



# Debates

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Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**NINTH ASSEMBLY**

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**Thursday, 17 August 2017**

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Dunne)** took the chair at 10 am and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

## **Petition**

*The following petition was lodged for presentation:*

### **Higgins playground facilities—petition 20-17**

*By Mrs Kikkert, from 203 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 to provide upgrades to playgrounds in Higgins, including bins, park benches, working bubblers, climbing frames and slides at Hudson St and shade sails at Westhoven St.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to urge the ACT Government to upgrade these two playgrounds as well as maintain the other playgrounds in Higgins.

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

## **Petition—ministerial response**

The following response to a petition has been lodged:

### **Giralang community precinct—petition 12-17**

By **Ms Fitzharris**, Minister for Transport and City Services, dated 15 August 2017, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Orr on 11 May 2017 concerning the revitalisation of the Giralang community precinct.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

I refer to your letter of 11 May 2017 regarding petition No 12-17, lodged by Ms Suzanne Orr MLA regarding the Giralang Community Precinct. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

The ACT Government went to the last election with a vision for renewal across our city and suburbs. The first Budget since the election begins delivery of this

commitment, with \$100,000 allocated to a new natural play space adjacent to the Giralang shopping centre site. This investment will deliver the design and construction of the play space and associated infrastructure.

Whilst the planning for the delivery of the project is in the early stages, Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) is excited about the partnerships that will deliver this project for the community. Previous projects which modelled government and community partnerships have been very successful.

Community consultation to inform the design and better target the requirements of the local community will be undertaken as part of the delivery of the project. The project will also involve working with students from the University of Canberra, who will deliver the conceptual plans for the new play space. The Giralang Primary School's willingness to be involved in the process will be critical to the successful outcome for everyone involved.

## **Petition**

### **Higgins playground facilities—petition 20-17**

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (10.02), by leave: I have presented a petition signed by more than 200 Canberra residents in the Higgins area calling on the ACT government to provide adequate funding and services for the maintenance and upgrade of playgrounds in Higgins, namely the playgrounds located along Hudson Street and Westhoven Street. I receive many emails and phone calls from constituents regarding the quality of playgrounds in the Ginninderra electorate. I have also had the opportunity to personally meet a number of these people to discuss with them their concerns. More than half of all the complaints I have received concerning playgrounds relate to the current state of playgrounds in Higgins, and I have promised to bring this matter to the attention of the ACT government.

Higgins is a suburb in my electorate where many people choose to raise their families. It is a place where children under the age of 14 make up more than 20 per cent of the suburb's population, and where families with children make up over 60 per cent of households. My constituents in Higgins and also in neighbouring suburbs call on the ACT government to recognise the importance of families having access to playgrounds that are well designed, functional and in good condition, in order to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children can go outdoors and be physically active and where families can spend time together and enjoy public amenities in their local neighbourhoods, which they dearly pay for in their rates.

This is not the case when playgrounds are not safe, do not look fun and are lacking in suitable amenities. For example, when local residents invited me to visit the Hudson Street playground in Higgins, it then featured a broken bubbler and a rusty, peeling swing set. Appalled, I wrote to Minister Fitzharris on behalf of my constituents on this matter. The minister responded only that replacing the broken bubbler at this playground would be considered at some point in the future. And then the broken bubbler was removed, perhaps to take away a clear and present reminder of this government's neglect of both basic infrastructure and the families of Higgins.

I was also invited to visit the Westhoven Street playground in the same suburb, which lacks sun protection. When I wrote to Ms Fitzharris regarding this issue, the minister responded that tree planting to provide shade had “been determined unsuitable at this location”. And on the option of shade sails, the minister merely noted that the next opportunity to consider shade structures for playgrounds would be the 2018-19 budget process, the outcome of which, of course, could not be guaranteed.

Madam Acting Speaker, the residents of the Ginninderra electorate take pride in improving and maintaining their neighbourhoods. They are active in voicing their concerns and needs when it comes to ensuring that their suburbs are clean, safe and welcoming for everyone who visits or resides there. Community activism should be appreciated, and we should encourage all Canberrans to come forward with the valuable feedback that they have and contribute to bettering our streets and suburbs.

Today, more than 200 Canberrans in my electorate share their input with the Assembly. They are alerting you to the urgent need to provide upgrades to these two playgrounds in Higgins—not maybe in next year’s budget, and not at some vague point in the future either. These residents are tired of the general shabbiness that has resulted across this territory as a consequence of this government’s chronic neglect of basic maintenance and urban services, and they are specifically frustrated with the state of their suburb and its playgrounds. I share their frustration and am honoured to bring their voices into the chamber this morning.

Madam Acting Speaker, these Canberra families ask for a working bubbler, park benches, climbing frames and slides for the playground located along Hudson Street in Higgins, as well as a shade sail for the playground located along Westhoven Street in the same suburb. They also petition the government to maintain the other playgrounds in Higgins, a request so self-evident that it should never need to be made. I commend this petition, with its 203 signatures, to the Assembly.

## **Outlaw motorcycle gangs**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (10.07): Madam Acting Speaker, the following is the ACT government response to outlaw motorcycle gangs, OMCGs. The ACT government is committed to keeping Canberra safe. Our community is strong and resilient, and the vast majority of ACT residents are law abiding. But, like other cities in Australia and around the world, we are not immune to the presence and activities of people who operate outside the law.

Canberra remains a very safe city to live in, but the unlawful firearms activity and apparent escalation of violence linked to outlaw motorcycle gangs are of serious concern to the community, to ACT Policing and to this government. On behalf of the government, I rise today to condemn in the strongest possible terms the dangerous behaviour and criminal activity of outlaw motorcycle gangs. I rise today to assure the Canberra community and the Assembly that this government is committed to ensuring

that ACT Policing has the necessary tools at its disposal to effectively deal with serious and organised crime entities.

Since I last reported to the Assembly in March on ACT Policing's key priorities, a new policing agreement, purchase agreement and ministerial direction have been put in place to set out the resources and priorities for ACT Policing. In July, I issued my ministerial direction for ACT Policing, which states clearly my expectation:

... ACT Policing will continue to prepare and respond appropriately to changes in the national security and threat environment and, through an enhanced focus on technology and innovation, will develop agile policing capabilities that are able to respond to increasingly complex and emerging crime, including serious and organised crime.

This demonstrates very clearly that, contrary to some media reporting, we have continually placed a high priority on responding to outlaw motorcycle gangs. And we will continue to respond to these matters based on the best available evidence on what action by government is necessary, effective and proportionate.

In response to the firearm discharges, on 19 July I met with the ACT Chief Police Officer, Assistant Commissioner Justine Saunders, to receive a briefing on ACT Policing's ongoing targeting of OMCGs. The CPO advised that she had issued an immediate directive to all of ACT Policing to make targeting OMCGs the number one priority. This increased operational focus complements and strengthens the work of ACT Policing's Taskforce Nemesis, which is specifically dedicated to detecting, disrupting and prosecuting members of OMCGs involved in criminal activities.

At our last meeting, the CPO updated me on how ACT Policing is using the additional \$6.4 million the government provided in August 2016 to increase Taskforce Nemesis by eight additional staff. Since it was established by ACT Policing in August 2014 to lead operational and investigative responses to OMCG activity, Taskforce Nemesis has been responsible for initiating 83 prosecutions against OMCG members for a total of 255 offences.

I trust that the Assembly will be reassured, as I was, by some of Taskforce Nemesis's recent successes, including the following. On 21 June 2017 a known OMCG associate was arrested and charged with making a demand with the threat to kill or cause grievous bodily harm. On Friday, 23 June 2017 ACT Policing arrested the Nomads OMCG president and seized a self-loading semi-automatic pistol, three ballistic vests, a disguised conducted energy weapon, a spring-loaded flick-knife and drugs. And on 28 June 2017 a former high ranking office holder of the Rebels OMCG was arrested and charged with multiple large commercial quantity drug supply offences in a joint operation conducted with New South Wales police.

I can also advise the Assembly that as a result of Taskforce Nemesis's activities there are currently seven OMCG members remanded in the ACT and one member in New South Wales. I commend our ACT Policing officers, in particular those in Taskforce Nemesis, for those successes and for the work they do to keep Canberra safe. But we are not complacent and, as I said earlier in my statement, the ACT government and ACT Policing are working together to continually strengthen our response to



OMCG activities, particularly as those criminal activities evolve. This involves an ongoing conversation between the ACT government and ACT Policing about what tools and resources, including new laws, could assist police to target OMCGs. Indeed, at our most recent briefing I asked the acting CPO if “ACT Policing felt supported enough by the resources and tools provided by Government”. His response was: “Yes, we do.”

As previously advised to the Assembly, the government is exploring the introduction of fortification removal laws. The ACT does not currently have laws which prohibit the establishment of fortifications or require them to be removed. Fortifications are structures designed to stop or hinder uninvited entry to premises. Fortifications may provide OMCGs with time to vacate premises, delay police entry and frustrate the execution of search warrants through the destruction of evidence. Laws allowing police to apply for an order which requires fortifications to be removed or modified will provide an additional tool to assist police to effectively target serious and organised crime.

As foreshadowed by the Chief Minister in his address to the Assembly on the government’s legislative priorities this year, I have also committed to working with the Attorney-General and my cabinet colleagues to bring forward a discussion on legislative options to assist police to target serious and organised crime. We intend for this to include a new offence directly addressing drive-by shootings to ensure that this behaviour is subject to an appropriately serious penalty; new crime scene powers; and firearm prohibition orders. A specific offence addressing drive-by shootings would subject this dangerous behaviour to a serious penalty, even if it cannot be shown that a particular individual was the target of the shooting. This would make it clear to OMCGs that the community rejects this behaviour.

ACT Policing has identified that specific powers to secure a crime scene to protect evidence while obtaining a search warrant would be a beneficial measure. A recent incident where bullets were fired into the walls and windows of a house demonstrated a gap in the law in the ACT, as ACT Policing officers were unable to either enter the house or establish a crime scene until a search warrant was obtained. If the occupants of a house in this scenario subsequently tamper with evidence while police are obtaining a search warrant, this impacts on the ability of ACT Policing and forensic specialists to examine the scene. I will work with my cabinet colleagues to examine crime scene powers and consider possible solutions to address this issue.

Firearm prohibition orders could allow for specified persons to be prohibited from possessing a firearm, firearm parts or ammunition. Once an order is made, it would allow police to search the order subject, their vehicle and premises to determine if they have committed an offence contrary to the order. ACT Policing has advised that firearm prohibition orders could greatly assist in the proactive and agile targeting of persons currently engaged in OMCGs and associated criminal activity and help to reduce firearms related violence.

The ACT government will not step away from our commitment to the safety of our community and will continue to ensure that ACT Policing is effectively resourced and has the right tools to meet the challenges it faces ahead. But neither will we respond

without serious consideration of whether our actions are both effective and proportionate.

The community and this Assembly are understandably concerned about the recent incidents involving OMCGs in the ACT. As a Tuggeranong local, as well as being the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I am keenly aware of the risks to community members and the concerns these incidents have created. I will continue to make sure that ACT Policing has the right resources, tools and relationships to effectively respond to these illegal and dangerous actions. I commend to the Assembly the ongoing dedication of the men and women of ACT Policing in their commitment to keeping the ACT safe. I make a serious commitment to you, and to the Canberra community, that this government will continue to support you in this important work.

Madam Acting Speaker, I present the following paper:

Outlaw motorcycle gangs—ACT Government response—Ministerial statement,  
17 August 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (10.16): In response to the minister's statement, I will start where he finished. That is about supporting our frontline police officers. It is ironic that the minister should end there, because they are not being supported. I know that my colleague Mrs Jones has been making the case on a number of fronts over a range of issues. ACT police have been subject to \$15 million of cuts. It is an ACT police force that up until July did not have dealing with OMCG as a priority at all. It has suddenly become priority number one.

It is an ACT police force that desperately needs adequate laws, in this case anti-consorting laws, equivalent to those in New South Wales. The government is not providing police with that important tool. That is the point I want to go to in responding to Mr Gentleman's statement. I agree with him. There have been a series of horrific crimes committed in our suburbs by outlaw motorcycle gangs. The question is: why is that? The reason is complex, but largely it is due to the fact that this government has failed to introduce anti-consorting laws when it is clear from the evidence that there is a requirement to do so. It is the absence of those laws that is resulting in these increased activities of motorcycle gangs.

I go to some of the points here. This goes back, as you would remember, Madam Acting Speaker, to 2009, when the then Premier of New South Wales, Nathan Rees, in response to an OMCG incident in New South Wales, said, "I am going to drive the bikies out of New South Wales," and he introduced tough new anti-consorting laws. At the time, there was advice from the Australian Federal Police Association and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission that, if we in the ACT did not follow with similar laws, we would become a safe haven or an oasis for that bikie activity.

That is what we were warned of. At the time we in the opposition called for the government to introduce such laws. The government refused to do so.

What we have seen in the intervening period is, sadly, that that has come to fruition. It has come to fruition in a number of ways: by bikies coming down from New South Wales, particularly from Sydney, to conduct their activities here, and through the emergence of two new gangs. This is because this is an attractive place for new gangs to emerge and to start operating. In fact, some gangs have received legal advice to that effect. I will quote from some reports. This one is widely reported. It is from the *Daily Telegraph* earlier this year:

... NSW Police sources have revealed their exasperation at how the ACT situation is hampering their battle against the bikie menace. "A lot of clubhouses have been closed down and bikies no longer roaming in packs in NSW but it's frustrating that they can still operate freely in Canberra," a senior New South Wales officer said.

Closer to home, I will quote from the ABC earlier this year, in March. This is the Chief Police Officer:

I think the key benefit of anti-consorting laws, noting that's not the only solution, is that it's a preventative tool," she said.

This is the ACT Chief Police Officer. This is the ACT Chief Police Officer that this government is ignoring. It is refusing to give her and her frontline men and women the tools they need. The quote continues:

"So what it means is people can't wear their colours and they can't congregate in groups, which allows them to undertake their planning and preparation and potentially criminal conduct.

"It's about dismantling, disrupting and preventing rather than responding."

Assistant Commissioner Saunders agreed that Canberra's lack of anti-consorting laws made Canberra a haven for bikies.

That is what the opposition has been saying since 2009. The Chief Police Officer agrees. The ABC report continues:

"I believe that's a factor in the decision to come here and undertake their activities," she said.

It is not just the Canberra Liberals saying this. This is your Chief Police Officer saying it and you are ignoring her. As a result, what we have seen is an explosion of bikie violence in the suburbs in this town.

Some of the recent incidents are very disturbing. We have seen fire bombings of homes. We have seen assault-style weapon used. I think 27 rounds of high powered ammunition were fired into a house, which had a minor inside at the time. The AFPA president, in responding to these latest issues, said:

I've been calling for these laws since I became president just over 18 months ago and I just don't understand the reticence of the ACT government. It doesn't make any sense.

It's 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 New South Wales. We've become a safe place to operate.

Madam Acting Speaker, we have evidence here from the AFPA and from the Chief Police Officer that, as a result of this government's failure to act, we have become a safe place for the bikies to operate. "For goodness sake," she concluded, "bring these laws in."

I have made this case before. In fact, I asked the Attorney-General in the last sitting weeks to give me an explanation as to why the bikies are coming here if not for the absence of anti-consorting laws. His response was, "Go and ask the bikies." That was his response to this very serious issue: "Go and ask the bikies." I think that is an outrageous response when we have evidence from the Chief Police Officer that these laws are needed to help dismantle and disrupt gangs and keep our community safe.

The *Canberra Times* editorial of 19 July also discussed the issue of this being a safe haven and the resulting epidemic of bikie gang-related violence. I quote from that editorial:

As matters stand Canberra is now viewed by some as a safe haven for these gun-wielding thugs who have fled across our border to avoid being persecuted elsewhere. Pity the terrified residents of Canberra suburbs listening to assault rifles being fired meters from their homes.

