2016. This is in addition to five trainers found guilty of using prohibited substances in Canberra. With fewer than six per cent of starters being swabbed in 2015, there are serious concerns about how comprehensive this data really is.

On the issue of live baiting, the RSPCA has records which include trainers who have been found guilty of live baiting offences in New South Wales and Victoria who have raced their dogs in Canberra. This further highlights the finding of the Durkin report that the ACT greyhound racing industry and the New South Wales industry are inextricably linked. We cannot pretend that the extensive findings of abuse and neglect highlighted in the McHugh report have nothing to do with greyhound racing in the ACT.

Data analysed by the RSPCA shows that the vast majority of individuals who participate in greyhound racing in the ACT are actually from New South Wales, including 90 per cent of all starters and 89 per cent of trainers. Therefore, while I have already outlined a number of examples of animal welfare concerns found in the ACT, we must also recognise the extensive evidence exposed through Michael McHugh's report as being relevant to the local industry.

He found that the industry: implicitly condoned as well as caused the unnecessary deaths of tens of thousands of healthy greyhounds; engaged in the barbaric practice of live baiting; caused and will continue to cause injuries to greyhounds that range from minor to catastrophic; treated greyhounds as dispensable commercial commodities; and deceived the community concerning the extent of injuries and deaths caused during race meetings.

The Greens believe that greyhound racing is an outdated industry that relies on animal exploitation. Our concern has always been for the welfare of greyhounds in the ACT, and I will not be intimidated or silenced by the bullying tactics of the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club. The defamation threat they have made against me is a classic SLAPP suit—strategic litigation against public participation—historically a tactic used by dodgy developers to silence community activists and provide a chilling effect on media reporting of issues.

I accept for those in our community who are passionate about greyhound racing that this is a difficult transition. No doubt it was the same for those in the whaling industry when Australia banned whaling in the 70s. But the time has come to acknowledge the toll on the animals used in this commercial operation and draw the curtain on this part of our history. I encourage affected people to grasp the opportunity offered by the transition package so we can move forward together. (*Time expired.*)

### **Hartley Lifecare—fundraising**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (5.02): We all know we live in the best city in Australia, and a huge part of what makes our city great is the people. I feel privileged to meet many different Canberrans who embody our generosity, our sense of adventure and our connection to community. This evening I rise to speak about a very special event I had the pleasure of attending on 14 of June. The spine tingling ride fundraising dinner was held at Albert Hall to celebrate the great achievement of a passionate and clearly very fit Canberran, Andrew Kerec.

The Kerec family was devastated when its patriarch, Andrew's father, Lud, was involved in a tragic cycling accident in early 2010 rendering him quadriplegic and confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Motivated by his father's courage and commitment to raising awareness of spinal injuries and the devastating impact they have on families and the community, Andrew embarked on a 5,450-kilometre bike ride, going from Canberra to Humpty Doo in Darwin all to raise well needed funds for Hartley Lifecare, Spinal Cure Australia, Project Edge and Livable Housing Australia.

Kicking off in March and taking three months to reach Humpty Doo, the ride was captured in a video diary by Andrew, and it did not take long for the momentum of donations to start rising as Andrew's journey touched a lot of hearts. A particularly touching moment for Andrew was having his father cross the finish line with him, on a modified hand bike for an uplifting reunion at Humpty Doo.

As members in this chamber would be aware, I have been and am a great supporter of Hartley Lifecare, an organisation that provides vital assistance and support for people with complex disabilities, an organisation which only over the weekend held a great fundraising initiative, the Hart.R8 challenge, in which I had the pleasure of participating. I acknowledge that Minister Rattenbury was also there and probably felt very much at home on the bike.

Partnering with a number of local gyms around Canberra, participants signed up to ride an indoor bike for up to six hours to raise funds for Hartley. I congratulate

Hartley for raising more than \$20,000 from this challenge, and I look forward to seeing more Canberrans and perhaps even more members in this chamber at the challenge next year.

Project Edge is a research and clinical trial that is looking into new methods of spinal cord repair, having just recently achieved a world first in reawakening the spinal cord, restoring feeling and functionality through neurostimulation for 30 paralysed people. Spinal Cure Australia recently made a donation of \$1 million for this project, and a big component of that donation came from this spine tingling ride and the Canberra community. Livable Housing Australia works to increase the quantity and quality of accessible homes.

I congratulate Andrew on this tremendous feat in completing this ride, and I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the after-ride celebration and fundraiser dinner. This dinner was aimed at bringing the family and community together to celebrate Andrew's achievement and to further raise funds for these worthy organisations. Andrew's touching, funny and motivating story was an inspiration to the more than 350 Canberrans who attended to celebrate his great achievement. I congratulate Andrew and the Kerec family on their enormous achievement of raising more than \$110,000 from the ride.