I have met with some of the innocent victims that have come into my office. They do not want to be known. They are terrified. But what they have said is that they clearly support the introduction of anti-consorting laws because they know, as the victims of one of these attacks, that these are the sorts of laws necessary to keep them safe.

As I said, have been talking about this and calling for these laws since 2009. A couple of years ago the pressure finally bore down on the previous Attorney-General and he did start to act. The previous Attorney-General recognised the need for anti-consorting laws, finally. He came to the party later than he should have but he did eventually recognise that these laws were needed. He released a discussion paper. He released draft laws that were put out for discussion. Then that process was terminated. I note that that process was terminated at about the same time that his pre-selection was also—I am not sure of the word to use—terminated.

This process of anti-consorting laws was terminated within the Labor Party. Why is that? Why was that terminated? That is a question for the minister to answer. I assume that these draft laws were put through cabinet before they were released. There was a decision to go ahead and that was stopped within the Labor Party. Shame on the

Labor Party for stopping it! There have been concerns about anti-consorting laws. I acknowledge those. But it is not fair to say that anti-consorting laws are something that this government does not already have. I quote the Deputy Director-General of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, David Pryce, who said in a committee recently:

... we do have other laws that actually prevent association and put place restrictions on people in certain circumstances. It is not accurate to characterise it as if there is no legislative ability to actually prevent people ...

We have non-association orders that the courts can deliver. Obviously, through bail restrictions, there is an ability to put restrictions on people and there are also place restriction orders that can be made as well ....

There are always exemptions and this is always a balance between human rights and community. I will quote Mr Rattenbury on these sorts of limitations that will be put on human rights. Mr Rattenbury has said previously, "It is recognised that few rights are absolute and in accordance with established international human rights norms reasonable limits may be placed on the right to freedom of expression and related rights with the aim of balancing competing interests."

I note with caution that the Human Rights Commissioner expressed in-principle support as a result of the recent spate of crimes that we have seen in the ACT. It is naive to bury our heads in the sand and say that we are going to be slavish adherents to the Human Rights Act, ignoring everything else, when we know there is well-established precedent in this place. In fact, almost a sitting week does not go by when the scrutiny committee will say that a particular aspect of government legislation has engaged the Human Rights Act. We all agree in this place that if there is a high need—in this case community safety is that high need—it is appropriate to do so.

The opposition has released an explanatory draft of legislation dealing with anti-consorting laws. Let me be very clear that these laws are aimed at keeping our community safe. They are balanced; they are measured. In brief, what it would require is for the Chief Police Officer to apply to the Supreme Court to have an organisation designated. Only if the Supreme Court is satisfied would an organisation be designated. The Chief Police Officer would need to present the evidence for that. The Chief Police Officer would then need to identify individuals as part of that organisation that would then be subject to control orders, again only if the Supreme Court is satisfied. There are checks and balances in the legislation that allow for a number of exemptions and defences.

If we are serious about keeping our community safe, if we are going to listen to the Chief Police Officer, to the Australian Federal Police Association, to NSW Police and to the victims of these crimes in our suburbs, we need to make sure that ACT Policing has all the tools. I acknowledge that the government has provided additional resources to ACT Policing. But we would not be in the position we are now if we had had these laws in the first place. The evidence for that is clear.

But it is not too late. As much as the minister can come in here, make statements and say that he is supporting the police, until this government bites the bullet and accepts, as the Chief Police Officer has asked for and many others have asked for, the need for appropriate anti-consorting laws, consistent broadly with New South Wales, this problem will not go away. Again, I implore the Attorney-General and the police minister to listen and to act.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Aluminium cladding working group**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (10.31): The following is an update on the aluminium cladding working group. Following the fire in a large housing complex in London, the ACT government set up a working group to investigate the use of aluminium cladding in Canberra buildings and the risk of potential structural fires. It is difficult and unwise to draw comparisons between the tragic Grenfell fire and the Australian situation. In Canberra we have been actively monitoring the use of aluminium cladding for over a decade, and the use of these materials is not common in the residential sector.

Community safety is a priority for this government, and I wish to discuss today the current approach to fire safety and building controls before outlining recent work in the ACT in response to the tragic events in London. Fire safety is not determined based on the presence of one material or another; many elements are considered in determining the fire safety of a building. It is the height of the building, the position and the number of suitable exits, access and egress, the type and vulnerability of tenants as well as the sprinkler systems, smoke detectors and fire alarms. A multiplicity of factors is built into the fabric of each building that combine to prevent the risk and spread of fire.

The presence of aluminium cladding on a building should not be seen in isolation as an inherently risky addition to a building. External cladding material, including aluminium composite panels, is considered safe if it is installed in accordance with the National Construction Code, or the NCC. Common materials used for cladding include weatherboard, lightweight panels such as aluminium composite panels, polystyrene products and metal sheeting. Again, I would like to highlight that this particular type of cladding is not normally used in residential buildings in Canberra.

Under the Building Act 2004 all new buildings and new building work must comply with the fire safety requirements of the NCC. The NCC requires minimum fire resistance levels for certain building components, fire separation, fire compartmentalisation and fire exits. Fire safety systems are also required to be installed, such as fire hydrant systems, portable fire extinguishers, smoke alarm systems and emergency evacuation lighting. The external walls of residential buildings two storeys or more in height are generally required to be non-combustible.

Any attachments to these walls must also meet fire safety requirements. For high-rise buildings classified as more than 25 metres in height, additional requirements also apply. These generally include a fire sprinkler system and additional fire exits.

Since 2009 the ACT government has been working on specific measures to address the fire safety risks associated with external wall cladding. The ACT was the first Australian jurisdiction to raise concerns about the issue. In 2009 ACT government officials, including ACT Fire & Rescue officials, attended meetings with ACP suppliers and the fire engineering industry to raise awareness of the combustibility problem.

Since 2009 ACT Fire & Rescue has checked all plans for new ACT buildings, excluding houses, with a floor area greater than 500 square metres to help ensure NCC compliance of wall claddings, amongst other fire safety requirements. It is a legislative requirement that all such plans must be checked so that ACT Fire & Rescue are aware of the kinds of substantial buildings being constructed and the fire risks of those buildings.

In 2009-10 ACT officials raised the issue with other jurisdictions nationally, through the Australian Building Codes Board, or ABCB. Since the 2014 fire in a high-rise residential building in Docklands, Melbourne, the ACT has been working with other jurisdictions and the Australian Building Codes Board to review the national technical requirements for external wall cladding. The ACT has also been active at the national level, working with other states and territories and the Australian Building Codes Board to strengthen regulations to minimise the risk of using building products that do not conform and comply with the NCC. The ABCB published a national advisory note relating to the appropriate use and selection of external wall cladding. This is part of a range of measures agreed to by the building ministers forum to address concerns relating to fire safety in high-rise buildings.

Following the tragic fire in London, the ACT government has begun work to identify and confirm if any aluminium cladding similar to that used in the London housing estate is installed on ACT government buildings. A working group was established to audit ACT government buildings across the city. The working group includes professionals from our building policy units, including Access Canberra inspectors, members of our Emergency Services Agency and officials from across government.

The government is currently undertaking an audit of all assets under its ownership. Once this investigation work is complete, the ACT government will identify any buildings containing these products and undertake a risk assessment of these sites. A risk assessment will identify the type of cladding used and other fire safety features of the building. I expect in some cases this will identify where rectification work may be required and what action, if any, is needed to ensure the safety of visitors and the integrity of the building. As properties deemed at risk are identified, further inspections will occur by building inspectors and emergency services personnel as required. Minister Fitzharris will update the chamber shortly about the work ACT Health have specifically undertaken on their buildings. In other portfolios where high-rise buildings are few and modern buildings exist, desktop audits followed by on-site visits are occurring.

ACT Education and Access Canberra are developing a program for reviewing school buildings to evaluate the potential of ACP materials and compliance requirements. The Australian government is a major building owner and tenant within Canberra. At the last building ministers forum I raised with the commonwealth minister the large number of buildings owned or tenanted by the commonwealth government, and I understand the commonwealth have also begun an audit of their assets, including those in the ACT. The ACT government will continue to work with our counterparts in other jurisdictions and on a national level in relation to the issue. This matter was discussed at the most recent meeting of building ministers, and I am sure the matter will continue to be discussed as jurisdictions undertake audit and risk assessments.

The ACT government is working with industry to encourage industry to review privately owned buildings in the ACT. Investigations will need to run their full course and building products will need to be tested before any certainty of risk can be known. The ACT government has also undertaken significant reforms over the past five years to improve the quality and compliance of any new buildings, including residential buildings. Initiatives include a new auditing and inspection system, new education and training courses on the ACT building and certification systems, and increased penalties for noncompliance.

I reiterate that the ACT government is committed to investigating the use of aluminium composite panels in Canberra, and I want to reassure members and the community that the situation in Canberra is very different to that which we saw with the Grenfell Tower fire. Canberra has much more stringent fire safety codes, with modern high-rise buildings being fully fitted out with sprinkler systems. I present the following paper:

Aluminium Cladding Working Group—Update—Ministerial statement,  
17 August 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (10.39): I thank Minister Gentleman for tabling the update on the working group. It answers a few of the questions I sent to Minister Gentleman on 12 July. Whilst he provided a response on 21 July, over half of the questions I sent to him on 12 July were unanswered. It is quite difficult to understand some of what appear to me to be inconsistencies in the report Mr Gentleman has just given us. He said:

In Canberra we have been actively monitoring the use of aluminium cladding for over a decade.

He also said that:

Since 2009 the ACT government has been working on specific measures to address the fire safety risks associated with external wall cladding.



However, as we have seen in the public domain in the past couple of days, the government has seen fit to install cladding on some of its own assets much more recently, in 2012, at the women and children's hospital in Woden. So it is hard to understand why, while there is an awareness of the dangers posed by these types of cladding, the government have chosen to continue to install some of these claddings onto their own buildings.

I asked in my questions to Mr Gentleman on 12 July about the audit and when it would be finished and available. Whilst he has referred to the government undertaking an audit of ACT buildings in his report that he has tabled today, it does not give a date as to when that might be available. I think people in the ACT would like to know whether the buildings they work in, for example, have potentially dangerous cladding on them.

We all understand the way the building code works and that buildings have to be compliant as at the date they are built and do not necessarily have to be retrospectively fitted with up-to-date building materials. But I wonder why, for example, there may not be a hotline or some way for builders, tradies or even members of the public to ring and ask about whether a building they work in may have this dangerous cladding. Indeed, given that the government have said in this report that they are encouraging the private sector to look at buildings, there should be a way for people to report to the government on these potentially hazardous buildings.

Another interesting aspect, of course, is that some buildings are on commonwealth land and these buildings do not necessarily have to comply with the ACT building code. According to the response I got from the minister, "the commonwealth is exempt from ACT building laws in relation to building work undertaken by or for the Australian government". That is directly quoted from the minister's reply to me. That is a very interesting point. Whilst that may not come directly under the ACT's jurisdiction, there are ACT residents working or living in these buildings. The safety of our residents is an absolutely important issue, and people have every right to be concerned about their safety in these buildings and about what the response would be if a terrible situation arose.

Whilst one does not want to scare people, as we become aware of these situations it is incumbent on the government to address them in the quickest possible way. We have not heard today about when this audit will be completed and when the information will be available. I have not had a response from Minister Gentleman to quite a number of my questions to him and I wonder why he is not being open and transparent. But, as we talked about yesterday in the chamber, I guess that is not a surprise.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Centenary Hospital for Women and Children**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MS FITZHARRIS** (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (10.44): Following Minister Gentleman's update to the Assembly this

morning that outlined the ACT government's actions since the Grenfell Tower tragedy in the United Kingdom, I would like to provide members with an update on ACT Health buildings and the polyethylene aluminium composite panels, or ACPs. All new ACT Health buildings since 2008 have received a certificate of occupancy certification confirming that buildings have been constructed in accordance with the building regulations at the time of their relevant completion.

Since the Grenfell Tower incident ACT Health has been proactive in investigating any potential impact on ACT Health facilities and has conducted an internal desktop audit of all ACT Health buildings built and/or improved since 2008. This desktop review and a subsequent detailed independent assessment identified that there is one multistorey building at the Canberra Hospital, the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, that used ACPs as a facade cladding.

The facade cladding panels are decorative panels that have been installed above galvanised steel and watertight and fire-rated structures which complied with all relevant codes at the time of issue of the final certificate of occupancy and use. It is important to note that not all of the panels on the building contain the combustible polyethylene core that are a feature of these types of ACPs and that therefore not all panels on the Centenary hospital building will need to be replaced. The recommended approach is to remove only the affected polyethylene ACPs.

ACT Health has comprehensive emergency procedures in place at the Centenary hospital building, together with a robust fire suppression system, to respond to a fire emergency. In the unlikely event of a fire, with or without these panels, the building is designed to keep patients and staff safe by stopping the spread of fire. In parallel with planning work to remove the impacted facade cladding, ACT Health has conducted regular fire system checks, increased the frequency of emergency drills and is in regular contact with members of the Emergency Services Agency and the Access Canberra building regulator. These agencies have expressed no concerns about our ability to keep patients and staff safe in this building. But this is a hospital and we expect a higher standard. We want the public to have complete confidence, and we will remove the panels.

ACT Health has met with representatives of commercial services and infrastructure in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, Fire & Rescue and Access Canberra, as well as internal clinical representatives, to discuss the draft report findings, cross-agency implications and operational implications for ACT Health. Preliminary planning and cost estimates for remediation works to affected parts of the Centenary hospital are currently underway, with the targeted completion date for works to be confirmed subject to the following known constraints: variations to delivery lead time linked to local and international demand for replacement materials; Australia-wide industry demand for facade installation services; weather conditions; and Centenary hospital operational constraints.

I want to assure the Assembly and the community that ACT Health is taking every reasonable precaution. ACT Health is working closely with hospital staff to boost fire preparedness at the hospital while plans for remediation are underway. The Canberra

Hospital has well-established emergency management protocols and procedures in place, with the safety of patients, staff and visitors as its number one priority. Robust emergency management protocols provide an extra level of risk mitigation and we are confident that there has been no compromise to patient and staff safety. Our facilities comply with modern Australian building standards and emergency management standards, and are fully fitted with sprinkler systems.

The ACT Emergency Services Agency visited the Centenary hospital on 10 August to review current safety and emergency protocols and have assured ACT Health that they are fully satisfied with all precautionary measures currently in place. I can advise the Assembly that staff at Canberra Hospital and the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children have been briefed on this matter and will continue to remain updated as the matter is progressed. Information has been placed on the ACT Health website to ensure patients and staff continue to have access to up-to-date information and an understanding of the risk mitigation activities in place.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that, in addition to these recent findings at the Centenary hospital, ACT Health has thoroughly investigated any other potential impacts across ACT Health facilities. Any potential risks will be fully investigated, with appropriate mitigations in place and remediation works where they are necessary. The Canberra Hospital and ACT Health are focused on remediating this issue and getting on with what they do best—providing safe and efficient health services to the Canberra community. I present the following paper:

Centenary Hospital—Ministerial statement, 17 August 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (10.49): I would like to comment briefly on the minister's statement, mainly to comment on the lack of information that is provided. I heard the minister on radio this morning and she did forecast that she would be able to provide more information in her statement. I was certainly hoping to find that. But there are no timetables in this statement as to when the remediation on the women's and children's hospital will be needed.

On radio this morning, the interviewer asked the minister on a number of occasions when this work would be commenced and when it would be concluded, and in response she eventually said that this would be revealed in her statement today. It has not been. The people of the ACT need some assurance from this minister about when this process will be taking place. On page 5 of her statement the minister outlined a range of quite considerable variables which give no certainty to the patients in the women's and children's hospital and the staff and visitors to the hospital about when this building will be made safe.

In a lot of what both Mr Gentleman and Ms Fitzharris have said, they tried to play down the issue. I think we should be concerned about the extent to which members

are trying to play this down. The minister in his statement used these quite alarming words:

The presence of aluminium cladding on a building should not be seen in isolation as an inherently risky addition to a building.

If we are to believe this sentence in Mr Gentleman's statement, why are we having an investigation? If it is not inherently dangerous, why are we having a task force look at it? If it is not inherently dangerous, why is the minister for health making a statement, or a partial statement, about what is happening in relation to the women's and children's hospital?

As Ms Lawder has said previously, this government need to be honest about what the risks are and what they are doing about them. I have said in this place before that this minister, the minister for health, has become the minister for plausible deniability and the minister for being under-briefed. Again today she demonstrates this. Coming in here and making a statement about the state of the women's and children's hospital and the fire risk associated with this cladding material and not being able to tell the people of the ACT when they are going to remediate it is unforgivable. The people of the ACT, the staff at the hospital, the patients at the hospital, the doctors, the nurses, the visitors and the people who clean the place should have better assurance.

The head of the AMA said on radio last night that he wants assurance; it should be happening now. And I agree with him. I do take the point that, yes, there is pressure on supply for this material, but I have not yet heard a reasonable explanation as to why they cannot take off the current dangerous material and leave it off until they can supply it. It might be more expensive, it might be a two-stage process, you might have to put up scaffolding, take it off, wait around and put it back on again, but it would be better for the people of the ACT, to give assurance of safety to the people of the ACT, to do that than to hang around for an indeterminate time while this government gets its act together.

It is very much like their failure to get their act together over the switchboard. Yes, we appropriated money for it in July last year, but then they spent literally months and months thinking about it, drawing up plans, having preferred tenderers on the never-never and not really acting until we had a fire. We have had a fire and we have had recent experience of a live evacuation from the hospital. We should not have to have that, and we should not have to rely upon that, because we now have a potentially unsafe situation in a very new building.

The point that Ms Lawder made is that this building was planned in 2010 and completed in 2012-13, well after the period when Mr Gentleman said they were concerned about this cladding, and they built a building with this cladding on it, even though they were concerned about it. There are questions there that need to be answered.

The other question which I think this minister has deftly avoided answering, regarding the question that I asked initially about cladding, is the question about the University of Canberra public hospital, which is entirely coated in cladding. Every vertical

surface of the University of Canberra public hospital is covered in cladding. During estimates I asked the direct question: was this the same material? The answer to the question on notice was a waffle through the government process of investigation, but there was no direct answer to the question in relation to the University of Canberra public hospital. So I put it on the record again now.

The minister needs to answer the question about the status of the University of Canberra public hospital and what sort of cladding is on it, because they do not yet have possession of that building. I think that they have not considered that building because it is not part of their estate yet. I have asked the direct question. The minister has failed to answer the question, and the minister needs to answer that question today.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Gambling harm minimisation**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (10.55): Today I take the opportunity to set out for members of the Assembly and for the ACT community the government's progress in implementing its commitment to preventing and minimising gambling harm.

During the election, and since the election, this government has proudly and firmly committed to find ways to reduce the impact of problem gambling in Canberra. For some time now we have had robust measures in place to regulate the industry. These include a daily limit of \$250 on the amount that can be withdrawn from an ATM at a venue with electronic gaming machines; a prohibition on ATM and EFTPOS facilities at the casino premises, except where a debit card is used for food or drink purchases; an online gambling exclusion scheme to enable people to exclude themselves from any or all licensed venues; the free and confidential gambling counselling and support service; a ban on an official at the casino lending or extending credit to a person at the casino, and a similar restriction on club licensees and club employees; a ban on people under 18 entering the casino premises or the gaming area of clubs or hotels; and the requirement that staff involved in the provision of gambling services must have undertaken approved responsible conduct of gambling training within the past three years.

The government is hard at work on evaluating, and building on these existing measures to limit the harms that we recognise can be caused to our community through gambling. The impact of problem gambling on individuals and their families has been highlighted in recent months. A number of courageous individuals have shared their experiences very publicly. Their examples show us why it is important to keep focusing on harm minimisation and finding new ways to regulate gambling in the territory. Understanding how the current measures have or have not worked to prevent harm has informed the government's consideration of further reforms, and we are grateful to those people who have been willing to share their stories so openly.

The government's view is that we do need to do more in this space and keep looking at the evidence. In the first week of August I introduced the Gaming Machine (Cash Facilities) Amendment Bill. The bill will require that cash withdrawals from EFTPOS facilities in a club must not exceed \$200. It will also require the person operating the EFTPOS facility to be trained in the responsible provision of gambling services. This bill was a direct response to concerns raised in the community about the availability of cash at gaming venues, and a subsequent audit by the Gambling and Racing Commission.

We recognise the important role that community clubs play in the life of our city and we understand that the club industry is operating in a changing business environment. That is why I also introduced legislation to give small and medium clubs and club groups a 50 per cent gaming tax rebate to support changing business models. The rebate comes with the opportunity to apply for a one-off \$10,000 grant. These measures will support clubs to invest in businesses other than gaming machines. The legislation also includes a change to make social impact assessments more widely available online. This change will give people an opportunity to comment on proposed changes to the number of machines in a club before they are approved.

The industry itself has identified that changes in consumer tastes, increased competition in the food, beverages and entertainment market, demographic change and, in particular, the growth in alternative gambling products, including online gambling, mean that the clubs business model has to change. The support package foreshadows a key government commitment, and that is to reduce the number of gaming machine authorisations in the territory to 4,000 by 1 July 2020. Our policy is to help clubs focus on offering community services and to reduce their reliance on gaming machines. We have already undertaken some preliminary consultation with the club sector on the best way to achieve the 4,000 limit on gaming machine authorisations.

Today, informed by that preliminary consultation, I propose to table the policy paper "Implementing the government commitment to reduce gaming machine authorisations". The paper sets out a number of options to achieve 4,000 by July 2020. The options are varied, and the information we get from this paper will help us to implement this policy successfully. In terms of the timing and staging of these approaches, the paper notes that, since the commencement of the current trading scheme on 31 August 2015, under which one authorisation must be forfeited to the territory for every four traded, 37 out of a starting total of 5,022 authorisations have been forfeited. This means that the ACT currently has 4,985 gaming machine authorisations, and this number will have to be reduced by 985 to reach the 4,000 maximum by July 2020.

The paper canvasses increased forfeiture rates, compulsory surrenders, whether in stages or otherwise, and how a club's gaming machine revenue should impact on participation in the new forfeitures. The models for surrender of authorisations include one based on the number of authorisations held by a licensee, with larger clubs required to contribute to the compulsory surrender at a higher rate than smaller clubs. An alternative model, for example, is to require clubs that make larger amounts

of gross gaming machine revenue per gaming machine to contribute to the compulsory surrender at a higher rate than clubs with lower revenue.

I will be seeking the views of clubs on the options in this paper over the next month. I also welcome the views of other stakeholders and members of the ACT community with an interest in gambling harm minimisation on the options to implement a maximum of 4,000 gaming machine authorisations. To be clear, this paper is not an invitation to revisit whether we should reduce the number of gaming machines. Its focus is to find ways to achieve the 4,000 target, which is a government commitment that we will be implementing.

As I mentioned earlier, this government will keep looking at ways to improve the effectiveness of our current framework. We will continue to ask questions such as: what new harm minimisation rules can we adopt from other jurisdictions? Are our self-exclusion rules for clubs strong enough to help problem gamblers get help? Can clubs support staff to identify and respond appropriately to individuals at risk of gambling harm?

I intend to convene a gambling harm minimisation roundtable later this year to answer these and other questions about our harm minimisation framework. The roundtable will develop information about our options, including the implementation of bet limits and pre-commitments on gaming machines in the territory. It will examine evidence about the effectiveness of different harm minimisation measures and practical issues with implementation. I will be seeking broad-based participation in the roundtable. Representatives of gaming machine venues, gambling reform advocacy organisations, academic experts and regulators will all be invited.

At the beginning of this term of government I identified harm minimisation as one of my key portfolio priorities. As I have outlined, the government is delivering on its commitment. The reforms being implemented, including cash withdrawals at gaming venues and encouraging clubs to diversify away from gaming, are an important beginning. The consultation process that I am beginning today will lay the foundation for removing 985 authorisations for gaming machines. The roundtable later this year will develop even stronger harm minimisation measures. We welcome and encourage the engagement of those directly affected by gambling harm, organisations working to reduce gambling harm and the industry, including the clubs sector, as the government takes forward this important work. This community has made its expectations about harm minimisation clear: more and stronger measures are needed.

This government has heard the community loud and clear and will keep working to deliver on its commitment to reduce the impact of gambling harm. I present the following papers:

Preventing and Minimising Gambling Harm—Ministerial statement, 17 August 2017.

Implementing the Government Commitment to Reduce Gaming Machine Authorisations—Options for Consultation, dated August 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Child placement and care plans**

### **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) (11.05): Just like every other child protection system in Australia, the ACT child protection system has been the subject of regular reviews. It is a system that is continually under scrutiny, not just by the Assembly but broadly across the ACT community. This scrutiny is necessary and appropriate because we are talking about the safety and protection of Canberra's children and young people.

One such review was the review into the system-level responses to family violence in the ACT, known as the Glanfield inquiry, which was released in April 2016. I rise today to report back to the Assembly on progress made in implementing the Glanfield inquiry's six recommendations that relate to decision-making, quality assurance and oversight in the child protection system. It is important to note that the implementation of these recommendations is occurring in the broader context of significant reforms to child and youth protection services under A step up for our kids. Launched in January 2015, A step up for our kids is a five-year strategy to reform out of home care and improve outcomes for children and young people in care.

A step up represents a significant change to the way we think about and support out of home care. It is intended to transform outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families who have contact with the child protection and out of home care systems. Fundamentally, A step up aims to recast the out of home care system as a therapeutic, trauma-informed system of care. The strategy focuses on early intervention to prevent, where possible, children entering care. If a child or young person does enter care and cannot be restored to their birth family, the focus is on achieving stability and security in a safe and loving home.

Decisions made about the protection of children and young people do not, nor should they, rest solely on the shoulders of our child protection workforce. Child protection workers and teams seek at all times to make decisions with the best interests of children and young people paramount. However, ultimately it is the Children's Court that decides, based on the evidence before it, whether children are returned to their families or remain in care.

It is also important to understand that, right from the start of a family's engagement with the child protection system, decision-making about children and young people most often occurs within declared care teams. Care teams are established to ensure



that families, carers, children and young people and community and government services are able to work together, collaboratively, and share critical information. Care plans are developed by care teams and represent a shared responsibility for decision-making about individual children and young people.

Declared care teams recognise the right for children and young people to grow in safe and stable environments and take into account the responsibilities of parents, families and our entire community to contribute to their safety, protection and wellbeing. Far from decision-making happening behind closed doors, shared responsibility through care teams is the prevailing way of supporting children and their families involved in the child protection system. As all members will appreciate, decision-making in a child protection context is complex and can be emotional and fraught for families. This is why, wherever possible, decisions are made in the context of care teams and having considered these best interest principles.

As recommendation 11 of Glanfield notes, good decision-making requires effective engagement and collaboration. In line with this recommendation, child and youth protection services has been working closely with community and government partners to improve decision-making. A collaboration framework is currently under development for child and youth protection services. This framework is being developed through consultation with our government and community partners to guide how organisations work together to ensure that services and supports are provided so that people get the best outcomes for their circumstances.

Child and youth protection services is also working with the Australian Red Cross Birth Family Advocacy Support Service and the Women's Legal Centre to update the 2014 working together for kids guide. The working together for kids guide is greatly appreciated by parents involved with the child protection system and by community partners, including schools, health services, legal services and family support agencies. The guide has facilitated a clearer understanding of the role of child protection, providing detailed information about processes for all parties and information for parents about where they can go for support and how to make complaints.

The updated guide will provide additional information regarding review rights and will be publicly available in print form and available on the directorate's website, as outlined in recommendation 14. I am advised that child and youth protection services anticipate that the new guide will be ready for relaunching shortly. I thank the Women's Legal Service and the Australian Red Cross Birth Family Advocacy Support Service for their willingness to partner with child and youth protection services to ensure that those who are involved with the child protection system have access to as much information as possible about not only their rights but also their responsibilities. The new guide reflects strengthened policy in relation to restoring and keeping children safely at home and reflects the ongoing commitment of child and youth protection services to better consultation and availability of information for parents.

The findings and recommendations of Glanfield address not only how decisions are made and who is involved in the decision-making but also how the decisions can be reviewed. I would like to remind members that in addition to the Children's Court and

other courts there are already a number of independent and external systems in place that offer external scrutiny of decisions at different points within the child protection process. These include the Human Rights Commission, specifically the Children and Young People Commissioner and the Public Advocate, and the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal for some administrative decisions.

In the ACT the Public Advocate has the ability to be heard and become party to Children's Court proceedings should they have contrary views to those presented by child and youth protection services. This represents a significant level of scrutiny of child and youth protection services decision-making that is not present in many other jurisdictions. All the external bodies I mentioned have well-established legislative avenues in place to review decisions and can assist parties to have access to all of the available information with the interests of children and young people at the centre of the decision-making. These established avenues are available to parties who seek to dispute decisions.

In addition to this, the ACT government has commenced the review of decisions made by child and youth protection services. As recommended in recommendation 12 of Glanfield, this work is being led by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that representatives from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the Community Services Directorate, including the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety, have met four times since December 2016 to consider which decisions made by child and youth protection services should be subject to either internal or external review, as recommended by Mr Glanfield.

As part of this work, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has prepared an overview of reviewable decisions under the Children and Young People Act 2008, together with an overview of reviewable decisions in other jurisdictions, to inform the review. Stakeholder feedback has been sought and decisions around contact were identified as those that caused the most concern in relation to review rights. Therefore this is an area that has the most potential for changes in the decision-making review. The Community Services Directorate has mapped particular types of contact decisions and the group is considering the most appropriate review mechanisms within broader policies around these kinds of decisions. I look forward to this work progressing under the leadership of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, in collaboration with the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety and child and youth protection services.

In response to the findings of Glanfield and other reviews of the ACT service system response to family violence, the 2016-17 ACT budget included the \$21.4 million safer families package to drive reform in whole-of-government, community-backed responses to family violence. This package included \$2.47 million over four years for enhanced child protection case management and coordination. Part of this funding was for the development and delivery of quality assurance through independent case analysis. This investment forms a direct response by the ACT government to recommendation 13 of Glanfield. In developing the methodology for case analysis the ACT drew on expertise from New South Wales and Victoria, ensuring that the ACT

had the benefit of hindsight from those who had been undertaking similar work in other jurisdictions.

The case analysis team has two key objectives: the provision of independent analysis of individual cases at key decision-making points and the identification of good practice, practice concerns and knowledge gaps of staff. The team leader commenced in December 2016 and has since recruited two additional staff, with further recruitment processes underway. As at 16 August 2017 the team had undertaken 22 case analyses, and these have involved key community partners, including the uniting children and families program and ACT Together. Case analysis encourages caseworkers to think about the long-term, cumulative impact of abuse and neglect and ensures the voice of the child is at the centre of decision-making.

The analysis supports care teams to make informed decisions based on all available information. Case analysis explores the risks and vulnerabilities to children's safety and provides an opportunity to consider whether there are sufficient protective factors to mitigate the risks and vulnerabilities. This significantly reduces the risk of workers relying only on intuitive skills or professional judgement alone.

The funding I referred to earlier also provided for the Community Services Directorate to establish an independent advisory body known as the child and youth protection quality assurance and improvement committee. The committee has been established by the Director-General of the Community Services Directorate to strengthen the quality of child protection policy and practice and to foster ongoing improvement of the child protection system.

Members will know that I recently announced a review into the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system, including those in out of home care. This review is a significant expression of the government's commitment to transparency in decision-making and our commitment to driving a culture of reflection and practice improvement to ensure better outcomes for children and young people. The child and youth protection quality assurance and improvement committee will be invaluable in assisting the ACT government in this review work.