I applaud the dedication of Hartley Lifecare and Spinal Cure Australia for their ongoing commitment to our community. I am again awed at the heart of the hundreds of Canberrans for their support of this great initiative. I salute you because you are one of the things that make Canberra great.

### **HerCanberra—women's achievements**

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (5.06): I rise today to speak about some of the incredibly talented and promising young women who are shaping Canberra's future. HerCanberra recently published the future generation series highlighting the outstanding work of 17 Canberra women in 2017. I was incredibly humbled to be included in this list, along with my colleague across the chamber Elizabeth Lee. But I would also like to share some of the stories of the other women featured by HerCanberra, women who are making Canberra an amazing and vibrant city.

Indeed, there are so many women making their mark in our city. I imagine that it was a challenging job to limit the list to just 17. I wish I could speak about all the other 15 in full tonight, but I will hold myself back. There are people like Dr Jessa Rogers, who is an Indigenous academic and trailblazer, a name probably familiar to many in this chamber. Overcoming serious disadvantage in her youth, Jessa is now a 32-year-old associate professor of education and a Fulbright scholar, as well as a mum of two.

Jessa graduated from university with first-class honours, completed a PhD and has won a string of awards for her work. Jessa is passionate about education and the creative arts as tools to empower individuals and to help diverse communities to prosper. She will continue carving a path in academia. Her next stop is the department

of anthropology at Harvard University where she will further her research in Indigenous girls' education.

Other women in Canberra are using social media to share their skills with the world and are becoming hugely popular. Some of you may know that I run a blog called "In the taratory" that I thought was doing pretty well. But I think Gina Ciancio and Tanya Hennessy have me well and truly beaten.

Gina is a talented interior designer who has created an online blog to bring styling, building, interiors and do-it-yourself together on a single website called "Style curator". Style curator has amassed over 25,000 social media followers and gets a whopping 50,000 clicks a month.

Tanya Hennessy is another Canberra woman who is killing it in the media. She is a comedian with her own refreshing style of observational comedy, making people laugh on her regular radio show in Canberra on 104.7 and her own YouTube channel. Tanya has amassed over 40,000 subscribers to her YouTube channel, 800,000 likes on her Facebook page, and her social media videos have been watched more than 130 million times. If only Assembly on Demand got the same attention.

Both Gina and Tanya have huge audiences of people around the world tuning in, clicking around and scrolling through their ideas, jokes and advice. These women are shaping public opinions and preferences and determining international styles and trends.

Another member of this group, Bianca Elmir, is powering ahead in her quest to compete in boxing at the Commonwealth Games. Bianca used to work in this very building as a staffer for Amanda Bresnan. She has been a fearless advocate for LGBTIQ rights and is passionate about international development and aid. She is committed to empowering Canberra women. She provides self-defence training for women and supports victims of domestic violence. As a proud Muslim woman, she also hopes to inspire other Muslim women to pursue their dreams and be comfortable in their own skin. I wish Bianca the best of luck on her road to the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Finally, Caitlin Figueiredo is another young woman who is proving that age is no barrier to achieving great things. At just 21, Caitlin has already made waves internationally in gender equality advocacy. Last year she was named White House Gender Equality Global Champion and was invited to discuss her passion with none other than Michelle Obama.

Here at home, she won the Westpac-AFR 100 women of influence young leader category, and is the youngest recipient in the award's history. To top it off, she is an ambassador for the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, helping to end violence against children and tackle childhood bullying as well as a range of other things. Her CV is really bloody impressive.

This is just a small sample of the incredible women who were featured by HerCanberra as the future generation. I was incredibly proud and humbled to stand

alongside them. These are women who are showing us the way forward. They are leading the world in academia, sport, media, design and advocacy. They are forging a path for younger women to follow, making it a little bit easier for every girl who wants to be a boxer or a scholar. They show us that if we put our minds to it, women can do anything.

## **Citizenship**

**MR MILLIGAN** (Yerrabi) (5.11): Forty-six years ago this month in 1971, Sheila Colyer arrived in Australia from England. Last week she finally took the oath and became an Australian citizen. I find her situation interesting as there has been a lot of talk recently about Australian citizenship at the federal level. But under an arrangement with the British government, prior to 1984 six months after arrival British citizens had to enrol and vote. So Sheila did. She voted at every election, federal and territory, ever since. She tells me she had worked until her retirement and paid her taxes. So why, I asked her, did she at this late stage decide to become an Australian?

She tells me it was not that she had not thought about it over the years, but it had never risen to the top of her list of things to do and there was no real incentive for her. But as she approached her 80th birthday, her daughter challenged her: “You are going to be 80 soon. Don’t you think you should become an Australian citizen?”

Sheila decided that it was time. One of the joys of being a member of the electorate of Yerrabi is the opportunity to work with my constituents. I have known Sheila for some time. When Sheila contacted me and asked me to help her fill in her form and to certify that I have known Sheila for some time, I was more than happy to help. It does not cost much to get a form. As a pensioner, Sheila was able to get a hard copy for just \$20. We filled out the form, lodged it and just last week, eight months after lodging the form, Sheila finally took the oath that made her a citizen of this great nation.

We do live in a great country. No matter where you come from you have an amazing opportunity to become a citizen. Voting is a civic duty which is both a right and a freedom, one that allows us as citizens to have a choice in government, a choice in who represents us, though the members opposite would waive that right to the union movement.

The right for voters to choose their representatives is one that should be valued and honoured by members of the Assembly and not one that should be treated lightly, with disdain and disrespect, as is the tendency of the members of the Labor Party who would legislate control of the government and government decisions to those not elected by voters.

As Sheila’s elected member for Yerrabi, I value Sheila’s efforts at 80 years of age to become an Australian citizen. I would encourage others to similarly take that step. Though she has voted all her life, I know that the next time she votes, she too will feel a sense of pride, as she tells me she did when she took the oath, which, by the way, she learned off by heart so she did not need to read off the card. She tells me that it

was a lovely ceremony at the Albert Hall, where the first formal citizenship ceremony took place in February 1949. But what Sheila is most looking forward to is being able to vote as an Australian.

### **Student photography festival**

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (5.14): Over the last month my office had the privilege of hosting a year 12 student from Hawker College on work experience. Lily Kleeman has been a great addition to our team over that time. She is the one who has actually prepared this adjournment speech on something that is very close to her heart, photography.

It was announced that three very talented Hawker College students were selected to represent Australia in the 3rd International High School Student Photography Festival by winning the annual Australian competition. The theme this year was, “What are you proud of about your town?” Their submissions showed off some of the natural beauty that we enjoy here in the ACT. This is not only a great opportunity to show the world the fantastic environment around us, but also the skill of our students to capture it and put it on display.

Sally Witchalls, Alex Williams and Grace McGurgan will be going to a festival which is held in the international town of photography, Higashikawa in Japan. Sally, Alex and Grace will be heading off at the end of June where they will join up with entrants from 13 other countries, all for the love of photography.

Two members of the group attended the previous festival, led by their very passionate and motivated photography teacher Mr Andrew Kay, who encouraged his students to take a leap and attempt to take their photography internationally. They would like to thank him for the work he put in and for believing that they could achieve this unique opportunity. This is an incredible accomplishment and puts on display some of the amazing opportunities that school students have today in the ACT. Well done to these fantastic young women for their initiative and for taking great pride in our wonderful home of Canberra. I, with Lily, wish them the best for their international adventure.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 5.17 pm.**

## Schedule of amendments

### Schedule 1

#### Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

##### Amendments moved by the Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety

1

##### Clause 7

##### Section 24A (2), definition of vehicle, proposed new paragraph (ab)

Page 3, line 22—

*omit proposed new paragraph (ab), substitute*

(ab) a personal mobility device; or

2

##### Clause 9

##### Section 25 (5), proposed new definition of vehicle, paragraph (c)

Page 4, line 12—

*omit paragraph (c), substitute*

(c) a personal mobility device.

3

##### Clause 10

##### Dictionary, note 3, proposed new dot points

Page 4, line 16—

*omit*

- segway

*substitute*

- personal mobility device

4

##### Clause 36

##### Dictionary, proposed new definition of motor vehicle

Page 12, line 9—

*omit*

segway

*substitute*

personal mobility device

5

##### Clause 37

Page 12, line 10—

*omit clause 37, substitute*

##### **37 Dictionary, new definitions**

*insert*

personal mobility device means a vehicle that—

- (a) is designed to be self-balancing while a person travels in or on the vehicle; and
- (b) is propelled by an electric motor; and

- (c) has 2 wheels that operate on a single axis; and
- (d) has a platform anywhere between the 2 wheels for the person's feet; and
- (e) has handles mounted on an upright post.

*rail transport operator*—see the Rail Safety National Law (ACT), section 4.

*registrable or rail vehicle*, for part 3 (Infringement notices for certain offences)—see section 21A.

6

**Clause 82**

Page 36, line 19—

*omit clause 82, substitute*

**82 Schedule 1, section 1.1, definition of *passenger vehicle*, new paragraph (k)**

*insert*

- (k) a light rail vehicle.

7

**Clause 83**

Page 37, line 1—

*omit clause 83, substitute*

**83 Schedule 1, part 1.2, new items 57 and 58**

*insert*

57	26	light rail vehicle	not entitled
58	26	light rail vehicle	entitled

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