Child and youth protection services have already been working to develop the cultural competence of the workforce and are delivering an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural development program for staff. The training aims to provide staff with the ability to develop and apply an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in order to improve practice, gain an understanding of protocols and processes used to collaborate in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children and community services, understand the importance of establishing positive working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children and services, and identify and analyse legislation, policy and work practices relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

As at 16 May 2017, 66 child and youth protection services staff had completed the training, with an additional 22 staff commencing the training in July 2017. To further strengthen quality assurance, child and youth protection services has also undertaken

a significant refresh of the supervision framework and delivered extensive training about the framework to staff, established an internal audit team that is undertaking a range of quality assurance and practice audits, and established an internal training and workforce development team to respond to the specific training needs of child protection workers. I think we all understand that staff can only make good decisions if they are provided with the right training, information, tools and resources. These quality assurance enabling systems are now in place and provide opportunity for child and youth protection services to continue to develop a learning organisation culture.

Finally, the Glanfield inquiry identified oversight as an issue for further consideration. Oversight of statutory systems like the child protection service is critical. The ACT government, in the 2017-18 budget, provides funding for an additional senior advocate to increase the capacity of the Public Advocate's office to meet its statutory obligations, not only by responding to increased demand but also by analysing emerging themes and promoting system improvements in a more proactive way. This budget initiative also provides funding to undertake the further work set out in recommendation 15 of Glanfield to assess whether resources directed towards the Public Advocate adequately support its oversight role. It will consider the resources of the Children and Young People Commissioner to perform oversight functions and the Community Services Directorate's resources to respond to oversight bodies.

I mentioned earlier the other established independent mechanisms already in place that perform oversight and external scrutiny functions of the child protection system. Just to remind members, these include the Children's Court and other courts, the Human Rights Commission, which incorporates the Office of the Public Advocate and the Children and Young People Commissioner, and the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal for some administrative decisions.

In addition, as part of the A step up for our kids reforms and to improve accountability and oversight, all places of residential care were made visitable places under the Children and Young People Act 2008, ensuring that each residential place receives a visit from an official visitor at least once a month. Official visitors are appointed by the ACT Attorney-General to provide external oversight and monitoring and complaints systems for young people who are in residential care. During 2016-17 the official visitors visited residential places of care 157 times. Advocating for improvements to services and facilities for children and young people has the potential to alleviate pressure on the child protection system while also providing benefits for the children and young people of the ACT more generally.

The ACT has taken very seriously the recommendations made in the Glanfield inquiry, and significant progress has been made against the recommendations. The ACT government remains focused on ensuring the most vulnerable people in our community—children and young people—are protected from those who place them at risk of harm, and on working with families to improve their ability to keep their children safely at home. Our ongoing support was most recently demonstrated with the 2017-18 budget allocating \$10 million each year for vulnerable children and young people. This funding provides the opportunity to employ additional child protection workers and respond to increases in demand for out of home care services.

Child protection work is one of the most difficult areas of government service delivery. Our child protection workers are out in our community every day, in families' homes, working to ensure the safety of children and collaborating with other government and community agencies to ensure the right supports are in place to keep children at home safely. Child protection workers deal with families who are in significant crisis as a result of multiple factors that include drug and alcohol misuse, mental illness and family violence. This work is fraught with danger and risk to children, and child protection workers deserve the ACT community's full support.

Our dedicated child protection workforce understands that the decisions they make on a daily basis make a difference to the lives of children and young people. The responsibility and expectations placed upon these workers is significant, and each and every caseworker understands that decisions not made in the best interests of children and young people can cause further harm or trauma. Nobody wants that outcome.

The ACT government will continue to invest in improving responses to Canberra's most vulnerable and at-risk children and young people and to shape our service to the emerging needs of our community. The child protection system continues to reflect, learn and make the necessary adjustments to ensure that when children and young people come into the statutory child protection system they are provided with the right supports and services to reduce risk, return them home to their families when it is safe to do so and to provide them with safe, loving and secure homes when it is not.

I present the following paper:

Child placement and care plans—Ministerial statement, 17 August 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate interrupted.

## **Visitor**

**MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Ms Lee): Members, we have joining us today in the gallery a former member for Ginninderra, Dr Chris Bourke. Dr Bourke, on behalf of the members here, a warm welcome to you.

## **Child placement and care plans Ministerial statement**

Debate resumed.

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (11.22): I thank the minister for bringing this statement to the Assembly today. She has reported back on a number of recommendations from the Glanfield inquiry, and I wish to acknowledge the work that is being done in those areas. They are all important. At the same time, I and many

others in our community remain significantly concerned about one issue in particular. Like many Canberrans, I was troubled recently by news reports of a young person in the territory who was being pressured to drop a domestic violence order against one of her former foster carers. This case was brought to public attention by Bill Bashford, who earlier this year resigned in frustration from his role as one of three official visitors for children and young people appointed by the ACT government.

Perhaps more troubling than the details of this specific case, however, was Mr Bashford's account of what he experienced when he raised his concerns. He claims that his complaints to child and youth protection services, or CYPS, were first ignored and then dismissed. When he finally got a response, three months later, he was told only that the matter had been handled in accordance with internal protocols and that he was not entitled to any further explanation.

Some may wish to dismiss Mr Bashford's frustration, but I can assure you that his experiences are not isolated ones. I have heard nearly identical stories shared by dozens of similarly frustrated families and carers. Decisions are made without clear explanations why. Requests for information are refused. For many who interact with the system, matters at CYPS appear to be decided under a cloud of protective secrecy and with an air of absolute infallibility. When those directly affected find themselves in serious disagreement with decisions made, they often feel they have nowhere to turn.

In light of the growing number of Indigenous children receiving child protection services in the ACT and in the face of what he has labelled the arrogance of the system, Mr Bashford has recently asked for an independent Aboriginal community body to oversee Indigenous children in care in the ACT. In a similar vein, Julie Tongs, CEO of Winnunga, has proposed the appointment of an Aboriginal social justice commissioner for the territory. In both cases, the wish is to have someone external to the system to whom people can turn.

I feel confident that the dozens of worried and frustrated Canberrans who have contacted my office would agree that we desperately need an independent body to oversee the decisions that affect our children in care and protection, their families and their carers. This desire is not misplaced or new. The lack of external review for CYPS decisions has been a known flaw in the territory's child protection system for too long. Thirteen years ago, the Vardon report noted:

Parents, carers and agencies all relayed stories of frustration about having nowhere to go when they disagreed with Family Services—

the predecessor to CYPS—

about such things as placement decisions, care plans ... The consensus was that an independent mediator was needed to deal with these disputes.

The report's preferred recommendation, supported by both magistrates and legal representatives, was the appointment of a commissioner for children and young people who would chair an independent tribunal to review a decision made by

government-funded services dealing with children and young people. The Human Rights Commission Act created the position of Children and Young People Commissioner but ignored the Vardon report's recommended tribunal and likewise failed to provide the commissioner with specific jurisdiction to review CYPS decisions. The functions of the office include encouraging the resolution of complaints, but this is not proper administrative review.

Moreover, the situation in the territory has been so dire that Alasdair Roy, the Children and Young People Commissioner from 2008 to 2016, eventually gave up even trying to help resolve most complaints. As the *Canberra Times* reported in 2013:

Families and young people who complain to the ACT Human Rights Commission about their treatment by care and protection services are being referred back to the directorate, because the commissioner does not have the resources to deal with their complaints.

Just last year, current commissioner Jodie Griffiths-Cook told the ABC that it was common knowledge that her office was dangerously overworked and could not provide even basic oversight.

Another failed opportunity to address this issue passed in 2008 with the creation of the territory's much-needed Civil and Administrative Tribunal, or ACAT. Subsequently, certain CYPS decisions were identified as merits reviewable in the ACT, but as last year's Glanfield inquiry insightfully notes, a number of important decisions such as care plans, the amending of care plans and the decision not to provide information to a child's parents were not included. I have to assume that these omissions reflect the longstanding unwillingness of Labor governments to allow for rigorous oversight of these decisions.

The purpose of a tribunal is to provide for simple, inexpensive, quick and fair resolution of concerns, thereby enhancing the quality of decision-making under legislation. As the Australian Administrative Review Council has noted, access to external review "improves the whole system of government decision by increasing its openness and transparency and providing feedback on its performance".

In the words of Justice Deirdre O'Connor, "Confident executive government should welcome this kind of audit". Tribunals provide an attractive alternative to judicial review, which can be inaccessible to many people because of complexity and cost. But the situation in the ACT is even more complicated than that. The Glanfield inquiry specifically points out that decisions regarding a child's placement are legally not subject to judicial review in this territory, pursuant to the Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act. All of this has left parents, carers and agencies exactly where they were 13 years ago, when they unanimously shared with the Vardon report their frustration about having nowhere to go and their desire for an independent mediator.

Amongst those who have joined the swelling chorus of voices calling for some form of external review of important CYPS decisions is former Children and Young People Commissioner Alasdair Roy, who told the Glanfield inquiry:

I consider that the availability of administrative review of such key decisions would improve accountability for decisions that have a significant impact on the lives of children and young people, and their families and carers and would promote high quality evidence-based decision-making by CPS [now CYPS].

Another powerful voice has been Legal Aid ACT. In their submission to the Glanfield inquiry they directly identified the lack of an external oversight body for CYPS decisions as a threat to child protection. They then recommended that the territory follow other Australian jurisdictions by giving ACAT the responsibility to review important CYPS decisions, including where children live and whom they have contact with. Legal Aid suggested in particular that Western Australia offers an especially robust model to follow, providing both independent internal review and external administrative review. As noted by Legal Aid, current internal review at CYPS does not meet the standard recommended by the Australian Administrative Review Council and, even if it did, internal review without access to external review does not provide accountability.

When parents, carers, and agencies are joined by Legal Aid ACT, a former Children and Young People Commissioner and a former official visitor for children and young people it is well and truly time for the ACT government to finally listen and make changes. The minister has noted that child protection workers deserve the ACT community's full support. I could not agree more. They have incredibly difficult jobs. I therefore want to emphasise that the concerns I have shared today are not because either citizens or experts do not appreciate our territory's child protection. Rigorous internal and external review mechanisms are essential to provide the support and protection needed for those who daily engage in this kind of difficult work.

The minister has told us this morning that representatives from both JACS and CSD have been meeting to consider what decisions made by CYPS should be subject to enhanced internal or external review. I am satisfied that this important analysis is in progress and hope very much that it will not take much longer. It has already been 16 months since the recommendation for this review was issued. No doubt those involved wish to be both thorough and cautious, and they should be.

At the same time, I would like some assurance that this matter is one that has been prioritised by the ministers who oversee these two directorates. I would also like to be assured that issues of contact, though very important, are not the only ones being considered for potential changes regarding review. In the meantime, the minister has tried to assure us this morning that other established independent mechanisms are already in place to perform oversight and external scrutiny functions of the child protection system. If these established mechanisms were functioning as needed, we would not have so many recommendations suggesting that we need more and better reviews of important CYPS decisions.

The minister has mentioned the Children's Court and other courts. I remind this Assembly of the Glanfield inquiry's conclusion that decisions regarding a child's placement are legally not subject to judicial review in this territory. The minister has also mentioned the Office of the Public Advocate and the Children and Young



People's Commissioner. I remind this Assembly that the former commissioner threw up his hands in despair and stopped dealing with most CYPS complaints in 2013 and that the current commissioner has publicly noted her inability to handle all the complaints her office receives. I sincerely hope the additional funding being provided to this office helps to alleviate this incapacity, but even a less overworked commission is still an oversight mechanism, not the repeatedly recommended review mechanism.

Last, the minister mentioned that some administrative decisions are reviewable by ACAT. This is at best an attempt at deflection. As Mr Glanfield himself clearly stated in his report to the government, the most important decisions, such as care plans, the amending of care plans, and the decision not to provide information to a child's parents—the very decisions, in fact, that are central to people's concerns—are precisely the ones not currently reviewable by ACAT.

For far too long, successive Labor governments in this chamber have turned a blind eye to concerns raised by parents and carers. Perhaps they think such people are too simple to know what they are saying. But, increasingly, experts in child protection have voiced the same concerns. If the mechanisms that are already in place were enough, we would not be having this discussion, and we most likely would not have needed the Glanfield inquiry. The minister has this morning foreshadowed the possibility of future changes. All I can say is that it is about time. In fact, why has it taken so long to seriously address this issue? Whenever children are potentially at risk of harm, I expect this government to act with urgency.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Holidays (Reconciliation Day) Amendment Bill 2017**

**Ms Stephen-Smith**, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

**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) (11.37): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Today I am happy to introduce the Holidays (Reconciliation Day) Amendment Bill 2017. The purpose of this bill is to make a Reconciliation Day public holiday, commencing in 2018. This is a commitment the government made last year that was confirmed in a motion in this place in August 2016. The bill introduces Reconciliation Day, to be held on the first Monday on or after 27 May, the anniversary of the 1967 referendum and the first day of National Reconciliation Week. Next year, this will be Monday, 28 May.

National Reconciliation Week aims to give people across Australia the opportunity to focus on reconciliation, unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians. As Reconciliation Australia describes it, National Reconciliation Week is a time to “reflect on achievements so far and on what must still be done to achieve reconciliation”.

National Reconciliation Week is bookended by significant milestones in the reconciliation journey. As I said, 27 May marks the anniversary of Australia’s most successful referendum and a defining event in our nation’s history. The 1967 referendum, the 50th anniversary of which we marked this year, saw more than 90 per cent of Australians vote to give the commonwealth the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to recognise them in the national census. The end of Reconciliation Week, 3 June, commemorates the High Court of Australia’s landmark Mabo decision in 1992. This case legally recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special relationship to the land—a relationship that existed prior to colonisation and still exists today. This case and this recognition paved the way for native title.

In introducing this bill today, I must acknowledge the work of my predecessor, Dr Chris Bourke, the former Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. I acknowledge his presence here in the chamber today. This time last year, Dr Bourke tabled the outcomes report from the public consultation process on this proposal to establish a Reconciliation Day public holiday. In the consultation, a total of 94 written submissions were received, 150 people responded to an online survey and 25 participants attended community forums to discuss the proposal. The report found that people who participated in the consultation overwhelmingly support the proposal to establish a Reconciliation Day public holiday in the ACT.

Most of the engagement activities during the consultation process addressed the core questions of whether the Canberra community supported the proposed Reconciliation Day public holiday and when a Reconciliation Day public holiday should be held. While there was no consensus on a preferred date in the focus groups or the interviews, it was generally agreed that the day needed to have a strong link that is something culturally or historically significant. Participants in the focus groups emphasised the need to get it right and to not rush things, noting that it was important that the day be on the right date, at the right time and with the right name. Members will recall that on 11 August 2016 the ACT Legislative Assembly resolved to work with the ACT community to establish a Reconciliation Day holiday, to commence in 2018.

As I did in response to Mr Rattenbury’s motion about the Uluru statement, which we debated earlier in the month, I acknowledge that the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since 1788 has been profound. The resulting intergenerational trauma is deeply affecting, and lies at the heart of contemporary disadvantage. For non-Indigenous Australians, reconciliation is the opportunity to acknowledge what happened in the past, to recognise the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to move forward together.

Together, we need to write a better Australian story, which needs to reach into more than 60,000 years of this country's history and culture and say, "This is what it is to be a contemporary Australian." Reconciliation needs to be a conversation in Australian society which becomes normal and ongoing. Reconciliation will not end with a single act or gesture, but we have to keep working together. On Reconciliation Day, I hope we will celebrate what we have achieved as well as recognising what we still need to do.

It is important to note that while we are establishing a new Reconciliation Day public holiday, the total number of public holidays will not increase. While adding Reconciliation Day, this bill also removes the Family and Community Day public holiday. The significance of Family and Community Day, its origins and the important role of the union movement will not be lost, however. The government has committed to celebrating these important themes instead on Labour Day, giving the day and its message a far greater emphasis than it has had in recent years.

I would also note the significant role the union movement has played in supporting the ongoing journey to reconciliation. This involvement grew from the union movement's support for the workers at Wave Hill at the time of the Wave Hill walk-off. This walk-off eventually led to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act recognising Aboriginal people as traditional landowners for the first time in commonwealth legislation, based upon proof of their traditional association with the land. In the spirit of reconciliation, we must understand how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lived on this land for tens of thousands of years, thus creating an ancient connection with the land. Only then can we understand the issues Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples deal with today as a result of being removed from those lands.

In Reconciliation Week 2017 the theme was "Let's take the next steps". Establishing a Reconciliation Day public holiday is about Canberra taking the next step. It is envisaged that the day will be celebrated through community events that bring people together to continue the journey of reconciliation. It will also be an opportunity to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. Importantly, we can explore the contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture makes to contemporary Australia and how we can shape that understanding for our future generations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are inextricably linked with their land, and the land is a key element in the sustainability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

It is critical to true reconciliation that all Australians hold knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, both as a contemporary society and as a pre-colonisation society. Some people may be starting this journey and others may be well travelled. This is an opportunity for all of us to walk together. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

## **Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee**

### **Statement by chair**

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (11.44): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A. I wish to inform the Assembly that during the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017 the standing committee considered no statutory appointments.

## **Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee**

### **Statement by chair**

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (11.44): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A. I wish to inform the Assembly that during the period 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2016 the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services considered 14 statutory appointments; during the period 1 July 2016 to 31 December 2016 the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services considered 12 statutory appointments; and during the period 1 July 2016 to 31 December 2016 the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal considered one statutory appointment.

In accordance with continuing resolution 5A, I now table the following paper:

Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services—Standing Committee (8<sup>th</sup> Assembly) and Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee—Schedules of Statutory Appointments—8 and 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly—Periods 1 January to 30 June 2016 and 1 July to 31 December 2016.

### **Statement by chair**

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (11.45): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal in relation to its inquiry into housing. In March 2017 the planning and urban renewal committee resolved to undertake an inquiry into housing in the ACT which will look into “the interaction of population growth, housing affordability, housing diversity and design, consumer behaviour, suburban and environmental impact of residential development”.

The committee, in this inquiry, will consider a number of issues, including existing housing diversity; the demand for different housing types; the effects of suburban infill housing in centres; land release and greenfield development; the effectiveness of existing regulation and zoning; best practice in this area in other jurisdictions; and any other relevant matter. The scope of this inquiry is extensive. In recognition of this, the committee has developed a guidance document which provides some links to resources that members of the community can use in order to assist them in

understanding the inquiry's terms of reference and to inform themselves of current practices, processes and legislative requirements in the housing space.

The inquiry into housing will look at matters that will affect the whole ACT population in the years to come. For those interested in the future of housing in the ACT, and particularly for those looking to provide a submission to the inquiry, it is hoped that this collection of publicly available information will be of assistance. The inquiry into housing guidance document can be found on the committee inquiry into housing page on the Legislative Assembly website.

## **Executive business—precedence**

*Ordered that executive business be called on.*

## **Marriage equality**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (11.48): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the Federal Government is seeking to instruct the Australian Bureau of Statistics to conduct a non-binding voluntary postal survey on whether the law should be changed to allow same sex couples to marry;
- (b) the Assembly supported a motion on 10 August 2016 which called on the ACT Government to:
  - (i) demonstrate that the ACT is the most LGBTIQ friendly jurisdiction by supporting the case for marriage equality; and
  - (ii) support the LGBTIQ community through the anticipated marriage equality plebiscite debate; and
- (c) consistent with this resolution the ACT Government will provide additional support to the LGBTIQ community throughout the period of the voluntary postal survey;

(2) supports the ACT Government joining and actively participating in the campaign to achieve marriage equality; and

(3) reaffirms its view that all Australians should be treated equally under the law and that includes being able to marry the person they love. LGBTIQ Australians should have the same opportunities for love, commitment and happiness as everyone else.

I am moving a motion today that the Assembly note that the federal government is seeking to instruct the Australian Bureau of Statistics to conduct a non-binding voluntary postal survey on whether the law should be changed to allow same-sex

couples to marry. It asks that the Assembly note previous support for a motion on 10 August 2016 which called on the ACT government to do a number of things, amongst which was to demonstrate that the ACT is the most LGBTIQ friendly jurisdiction by supporting the case for marriage equality and to support the LGBTIQ community through the anticipated marriage equality plebiscite debate; and that, consistent with this resolution, the ACT government will provide additional support to the LGBTIQ community through the period of what is now a voluntary postal survey.

The motion also proposes that the Assembly support the ACT government joining and actively participating in the campaign to achieve marriage equality; and, perhaps most fundamentally, proposes that this Assembly reaffirm its view that all Australians should be treated equally under the law, and that that includes being able to marry the person that they love. The motion notes that LGBTIQ Australians should have the same opportunities for love, commitment and happiness as everyone else. In moving this motion today, I can do so confident in the support of all of my colleagues for marriage equality. I am confident in that support because all of my colleagues are great people and because they all believe that LGBTIQ Canberrans should have that same opportunity for love, for commitment and for happiness as everyone else in our community.

We have already seen, since the non-binding voluntary postal survey was announced, a debate that has moved very quickly to being hurtful and divisive. We have seen just outside this place on the weekend some quite extraordinary scenes already, including some public statements published in the daily newspaper suggesting that the LGBTIQ community in this city was showing too much courage—too much courage, Madam Acting Speaker—to stand up for their rights and for fundamental questions of inclusion and equality in this city. Not one postal survey has been sent out yet, and already people are being told that they are showing too much courage. I commend those who are showing the courage to stand up for their rights, and I commend all of the supporters, all of the allies of Canberra's LGBTIQ community, who are already coming to our aid in this difficult period.

This voluntary postal survey presents unacceptable risks to the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ Canberrans. And let us be blunt about this: it is forcing people to endure an unnecessary debate about the value of their relationship, their families, and, in many instances already, their personal identity, their value as a human being. Their status as an equal citizen in this city and in this country is being called into question already, and not one survey has been sent out; no television advertising, as far as I am aware, has begun.

I make another clear statement. We did not want to be in this situation. This country did not need to have this divisive debate in this way. But let us be frank: we are here now, and now is the time for good people to make their voices heard. We have already received advice from community groups about the impact that this debate is having on mental health, on relationships and on families in our community. We have received reports of sharp increases in demand for counselling, support, relationship and advice services from people within and associated with the LGBTIQ community.

It would come as no surprise to members in this place, from my maiden speech or inaugural speech and the speech I made when being elected as Chief Minister, that I am committed to making Canberra Australia's most inclusive and LGBTIQ friendly city. Throughout my political career I have backed up this commitment with practical legislation in this place and practical support throughout this community.

With that in mind, and I hope today with the support of a majority of Assembly members, the ACT government intends to continue its policy of equality and inclusion and to continue to provide support at this time for impacted members of our community. I can advise the Assembly that we are currently working in collaboration with a range of key LGBTIQ community groups to supplement and enhance existing supports and services to ensure that they can meet the increase in demand.

We will work with students in schools, the CIT and in our city's universities, and we will provide additional support for young people and, importantly, also the children of LGBTIQ parents. My government, this progressive government, is committed to ensuring that Canberra schools remain safe schools. Every Canberra student has the right to feel safe in their school regardless of their gender or sexuality. We have funded the safe schools program and we believe it is an essential part of our city's inclusivity.

I also advise the Assembly that, on the advice of the ACT Human Rights Commission, the government will consider legislative amendments to clarify the vilification provisions of the Discrimination Act 1991 to make it clear that we are serious about a respectful debate on marriage equality in this city. This motion today reaffirms a fundamental principle—that all Australians should be treated equally under the law.

I have this message for all of my fellow LGBTIQ Canberrans: you are not alone in this fight. You are not alone. Along with all of my colleagues in ACT Labor, we will be actively campaigning on your behalf in favour of marriage equality. What we do today is to strongly encourage everyone else, including those who disagree with us, to support love over hate, to undertake this debate respectfully, and, if you will forgive me, Madam Assistant Speaker, to end on a political note, to vote yes for equality.

**MR COE** (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (11.56): As is well known, the commonwealth government has directed the Australian Statistician to request information from all Australians enrolled to vote as to their views on whether or not the law should be changed to allow same-sex marriage. I encourage Canberrans, and indeed all Australians who are eligible to participate in this postal vote, to do so. Whilst the concept of a postal vote may not be everyone's first preference about how to deal with this question, it is what the commonwealth government has initiated on this federal issue.

I know that there is a diversity of views within the Canberra community on this issue. In fact, even within the Liberals there is a diversity of views on this issue. I believe that the Canberra Liberals reflect the Canberra community at large in having a diversity of views. My view is well known. I will be voting no in the postal vote. I ask that my view is respected, just as I must respect all those who are voting yes and all

those who are voting no as well. Whether views have a foundation in philosophy, in culture, in religion, in ethnicity or in sexuality, we should be respectful in this process. This postal vote is a rare opportunity to have such a survey of views. It is inevitable that many Australians will want to participate in this public debate, and this is a good thing. As citizens of Australia enrolled to vote, each member of the ACT Assembly, like all other voters in Australia, will have an opportunity to have our say.

The Canberra Liberals do not support the expenditure of ACT taxpayer resources for an ACT government campaign advocating for either side of this debate. I do not think that it is right that the resources of government, collected through household rates, payroll, parking fees, land tax and other sources, be used by the ACT government to conduct a campaign for changes to the commonwealth Marriage Act. I would also not support such expenditure on a campaign advocating for the other side of this debate.

With the ACT government formally weighing in to this debate, the onus will be on the ACT government to make sure that their actions are not felt as intimidation or bullying, most obviously by people from minority ethnic and faith communities. Through the ACT government's support for one side of this debate, I believe that the Chief Minister is putting public servants in a very difficult situation. Will the Chief Minister, or any other minister, assign public servants with tasks to support the yes campaign? If so, I believe this may be a breach of section 5 of the Public Sector Management Act—that is, “to maintain an apolitical public service”.

The ACT government, by “joining and actively participating in the campaign to achieve marriage equality” is, I feel, politicising the public service. I believe it is wrong to use the resources of government for such a campaign. If a public servant objects, perhaps on conscientious grounds, what guarantees are there that this will not limit their career progression or lead to disciplinary action? Even if someone is permitted to object to such tasks, how will they be able to do so without having to make public what their personal views are? This government risks intimidating public servants as part of this process, and it must be very careful not to do so.

I call on Canberrans to participate in this survey. I also call for all contributions to the debate to be respectful and to be respected. In doing so, I move the following amendment that has been circulated in my name:

Omit all words after “notes that”, substitute:

- “(a) the Treasurer, under the Commonwealth *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, has directed the Australian Statistician to request statistical information from all Australians on the Commonwealth Electoral Roll as to their views on whether or not the law should be changed to allow same sex couples to marry; and
- (b) within the Canberra community, there is a diversity of opinions on the subject;
- (2) supports the belief that all Canberrans, regardless of their views, culture, ethnicity, faith or sexuality, should be treated with respect and that contributions to the debate should be respectful; and



- (3) calls on the ACT Government not to provide ACT taxpayer resources to either the 'yes' or 'no' case.”.

It calls for a respectful debate and for no ACT taxpayer money to be spent by the ACT government on either side of this debate.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (12.01): I am proud to stand in support of the Chief Minister's motion today. I promised the community at the election last year that I would fight for a more inclusive community, and that means marriage equality. I will be voting and vigorously campaigning for marriage equality in Australia. In doing so I will be following the long line of ACT Labor members in this place who have fought for reform to make our community more inclusive for LGBTIQ Canberrans, including enacting marriage equality before it was struck down by the High Court on the challenge of the Liberal government.

Politics is personal, and marriage equality is one of the most personal issues to many people in our community, including me. I would not mind getting married one day. I have been in a relationship with my partner for around seven years, but we cannot get married under law. And there are thousands of couples across the ACT who are in similar situations and cannot get married. Many have been waiting decades to make their commitment to each other. What this fundamentally comes down to is a simple matter of equality before the law. It is hard to argue with. LGBTIQ Canberrans should have the same opportunities for love, commitment and happiness in marriage as everyone else. It is as simple as that.

It is hard not to think about marriage at the age of 31 because I have found that at my age you tend to attend a lot of weddings and a lot of stag dos as well. Weddings are happy occasions and they give us an opportunity as friends and family to share in the commitment of two people who love each other. But every time the celebrant is forced to read John Howard's words—marriage means the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others—there is no other way to read that passage than as a reminder that in the law gay people are excluded from this simple but important right. It is a reminder to me that as my friends get married I cannot. It is jarring, antiquated, and embarrasses the bride, the groom, the celebrant and the guests in the audience. I have been to weddings where they have a sign out the front noting that the bride and groom have an opposition to the Marriage Act and support marriage equality.

The fact is that our marriage laws do not reflect Australian values and they should be changed. The Australian parliament must remove this simple discrimination in the law and legislate for marriage equality. The fastest path to marriage equality is through a free vote in the federal parliament. Laws are made in our parliament. It should have been done this week, last week, last year, in the last parliament. But now we have a postal survey, a non-binding, voluntary survey costing all of us \$122 million, all of this to deal with an issue that could be dealt with today.

This is why I say to the people in the LGBTIQ community: I know that over the past week since the announcement of the postal survey you have felt hurt, frustrated and

angry because of the failure of leadership from our federal government that has led to this point, because I feel it too. I know that you have had it with this weak and gutless Prime Minister caving in to the right wing of his Liberal Party. I know that participating in this campaign may be degrading for you. I know that you have been waiting for this for too long, some of you for decades. I do not blame you if your optimism has faded. Some of you have fought your whole life just to be yourselves. I know that you do not need anyone—not your neighbour next door, Tony Abbott or Alistair Coe—to tell you that your relationship is genuine, because it is. But do not boycott this campaign. To do so would let the bullies win. That is what they want. We must rise up again to get this done. It is too important for the generations that come after us.

And to young people across the ACT and in the LGBTIQ community I say this: this is your campaign, your opportunity to have your say and make a historic change once in a lifetime. I know that you have been turned off by the politics of fear and chaos that has beset our federal government. But this is your opportunity to make yourself heard when you have not been heard by your politicians. We will be driven by your optimism and your energy, and we will stand beside you in support in this campaign for marriage equality.

It is not going to be an easy campaign ahead. We said this would be divisive and unnecessary, and it has been, dredging up the bigotry of some people who simply hate people based on their sexuality, where the issue of marriage law is an afterthought. It did not have to be this way, but it was the wish of the Prime Minister. The absence of leadership has given licence to those who hate on matters of race, sexuality and gender, and Malcolm Turnbull has opened the door to a cruel campaign against people from the LGBTIQ community.

It took 30 minutes on Friday when I was handing out stickers down at Cooleman Court for an elderly man to come up to me and say some things so deeply cruel about gay people that they cannot be repeated in this chamber, and it had nothing to do with marriage. It also did not take long for the Liberals' Kevin Andrews on *Sky News* to suggest that people in same-sex relationships are no more than affectionate friends akin to a class of relationship that he has with his cycling mates. We have already seen the red herring attacks on the children of LGBTI people, which has nothing to do with marriage because they already have children and they are doing fine.

These things are not respectful debate, certainly not the respectful debate that Mr Coe has called for today. They are totally offensive to the people in our community and they must be called out at every opportunity.

I was told some sage advice at the beginning of my first political campaign—put on your invisible armour. As a politician I am pretty good at it. But I am concerned about young teenagers out there who have not come out of the closet, who are not confident about their identity and who are seeing the hateful speech that surrounds this postal survey. I am concerned about the people who, from all walks of life, are coming forward to support this campaign and engaging in the political process for the first time and who may be more vulnerable. Every person in the LGBTIQ community is going to need to wear their armour for this campaign.

But there is hope. I also found at Cooleman Court when I was there last Friday that there was a broad warmth and support for marriage equality in the community. One mum came up and told me that her son was gay and that she was definitely going to vote yes. She wanted to see her son marry and have the same happiness as everyone else. I told her that I was gay and that we would be fighting hard over the next six weeks to get it done. I find a lot of support in our inclusive and compassionate Canberra community amongst the young, the old, tradies, business owners, mothers, fathers, grandparents, those from religious groups and multicultural groups. We must be buoyed by this support and we must support each other during the campaign ahead.

Labor took a leadership role to campaign for a yes vote, not because we like the postal survey or the idea of it but because we will always fight to end discrimination and provide equality before the law, whether it is in the Crimes Act, in our schools, in our marriage laws and now through this wasteful postal survey.

Labor and Rainbow Labor are just some of the groups that are campaigning for marriage equality. The campaign for marriage equality is a community campaign, a broad-based positive campaign that will involve thousands of Australians from all walks of life. We are relying on broad community support to win, and we will. I know that this is not a binding vote and that it may not change even a single vote in the commonwealth parliament, but we will campaign all the way up until the next election if we have to, when Labor will legislate on marriage equality within 100 days of taking office.

Finally, I want to speak to the community. If you support marriage equality then I ask you to do a few simple things. If you are not correctly enrolled, you will not get to vote for marriage equality. To make sure you can have your say, please update your enrolment at [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au). You need to be correctly enrolled by Thursday, 24 August—next week. Vote yes and make sure that your friends, your colleagues, your teammates and your relatives vote yes. And if you support marriage equality then I ask you to sign up to volunteer and help us with this campaign. The equality campaign will be on the ground campaigning for the right to marry and we need your help and your support.

Madam Acting Speaker, I am proud to stand with other Australians who believe in marriage equality. The fastest path to marriage equality is through a free vote in the parliament. Now that the postal survey is going ahead, vote yes and campaign for yes. It is time for marriage equality in Australia.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (12.11): I rise today in support of the motion, at a time of uncertainty and debate about the rights of LGBTIQ Australians to equal marriage including, of course, those living here in the ACT. From my perspective and from the Greens' perspective the question of whether or not we will support LGBTIQ Canberrans has never been up for debate. The Greens have always stood up for marriage equality. Every Green MP has voted for marriage equality every time it has come before an Australian parliament. We supported the ACT government at the time it introduced marriage equality legislation in 2013. In fact, it was part of the relevant parliamentary agreement. And we will do so again if the ACT government ever

moves such legislation, although it was made clear by the High Court at that time that the responsibility for introducing equal marriage lies with the federal parliament.

It was with extreme dismay that we learnt about the non-compulsory postal survey to be undertaken. It is an unnecessary step, as Mr Steel so well outlined. We already know through poll after poll that the majority of the Australian population supports equal marriage. It is an expensive step and funds would be better directed to a myriad of other concerns, such as poverty and homelessness, domestic and family violence, welfare supports, addressing climate change or affordable housing.

It is also a harmful step. The postal survey is already generating heated debates on both sides of the argument, and I have no doubt that the occurrences and accusations of hate speech and homophobia will abound over the coming months. I fear for what the public debate will look like. For many people, such as me, the right to marry has never been or never will be questioned. We have no idea what it feels like to have your right to make a public and legal commitment to spend your life with the person you love made the subject of public debate.

I can tell you already that those around me whose marriage rights are being questioned and debated are hurting. Even the most robust and resilient of them are hurting. It is their lives that we are all taking about; not just any part of their lives but the part that matters most to them—the part about who they love and who they want to share their life with as husband or wife.

We have already seen evidence of harmful mistruths and spurious claims that same-sex marriage will result in stolen children, polygamy or even bestiality, but we know this is untrue. We are the last English-speaking country in the world to introduce equal marriage legislation—that is, of course, if and when we ever do so—and the sky has not fallen in in any of those other countries. The fabric of society has not deteriorated. There is no increase in or legal validity of bestiality or polygamy. This is just hate speech really.

For those who think that equal marriage will create children with same-sex parents, think again. These families already exist. The best thing we can do for these children is to legally recognise the bond their parents have, to legally recognise that their family is valid and legitimate. This is the best thing we can do for these kids—make sure that they are growing up in families that are recognised by the state, families that are afforded the same rights as heterosexual families.

There is no evidence to suggest that families growing up in same-sex headed households are in any way worse off. Research undertaken by the Australian Institute of Family Studies indicates that children in such families do as well emotionally, socially and educationally as their peers from heterosexual families. Some researchers have concluded, in fact, that there are benefits for children raised by lesbian couples in that they experience higher quality parenting, sons display greater gender flexibility, and sons and daughters display more open-mindedness towards sexual, gender and family diversity.

To my mind, this is an added bonus. We live in a society that perpetuates an idea of masculinity that promotes vigour and toughness. It is an idea that is determined through society and culture rather than just biology. If our society and culture changes to the point of blurring gender distinctions because of equal marriage, that in general will probably be a good thing. It will mean it will be far more acceptable for men to participate in the more traditional feminine roles of parenting, housework and other non-paid labour. Ultimately we might even see that men's violence towards women is reduced.

We can but hope that with the advent of equal marriage the institution and idea of marriage itself will become more apt for the modern day. Marriage is a bond between two people that involves responsibility and legalities as well as commitment and challenge. The concept of marriage will not change if we allow same-sex couples to marry. As a person who has recently married, I have to admit that in the past I had a somewhat cynical view of marriage, informed also by views of patriarchy et cetera, which I will not talk about here. But I have changed my views. It took my partner's ill health for me to realise that I was ready to be married, and it was a way of reassuring him that I would stand by him in both sickness and health.

To those of you who may be opposed to equal marriage, I say to you: don't you think that is the sort of thing that any couple might wish to do—to have the reassurance and certainty that the person you love will stick with you no matter what? And how different is it if your partner happens to be of the same sex? The love is the same, the commitment is the same, and we should not be denying same-sex couples the right to publically make the same declaration as heterosexual couples can.

I am pleased that this motion includes supporting the LGBTIQ community during the period of the postal survey, should it not be prohibited by the High Court. The next two months will be the most trying and difficult for those whose right to marry is being debated by the community. There are already disproportionate levels of mental health issues amongst LGBTIQ people, not because they are LGBTIQ but because of the lack of acceptance and level of discrimination they face.

The next two months has the potential to make the situation even worse for many of them. We must support them and we must ensure that they know they are living in a community that supports them, accepts them and embraces them as part of our community. The ACT government's resolution to provide additional supports at this time is simply a continuation of our long-term agenda. We passed equal marriage legislation before, we pledged support in the event of a plebiscite before, and we must do the same thing again in the event that the non-binding postal survey should proceed.

I fear the greatest exposure to any argument will occur because that side is well funded and organised, not because their argument is necessarily right. That is all the more reason for the ACT government to actively participate in the campaign to support marriage equality. This is a question of human rights. Moral and religious beliefs should not override human rights. Whilst I agree that we live in a society where there should be free speech, we are also in a secular society where the law

should not be overridden by religious beliefs. I and my colleagues unequivocally agree that all Australians should be treated equally under the law, and that includes being able to marry the person they love. LGBTIQ Australians, including Canberrans, should have the same opportunities for love, commitment and happiness as everybody else.

**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) (12.20): I would again like to add my support to this very important matter and support the motion that the Chief Minister has brought on here today. We have spent many hours in this place talking about this. In fact, we have changed laws in this place and have seen the rights of same-sex attracted Canberrans extended to the right to marry the person they love.

The Marriage Equality (Same Sex) Act 2013 was passed by the ACT Assembly as part of our campaign for marriage equality, a campaign that was fought over many years by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex communities. It was awesome. We packed out this joint and we partied on and it was amazing; it was an awesome time to be a Canberran, to support everybody in our community.

It is important that we put on record the countless hours of work—the days, the years, the decades, the generations—of commitment to this campaign. Anyone listening or involved will know that this has not been an easy campaign. It has been heartbreaking, it has been cruel and it has been very personal. I fear that, through this current campaign, this cruelty will continue. I know that many in the community also have this fear. The cruel things that people are saying in this debate as part of this survey—as bad as some of that commentary is, and I am sure we are all seeing it across our social media posts—are very difficult to ignore or avoid.

I note the Leader of the Opposition's comments, in speaking to his amendment, about a respectful debate on this issue, but the fact that we are even having this debate at all, saying, "You are different and because of that you will be treated unequally and the rest of us will decide if you can do the things that all the rest of us take for granted, like getting married to the person you love," the fact that we are forced now to do this, that we are doing this at all, that we are still having this debate, is offensive and is wrong.

On an optimistic note, I have great hope that we will see marriage equality in the near future. I hope that, when we win this, all of us together, as we link arms and take action, will keep rallying and will keep working for justice. And we will win.

This issue is a deeply personal one. I cannot fathom why we are not offering the same human rights to the whole community and not purely based on their sexual orientation. We have a rare opportunity, as the Leader of the Opposition just said, to say whether or not one person's love is greater than another person's love for their partner and to have a say on the ability and the right for them to get married. This discrimination needs to be resolved once and for all. It is no way to treat members of our community—our neighbours, our friends and our family.

One in five lesbian, gay or bisexual Australians currently experience depression. This is more than triple the national rate. One in three from this community experiences an anxiety-related condition. This is why the ACT government are committed to ensuring that we are supporting and protecting our young people as they navigate their way through the difficult stage of adolescence in sometimes, unfortunately, an exclusionary world. It is why the ACT government has ensured that the safe schools program will continue to be available for students in schools in the ACT. The ACT government will not be changing our mind about that and we will do everything that we can to protect young people and to support them through what is going to be a difficult time, no matter how many calls for a respectful debate are made.

Up to 80 per cent of LGBTI teens have experienced homophobic language at school and one-quarter have experienced physical abuse at school, according to some studies. The safe schools program will support children through this and support their friends, their family and the school communities through what is going to be a very difficult time, as I have said. It is deeply saddening. It is deeply saddening how this debate must be making young people feel right now. No-one should have to hide their sexuality. They should not have to apologise.

Today all of us in the ACT government support a more equal and inclusive world and we send a very strong message, a very clear message, to young people and to all people in our community that we are here and we will fight until all are equal. Part of the ACT government's commitment to Canberra, socially and culturally, is that we will be an even more inclusive community that celebrates our diversity and supports LGBTIQ Canberrans in the ACT and across this country. I support the motion brought on by the Chief Minister today.

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (12.26): I rise to speak in favour of the amendment put forward by Mr Coe. I will be voting yes for marriage equality in the postal plebiscite. I will be voting yes because I believe it is time for this change. I have had, certainly as a broadcaster, many, many conversations with the Mr Steels and the Mr Barrs of the world. When I heard Mr Steel's speech, many of those conversations echoed in my head.

I am appalled, not so much today but over a period, that this government often wishes to use the same-sex marriage issue as a political football. When the Chief Minister spoke, he said that he knows that his entire team will be voting yes because he knows that they are good people. Can I say to people in the ACT community: if you wish to vote no, that does not mean that you are a bad person. You have the right to vote no.

For the Australian people and for the people of Canberra and certainly for this party, it is a matter of conscience. The people of Canberra should be voting based on what their hearts tell them to do. They should not be bullied or shamed into changing their position by a government elected to represent the entire community. This is not the business of government; this is not the way that ratepayers' money should be spent.

How do you explain to a staunch Catholic from Fadden whose budget is buckling under the weight of spiralling rates, how do you explain to those individuals, to the

many thousands in our community who do not believe in marriage equality as a concept that part of the reason for their spiralling rates is the government spending money campaigning on a particular position in a federal plebiscite? By all means, wear the “Vote Yes” T-shirt; by all means, wear the rainbow pin; go out into the community in your own time and as an individual campaigner for the yes vote to your heart’s content. But I do not believe that it should be at the expense of ratepayers.

If members of this Labor government are genuinely committed to a bipartisan approach on the ground, if they genuinely want to make this above politics, as it should be, then I would urge them to contact the Liberal members who have publicly indicated that they are voting yes and talk about the possibility of linking up, standing together and explaining why we are voting yes. This is one of the things that I agree with the Chief Minister on. I think it is a very important matter of conscience.

I have been speaking behind the scenes with marriage equality advocates, local and national, over many months about the role that Liberal members can play as individuals in this process, because often we are not preaching to the converted. I have made my position very, very clear on social media and mainstream media and in this chamber and, as a consequence, I can say that I have had dozens of conversations with conservatives who were not quite sure how to vote on this issue, were having second thoughts on it. I have also copped some abuse from some and I am sure I have lost some support from some. But I do not care.

People have a right to vote however they choose in this postal plebiscite. The Canberra Liberals allow their members a free vote on conscience matters, as it should be. We are not the federal Liberal Party. None of the members in this place played any role whatsoever in what played out in the federal parliament. We are not connected to that process and I am sick to death of those opposite trying to link the machinations of federal parliament with us, because they know it has got nothing to do with us.

There is no place for hurtful language or disparaging remarks in this debate. Nobody should feel ashamed because of the way that they feel or the way that they vote in this plebiscite and there is no place for governments to spend ratepayers’ money campaigning on such matters.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (12.30): My support for marriage equality is well known, and I am pleased today to rise in support of the motion moved by the Chief Minister. I am dismayed that this postal survey is going ahead; I really do think it is a very shonky approach to doing politics in Australia and resolving important policy questions. I think there is significant potential for the disenfranchisement of people through this process. I think there is a high likelihood that the question will be twisted and designed in a way to confuse members of the public or to manipulate the likely outcome and I think it is simply cruel and unfair that the status of people’s relationships should be debated in this way.

As Mr Steel very eloquently put it, the federal parliament should do its job. Just as the federal parliament felt comfortable to legislate, when John Howard was the Prime Minister, that the Marriage Act should be defined as it currently is, the federal



parliament should also move to change the definition to a much more inclusive one that reflects modern Australian values.

Of course, the ACT has legislated for marriage equality before. Ms Berry just spoke about that. I was very pleased and proud to be in this parliament on that day, when we supported that, and to share in the joy that that vote brought to members of the ACT community.

I do not share the view that Mr Coe and Mr Parton advanced today that the ACT government should not play a role in this. We have a duty to stand up for citizens in our community. At the moment those citizens are discriminated against and they should have equal opportunity before the Marriage Act, as they should have before any other act. So I do think there is a role for this government to lead and be part of this debate and to put very clearly an argument that equality is something that this government stands for, that this community should embrace.

I will, like many others, be voting yes for marriage equality when the ballot arrives in my postbox sometime in the coming weeks, assuming that the High Court challenge does not proceed. Despite the fact that I do not think we should be doing it this way now, the fact is that we are having this postal survey and I would encourage people to vote yes, to take the time to vote and to make sure that they stand up and say that it is time this country embraced true equality for all of our citizens, at least in this regard.

As the Minister for Mental Health, I am concerned about the impacts that this will have on some members of our community and some of the hurtful comments that will be made in coming weeks. I think that people are entitled to have a different opinion, but I would ask them to reflect, before making some of those comments, on the impact those comments can have and to think about measuring their comments in a way that is fair and respectful and not simply hurtful. We spoke yesterday afternoon about the safe schools program and I made my comments then about how important it is that people try to just walk that mile in someone else's shoes before casting judgement or making comments that, frankly, are unfair and unwarranted in our community.

One of the practical ideas I would like to put on the table for the coming months is that here in the ACT we put in place a rainbow crossing. Members might recall that one was in place in Sydney many years ago before Duncan Gay spent quite a bit of taxpayers' money on removing it. I think it is a small and practical example of the kinds of things we can do to make a statement about the importance of participating in the postal survey. It also provides that very real symbol of crossing the road and changing one's mind and crossing over and thinking about other people's perspectives. I am sure there will be many campaign ideas out there, but this is one we think could be a very practical and real example and a bit of fun through the course of this campaign.

I simply close by saying this: I think this is a very simple proposition. Love is love. If two people love each other and want to commit to that, particularly in a very public way before friends and family and celebrate their love, they should be entitled to do

that in this country. That is what I support. I look forward to a resounding yes vote when the results of this postal survey come in over the coming months.

*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 12.34 to 2.30 pm.**

### **Questions without notice**

#### **Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—aluminium cladding**

**MR COE:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, in 2009 the ACT government identified concerns about the use of ACP in buildings. In 2010 construction of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children began. Did your directorate have concerns about the use of aluminium cladding when it approved the development of the hospital?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The concerns that the government raised with our national body and our federal colleagues was in regard to non-conforming building products, not the particular ACPs on the Canberra hospital.

**MR COE:** Minister, during the course of construction of the Centenary hospital, which ended in 2013, did the directorate have any concerns about the use of aluminium cladding raised by industry, advocates, activists or the Building Code Board?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The directorate did have concerns in regard to non-conforming building products. The products that were used on the Canberra Centenary hospital, my understanding is, were conforming at the time. That is the work that has been engaged in in the building ministers forum and with the national body.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, since 2009 how many development applications including aluminium cladding have been approved?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Quite a number. I do not have the actual figures in front of me. As you would imagine, there have been a number of modern constructions across the ACT where aluminium composite panels have been used for aesthetic reasons in the cladding of buildings. I am happy to ask the directorate for that number. They are doing a desktop audit at the moment, so I do not think that we are too far away from being able to supply the Assembly with the number of buildings, usually high-rise or medium-rise buildings, that have ACP as an aesthetic cladding. I will get that detail and come back to the Assembly.

### **Budget—women**

**MS LE COUTEUR:** My question is to the Treasurer and relates to the development of the 2017-18 ACT budget. Minister, I understand that a triple bottom line assessment was undertaken in the development of the 2017-18 budget. Can you advise

the Assembly exactly how the triple bottom line assessment takes into account the impact of policies on women?

**MR BARR:** The government in the budget deliberation process seeks from directorates and ministers detailed business cases for the preparation of budget bids. The usual process in for the full budget year—that is, a year that is not interrupted by an election—is for there to be a two-stage process of assessment of budget bids. Obviously with the territory election occurring in October last year and the new government not being formed until November, work on the 2017-18 budget was necessarily truncated. That meant a single-pass process for assessment of business cases.

In many instances the cabinet-level discussion also focused on the impact of policies on women, on other groups and minorities within the territory population, particularly as it related to policies and measures in support, for example, of Indigenous Canberrans, LGBTI Canberrans, Canberrans from a multicultural background, recently arrived migrants, for example. There is a range of filters that cabinet considers in addition to what would traditionally be a two-stage business case assessment process.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Treasurer, given the broad answer you have given to my question, were other groups' impact statements, not necessarily minority groups, provided for any budget measures? If so, for those budget measures—only that were successful, obviously—would you be able to table them for the benefit of the Assembly?

**MR BARR:** No, I cannot table matters associated with cabinet decisions. They would ultimately be tabled in the context of freedom of information or the release of cabinet documents after a certain period of time. Clearly, the public communication of such initiatives, their descriptors within the budget papers, the examination of particular initiatives in the context of estimates and other processes would certainly bring forward those issues for public debate.

Often a ministerial media release or detail behind a policy that would then be found on a directorate website or associated with public communication of an initiative would, I am sure, reveal some of the information that the member is seeking. But I would not make it a practice to release budget business cases in the context of the request from the member.

### **Government—building materials policy**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. On 12 August 2015 you advised the Assembly that the CMFEU was helping to raise industry awareness regarding the use of cladding on ACT government buildings, a product you described a “defective” and “not fit for purpose”. You also noted a 2014 fire in Melbourne in which:

...a not fit for purpose cladding material was used on the side of a building and something like 15 storeys of fire raced up the side of the building, because of the improper use of the material ...

Minister what did you do to inform all ACT government agencies of these defective and not fit for purpose materials?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank the member for her question. The work began before that time in regard to conforming and non-conforming building products and those building products that may have conformed but were used in an inappropriate way. That was some of the work the CFMEU was doing at the time. I asked the directorate to ensure that they would work with all government agencies to ensure that we had building products used in the proper way across the ACT. That work was done, and we have, of course, the report coming now with the working group on building products that are used in the correct sense across the ACT.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, why has it taken two years for you to establish a task force to investigate the use of this aluminium cladding in Canberra, and how is that different from two years ago when you asked the directorate to work with all government agencies on the matter?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The difference is, of course, that two years ago we were talking more about non-conforming building products, and a national discussion ensued. What we are talking about now is a building product that may conform but may have combustibility about it. Certain aluminium composite panels with a particular inner core can be combustible in certain circumstances. That is what occurred in the Docklands fire.

I am assured that nothing like that can occur in the ACT. Firstly, we do not have high-rise buildings of that nature in the ACT. Secondly, our fire retardant systems are more advanced, and we ensure that there are many other fire retardant opportunities, such as the best fire escapes, illuminated fire escapes, as well as a response from ACT Fire & Rescue in any of those circumstances. Today we heard from ACT Fire & Rescue directly in detail about the compartmentalisation of particular buildings that may have ACPs on the outside. They assured us that these buildings are safe; indeed it may well be that the occupants of such buildings are—

**Ms Lawder:** A point of order, Madam Acting Speaker.

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

**MS LAWDER:** While I am interested in the information that Mr Gentleman is providing, as to relevance, I asked about the difference between the task force now and work that Mr Gentleman gave instructions about two years ago.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order and remind the minister of the provisions of standing order 118(a): that he be concise and directly relevant to the question, which was about the work currently being done and the work that you commissioned previously.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The difference was between non-conforming building products and ACPs.

**MR COE:** Minister, has your directorate approved the use of defective and not fit for purpose aluminium cladding material in any ACT building? If so, when was that last approved by the planning directorate?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I am not aware of any approval of the product that Mr Coe mentions. I will take that on notice and ask the directorate for any details that they may have and come back to the Assembly.

### **Government—building materials policy**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, on 12 July this year the shadow minister for planning, Ms Lawder, emailed you about the use of aluminium cladding. You failed to answer a number of questions. Do any of the multistorey buildings on Section 65, that is, the Glebe Park precinct, use these panels?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I will go to the premise of the question first: the questions from Ms Lawder. My understanding is that my office did provide Ms Lawder with complete answers to a number of her questions. She posed 23 questions and my office supplied a direct answer in relation to all of those 23 questions. In relation to the detail of that particular building, I would have to take that on notice.

**MS LEE:** Minister, are these cladding materials used on any buildings in the Canberra Airport precinct?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I can say for sure that I understand that the Canberra airport group is looking at some of their buildings in Brindabella park, but they have not provided me with any detail.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, who is responsible for ensuring the safety of all buildings in the ACT?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Buildings come under a national code. Building safety in regard to the complexity and the construction of the building would come under my directorate in regard to the first acceptance, if you like, or approval of the building to those national codes.

### **City Renewal Authority—program**

**MR STEEL:** Chief Minister, what is the work program the government has outlined for the City Renewal Authority?

**MR BARR:** I thank Mr Steel for the question. The authority has been tasked with delivering a cohesive, coordinated plan for the revitalisation of the city centre and develop the CBD Australia's capital city deserves. It will have particular focus on the sequence and timing of major infrastructure works. The authority will also finalise and implement the Haig Park master plan, including developing a conservation management plan for the area. The authority will complete state 1 of the West Basin

waterfront and start stage 2 of the boardwalk, which includes building a further 500 meters of boardwalk and reclaiming three hectares of the lake bed for a public park. It is also responsible for planning renewal works to enliven and renew the city bus interchange. It will be engaged in progressing the sale of the asset recycling initiative sites, and it will be engaged in the process of establishing Dickson as a key community and transport hub.

The CRA is tasked with transforming our CBD through a diverse range of public events and festivals, through capital works upgrades, public realm and amenity improvements and by further improving key stakeholder partnerships, particularly with private sector property owners.

**MR STEEL:** Chief Minister, how will the City Renewal Authority engage with the community in delivering this work?

**MR BARR:** This commitment for community and stakeholder engagement is reflected in a practical way in the comprehensive and well-received Haig Park engagement strategy. The authority is going to build on this by quickly establishing further productive relationships with key stakeholders, by engaging openly and meaningfully with the local community to inform the design and delivery of public works in the precinct, and by having a particular focus on promoting cooperation, collaboration and coherent urban renewal with other key entities, particularly the National Capital Authority.

Like all government agencies, the City Renewal Authority will observe the principles of open government, which require transparency in processing and providing information, and collaboration with the public in finding solutions to community problems.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Minister, given all the wonderful things that the CRA will be doing for the city, why is Woden town centre described as part of the suburban landscape and being under the aegis of the Suburban Land Agency? Why is an equivalent amount of energy not being given to Canberra's second town centre?

**MR BARR:** The purpose of establishing the City Renewal Authority, with its defined precinct, was to focus that agency on a specific task, namely, development within the CBD, the first amongst equals of Canberra's town centres, with a particular focus on stage 1 of the light rail project. The Suburban Land Agency—and I have met with the chair of the board to have this specific discussion—will be focused on urban renewal associated with stage 2 of the light rail project, and that will specifically focus on development in relation to the Woden town centre. I know that Mr Steel and Ms Cody have already raised these matters. The government has held a roundtable, particularly with the support of Mr Steel and Ms Cody, as members for Murrumbidgee, and there is a real focus on the Woden town centre as part of stage 2 of light rail. My rationale is that the task is much bigger now and we need more resources to tackle that task; hence the establishment of the City Renewal Authority.

## Visitors

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** Could I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the Greenway Lanyon Probus Club. Welcome to your Assembly.

### Questions without notice Government—building materials policy

**MR WALL:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, are ACT Fire & Rescue on the aluminium cladding working group? If so, who is their representative and when were they appointed?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mr Wall for his interest in this area. Yes, ACT Fire & Rescue are on the working group. In fact, they were instrumental in assuring us of the safety of the Canberra Hospital today. I apologise because I do not have the actual name of the senior person on the working group, but I could come back to the Assembly with his name and rank.

They have, of course, been putting a great deal of effort into the working group's challenge across the ACT to identify any safety issues that could occur from ACPs and have advised of the matters that they look at when they are looking at particular building safety. As I said earlier in my answer, they look at the safety of a whole building. Aluminium cladding products are, of course, simply the amenity which is bolted onto the outside of some of these buildings. ACT Fire & Rescue have advised me that they feel that Canberra is quite a safe place to be in regard to building fires.

**MR WALL:** Minister, is anyone from the building and construction industry, for example the HIA, the MBA or the Property Council, represented on the working group?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I do not believe so. The working group is tasked with working across ACT government buildings. But also EPSD is working with the private sector, the MBA and the HIA, on this matter as well. They have been associating with them on a regular basis to ascertain any private buildings, and of course the topic of conforming building products and ACPs has been discussed at our PACICERG meetings, which has members of the building industry, the private sector, our officials from EPSD, the Government Architect, of course, and our safety officials.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, for the benefit of the Assembly could you explain to what extent members of the fire brigade or the building and construction industry have been in discussion with you, your directorate and the working group on the topic cladding?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** On the topic of? Sorry, I missed the last part.

**Ms Lawder:** The cladding.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The cladding, yes. Regularly, I suppose, is the best answer. As I said, this is a whole-of-government priority. We are looking at providing the safest possible outcomes for all Canberrans. I talk with the group regularly and, of course, they provide me with briefs regularly. They are talking to the private sector regularly as well.

### **Government—building materials policy**

**MRS KIKKERT:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, during the estimates period a question on notice was put to you about cladding used on ACT Health buildings which asked whether external cladding is fire rated. You did not answer the question, so here is the question again: minister, is the external cladding on ACT Health buildings fire rated?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for the question. Indeed, the answer that I provided to that question on notice was that all ACT Health buildings constructed since 2008 utilising facade cladding have been reviewed for compliance with the Building Code of Australia. All buildings have received certificates of occupancy. ACT Health is liaising with the recently set up ACT government task force to coordinate and consolidate assessment of all buildings. Implicit in the Building Code and implicit in certificates of occupancy is the necessary fire rating.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, what material is used for the external cladding on the University of Canberra hospital building?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I do not know the precise nature of the material but what I can inform the Assembly is that it does not contain the polyethylene ACPs that have been discussed earlier today.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, when will the cladding on the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children be removed?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** As I have outlined today, we have identified that there is some cladding on the facade of the Centenary hospital containing the polyethylene ACPs. We are currently in the process of assessing whether or not we can remove those panels before new panels become available. That process will take us until the end of September. We will be removing the polyethylene panels. They are five or 10 per cent of the building facade.

The assessment of whether we can safely remove them to otherwise protect the facade of the building before replacement panels become available will be completed by the end of September. That will further inform further work that our engineering and technical experts will undertake, and we will know answers to that post the end of September.

I expect remediation work to begin by the end of this year but I repeat what I have said on a number of occasions today, and will continue to repeat: we have had assessments of the Centenary hospital. It is a modern and safe building, and ACT Fire



& Rescue have again confirmed this afternoon that the Centenary hospital is a modern and safe building.

### **Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—aluminium cladding**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, you stated in your ministerial statement that the facade panels on the Centenary hospital complied with all relevant codes at the time of issue of a final certificate of occupancy and use. The national construction code states that while the use of combustible cladding is not prohibited, medium-rise buildings or buildings close to others generally are not permitted to use cladding. Minister, why were these panels used given that the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children is close to other buildings on the hospital campus?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** It is certainly my understanding, and it has been confirmed to me by Health, that the Centenary hospital was compliant with all building codes and did receive a certificate of occupancy before it opened.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, what specific actions did ACT Health take to ensure that it was safe to install the facade panels prior to the construction of the Centenary hospital?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That would have taken place in 2011 and 2012. I will triple check but, as I have said, it was compliant material that complied with the national building code and the local building code and the hospital received a certificate of occupancy.

**MS LAWDER:** Will you add the use of aluminium cladding to the list of high and extreme risks already identified in the AECOM report?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I will not be adding to the AECOM report.

### **Justice—drug and alcohol court**

**MS CHEYNE:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Can the minister update the Assembly on how work towards a drug and alcohol court is progressing?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cheyne for her question and her interest in this particularly important area and positive initiative from the ACT Labor government.

The drug and alcohol court will help make Canberra safer. It will help make Canberra stronger and more connected by bringing a restorative approach to criminal justice. One of this government's top priorities is to support a modern, best practice court system. The drug and alcohol court will bring a best practice approach to treating people whose crimes are primarily the result of addiction.

The 2017-18 budget provides \$400,000 to support research and planning for the new court. That funding will support a Supreme Court working group which is studying the best ways to implement the new court. We are particularly fortunate in this

territory to have the expertise of Her Honour Chief Justice Murrell, who was the founding judge of the New South Wales Drug Court. The working group was established by the Chief Justice and comprises judges and experts in health, corrective services and policy.

The working group has already been visiting drug courts in New South Wales and heard presentations from experts in Victoria. It has already met to discuss the scope, and the needs particular to Canberra.

This budget will provide even more support for the ACT to study models in other jurisdictions, survey the available evidence and deliver a drug court that achieves great positive outcomes for the territory.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, what are the ways that a drug and alcohol court will support rehabilitation?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question. A drug and alcohol court is meant to help people whose crimes are primarily the result of addiction. Drug and alcohol courts are a form of therapeutic justice. Therapeutic justice is focused on how to help people live better lives as fully participating members of society. This means having a criminal justice process that is solution focused and measured by how it changes future behaviour.

In a 2012 presentation on therapeutic justice, Her Honour Chief Justice Murrell identified common sense, some appreciation of the psychology of behaviour and an ability to communicate and behave in appropriate ways as the key ingredients for judges and lawyers to participate in a solution-focused court.

The new court will be designed to establish a relationship between the person who committed the crime, the presiding judge and health and social service providers. That relationship will, in turn, support offenders to overcome their dependency and leave the justice system with a better set of tools to participate in society.

It is important to recognise that this is not about diminishing responsibility for crime; this initiative is about reducing recidivism by encouraging offenders to recognise and address the causes of their behaviour. And it is about protecting our community and strengthening individual people and families in the process.

**MS CODY:** Minister, what did the evidence from other jurisdictions tell us about how effective drug courts are?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cody for her supplementary question. The evidence is strong that if we provide the right support services to people with drug and alcohol problems at the right point in their contact with the judicial system we can address these dependencies and in turn build more resilient people, families and communities.

The drug and alcohol court is a fundamentally person-centred reform. It will be focused on individual cases. However, statistics from these courts tell us that they have community-wide impacts. A 2008 study of the New South Wales Drug Court

found that people who completed the program were 37 per cent less likely to be reconvicted of an offence than people who had never entered the program. A 2014 evaluation of the Dandenong program in Victoria showed that the reduction in sentences of imprisonment over a two-year period generated savings of \$1.2 million compared to traditional sentencing courts.

Earlier this year I met with the New South Wales Attorney-General, Mark Speakman. Mr Speakman offered to share his state's experiences with developing and operating drug courts. I will be taking him up on that offer to ensure that the ACT's new court achieves the greatest possible outcomes for Canberra.

The evidence shows that a drug court will help to make the community safer and it will be a cost-effective way of doing so. More importantly, it will help our criminal justice system to be more person-centred and outcomes focused.

### **Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—aluminium cladding**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, on ABC radio this morning you said in relation to replacement of the cladding on the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, "I don't know the time frame right now but I can tell you it's likely to be a couple of months." You went on to say, "We are removing the cladding and we will be replacing it. It shouldn't be too disruptive to the hospital." Minister, why did you not know the answer to the interviewer's question about when the cladding would be replaced?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Milligan. We were all waiting with anticipation for his question. This morning I also indicated that we would be having a media conference at lunchtime today. We would also have our experts from our directorates to talk with the media so they could share that information with the community. What I said this morning, and what I said in my statement in the Assembly earlier today and in the media conference, was that it will take some time to remediate.

What I said earlier today is that we are currently assessing whether we can remove the panels while we wait for replacement panels to become available. That will take some time. What we have done in the past 24 hours is inform staff, patients, their families and friends and the broader community that we have assessed these panels at the Centenary hospital. They make up 5 to 10 per cent of the panels on the facade of the Centenary hospital, and we will remove them.

The Centenary hospital remains a modern and safe building. We are doing everything we can, with the technical and engineering advice that we need to seek, to make sure that we remove these panels.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, why do you consider your answer "I don't know" sufficient for dealing with a serious fire risk?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I have been fully briefed by ACT Health. They have been working closely with the Emergency Services Agency, with Access Canberra and with the fire and rescue authority. We know that this will take some time to remediate

but we know that we have taken every measure available to us now to ensure that the building is safe. ACT Health have made the decision to remove those panels at the earliest opportunity. We will undertake the necessary assessment and get the necessary technical and engineering advice that we need to make the right decision.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, why are the panels being removed if, as you say, they are safe enough to receive a certificate of occupancy?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** The building remains safe, but, as I have said, we are going to go the extra mile, given that we have learnt more since the Grenfell tragedy in the UK.

### **Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—aluminium cladding**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, in your ministerial statement today you spoke about emergency procedures and fire drills used in ACT Health buildings, seeking to reassure staff and patients that, in the event of a fire, their safety would be a priority. You also spoke about removing the aluminium composite panels from the front of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. But there does not seem to be an appetite for urgency on this matter. You said:

ACT Health has met with representatives of Commercial Services and Infrastructure ... Justice and Community Safety ... Fire & Rescue and Access Canberra, as well as internal clinical representatives to discuss the draft report findings, cross agency implications and operational implications for ACT Health.

Minister, having identified the need to remove the panels, instead of more talk and more meetings, why don't you just use your ministerial power to order their immediate removal?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Because that would be irresponsible of me as minister. What I will do as minister is make sure that I identify the issues and am fully briefed by my department.

Where priorities have been assessed and identified, and where they have given advice to me on the appropriate course of action, I have approved them taking that course of action. That course of action has meant that ACT Health has proactively looked at all of its assets. It has identified the Centenary hospital as having five to 10 per cent of its façade in this particular form of panel. They advised me that it cannot be removed immediately without the assessment that is currently underway and that will be completed by the end of September, because it may compromise some other features of the building itself.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, can you tell me: when did you decide to remove the cladding? What sparked that decision?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That was a decision that ACT Health took and they advised me of that. I support that decision that ACT Health took.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, does increasing fire drills mean that you know the flammable panels are a high risk?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** No, it means we are taking every necessary precaution given that we have identified that five to 10 per cent of the panels on the facade of the hospital contain polyethylene panels.

### **Canberra—suburban renewal**

**MS CODY:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, how is the government delivering on its commitment to improve the look and feel of our city?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Cody very much for the question. The government is getting on with delivering its commitments and its priority to improve the look and feel of our city. This year's budget builds on previous budgets and includes funding for better road maintenance, safety in school zones, better playground and sporting facilities, better weed control and better graffiti management.

Our government also has established a better suburbs policy team to drive a strategic approach to the delivery of city services, helping to identify smarter ways to improve the livability of our city now and into the future.

Early next year, the government will be introducing a container deposit scheme in the territory to encourage more Canberrans to do the right thing with their used drink containers. Drink containers make up more than a quarter of the volume of all litter in the ACT, and this scheme will help protect the environment and improve the look and feel of our city.

We are also increasing weed control along arterial roads and on roundabouts, road medians and other high use suburban areas to improve the visual impact of the city and reduce the damage from overgrown weeds to kerb and gutter infrastructure. We will also increase mowing and weed control maintenance at the major entry roads into the ACT and Canberra Airport. We will increase tree pruning under power lines over the next year to not only improve the amenity of urban areas but also reduce fire risk.

More than \$2.3 million has been provided, as well, for city services in our new suburbs, covering the maintenance of roads, paths and parkland as well as essential services such as waste and recycling collections.

The government invests significant resources each year in the delivery of Canberra city services. As we know, Canberra is growing, and with that comes greater demand for services, which means that the level and focus of the city services we deliver needs to change too.

I look forward next month to launching a better suburbs project with the intent of delivering a better suburbs statement for Canberra. This statement will send a clear vision for the improved delivery of city services in the ACT. *(Time expired.)*

**MS CODY:** Minister, what practical steps have been taken to deliver better suburbs across Canberra?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I am pleased to say that the government has already taken a number of practical steps to deliver better suburbs across Canberra. For example, over 2,500 trees near powerlines have been pruned as part of recent powerline clearance works. We are also delivering graffiti prevention measures through the ACT's graffiti management strategy. This reduces the incidence of graffiti vandalism. Twenty-six legal art sites have been established across Canberra to reduce the incidence of illegal graffiti. In addition to this, the TCCS graffiti coordinator has recently located a new site in Gungahlin.

Graffiti inspections have been carried out at least weekly across Canberra's suburbs to proactively identify and remove any illegal or offensive graffiti from public assets. 1,600 square metres of illegal graffiti was removed from public assets during July alone, which is less than the 2,200 square metres of graffiti removed each month. We also run an education program for offenders in conjunction with a restorative justice unit in JACS. Graffiti buster volunteers have also removed graffiti in Gungahlin and Kambah over the past year. I pay particular thanks to these terrific community groups that have joined with us in this effort.

Extensive weed control measures have been implemented through the use of herbicides, brush cutting and manual removal. Whilst weeds growing along arterial roads are generally treated at least twice annually, weeds growing in high visibility areas such as parks and entrances to suburbs are treated more as required. Shrub beds are also mulched in an effort to prevent weed growth in the public realm.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, what role can the community play in supporting the work of government in creating and maintaining better suburbs?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** The government recognises that we cannot create and maintain those suburbs all on our own. Creating and maintaining better suburbs is a shared effort between government, business and the community. As we know, Canberrans are proud of their city and their suburbs and I know many residents are active in maintaining and improving their local area. Local residents, for example, can be our eyes and ears on the ground, reporting broken public assets and maintenance issues.

Fix my street, as we know, is a very popular, convenient way for Canberrans to engage with government. Reporting and pinpointing an issue in their suburb has never been easier. Recent improvements to fix my street enable the community to better report faults in city maintenance matters. Locals can directly advise the relevant line area what precisely needs to be done, speeding up response times and helping inform the regular maintenance schedule. The government is also continuing to work on enhancements to this platform, and I look forward to seeing the results of those shortly.

The majority of Canberrans recognise the shared responsibility of caring for our suburbs. This is evident as I move around the city, noting beautifully cared for nature strips, streets and community gardens.

Figures from the most recent census highlight that Canberra has one of the highest volunteering rates in the nation, and I am keen to ensure that Canberrans are given every opportunity to help improve our suburbs. Residents have approached us wishing to volunteer to remove graffiti. They have formed the graffiti buster groups that I spoke about in my previous answer.

In addition, we made an exciting commitment during last year's election campaign to adopt a park initiative to provide small grants for interested groups to help make our local parks even better. We look forward to providing more details about that initiative later.

### **Canberra—heritage festival**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. Minister, can you outline the success of this year's heritage festival and the activities it provided to residents and visitors of Canberra?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mr Pettersson for his question and his interest in this area. It brings much joy to me to report to the Assembly the great success of this year's heritage festival. From 18 April to 7 May Canberrans and visitors to our city were invited to participate in over 160 events from 64 private, community and government groups varying from festival-hosted open days, talks, tours and workshops to exhibitions celebrating what makes Canberra and our surrounds unique.

It is fitting that this year's festival opened on world heritage day, also known as the International Day for Monuments and Sites, the aim of the day being to encourage local communities and individuals across the world to consider the importance of cultural heritage and to promote awareness of its diversity as well as the efforts required to protect and conserve it.

Over the three weeks the festival ran, many fun, educational and interactive activities that celebrated our truly unique regions were available. Members of the community were invited to uncover the hidden mysteries of Lake George, be part of a graveyard tour—which I took part in last year—learn about the National Carillon or explore the Gungahlin Homestead in Crace, which was opened up to the public for the first time with great lines of people anticipating a visit there.

The sense of place that heritage provides helps us to understand where we have come from and to define our identity. Heritage gives the community a sense of connection and continuity in the story of progression through time, enabling our journey to continue into the future.

This year's festival was considered especially successful with 97 per cent of event organisers considering that their event had occurred either successfully or very successfully. At the official launch at Burrunjui Gallery on 7 April over 2,500 people watched the live stream of the event, the first time they had done so. (*Time expired.*)

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, can you please explain how Indigenous history and heritage were explored and displayed in this year's festival?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** This year marks the 50th anniversary of the historic 1967 referendum on whether to count Aboriginal people in the census. Many events of the festival subsequently centred on the rich Indigenous culture and heritage we have here in the ACT. The official theme of the festival was "Questions and Change", which focused on celebrating past decades, including those intangible aspects such as stories, customs and traditions, all important parts of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture in our region.

Much of the festival activities on offer for local and interstate visitors involved specific references and were based on the role of Indigenous people in Canberra. These activities included weaving workshops using traditional methods, as well the opportunity for visitors to the festival to travel back to "The Dreaming" with an experienced Aboriginal guide. Events such as these allow the ability to witness and experience the connection to country that has remained an important aspect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Regional partners in Nimitabel, Gundaroo, Braidwood, Queanbeyan and Goulburn held similar events and worked with us to explore the Indigenous heritage present in all our regions.

Lastly, the government, working with the heritage trust, sought to provide a "path to reconciliation" experience through the use of a sculpture path in Reconciliation Place, creating a visual story of the steps taken to achieve self-determination for Indigenous people. Activities such as these provided local and interstate visitors as well as the community at large the opportunity to be part of a conversation around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion, recognition and the celebration of their culture.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, what is the plan for the ACT's historic 1210 locomotive, given that it is managed by the Railway Historical Society and you have no carriages?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Lawder for her question. Even though it is outside the original question, it is an important question. The ACT government is supporting where it can the restoration of the engine. The engine at the moment is in pieces but it is an asset of the ACT government, so my directorate is keen to see that asset protected and restored at some point in the future. We will be working along those lines to get that done.

### **Children and young people—government support**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. How is the ACT government engaging with young people on the issues that matter to them?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Orr for her question. The ACT government is committed to working with Canberra's young people. Many issues, such as insecure work, marriage equality, sexual identity and climate change, inspire the passions of Canberra's young people. Knowing that government can appear to be complex from the outside, a key initiative to enable young people to speak to government and influence decisions is the Youth Advisory Council,



The Youth Advisory Council provides strategic advice to the ACT government on issues affecting young people. The council comprises 15 young people aged between 12 and 25 years at the time of their appointment, and membership reflects the diversity of young people residing in the ACT, including a gender balance and representation from young people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and young carers.

Each year the council develops an annual work plan identifying issues affecting young people in the ACT. This work plan is based on current research and trends and, most importantly, on the views of council members themselves. This year's work plan includes three priority areas: youth employment, particularly around rights and opportunities; inclusive sexual health and wellbeing; and environment and planning.

I was pleased to be able to appoint new co-chairs of the Youth Advisory Council in June this year and met with them recently to discuss their work plan and progress to date. On behalf of the ACT government I will continue to meet regularly with the Youth Advisory Council co-chairs on their work.

In addition to the established engagement processes through the advisory council, the ACT government endeavours to engage with young people on their views, through various consultations, working with service providers and other processes such as the youth think tank on 20 August last year that brought together more than 100 young people to discuss a range of topics as part of the #briefingBerry series of events supported by the former minister for youth, the Deputy Chief Minister.

**MS ORR:** How is the ACT government supporting young Canberrans to lead and participate in community development activities for other young people in Canberra and the region?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary question. The ACT government's youth InterACT strategy encourages and supports young people to engage and participate in the local community through grants and scholarships. The 2017-18 youth InterACT grant round is currently open and due to close on 3 September. The 2017-18 grants round will support young Canberrans to pursue projects that support, engage with and inspire other young people in the community.

Youth InterACT grants provide funding of up to \$1,500 per project. There are many ways that activities, events or projects can be facilitated, such as building supportive connections between community members using sport; cultural and creative activities; creating awareness of issues affecting young people; or recognising the contribution young people make to their local communities.

In 2016-17, 19 youth InterACT grants were awarded. One example is the youth community photography pastings project facilitated by Canberra College highlighting the artistry of young Canberrans and celebrating diversity in our community.

Throughout the year, youth InterACT scholarships are also available to provide funding of up to \$500 for individuals and \$1,500 for groups of young people to attend learning, sporting, personal and career development opportunities. This scholarship program was instrumental, for example, in supporting Ms Eden Lerable to progress through the Premier League and in 2017 make it into the Women's Premier League soccer squad, representing Woden Weston.

Coming from a single parent household with a low income has often made it harder for Eden to achieve her goal of representing Australia in the sport she loves. With the assistance of the youth InterACT scholarship, Eden will be able to keep kicking goals and following her dream.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, what else does the ACT government do to involve, recognise and celebrate Canberra's young people?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Steel for his supplementary question. The ACT government's youth InterAct strategy also recognises the outstanding contributions young people add to their community through the Young Canberra Citizen of the Year awards.

The Young Canberra Citizen of the Year awards were established in 1989. The awards recognise individuals and groups of young people who have made a significant contribution through their personal endeavours or who have been actively involved in the ACT community across the following six categories: Young Canberra Citizen of the Year Award; Environment and Sustainability Award; Personal Achievement Award; Individual Community Service Award; Group Achievement Award; and Arts and Multimedia Award.

In 2017, 39 applications were received for the six award categories. The Young Canberra Citizen of the Year Award winner was Mr Mustafa Ehsan. Mustafa arrived in Canberra in 2012 as an unaccompanied minor refugee fleeing persecution as a young Hazara person in Iran. Since arriving in Canberra, Mustafa has completed his schooling and gone on to establish and coach the Canberra Kangaroos football—that is, soccer—team. Mr Ehsan is a strong advocate for and supporter of young refugees and asylum seekers and has used football as a means to support social inclusion and cohesion. The mentorship he provides to young refugees and asylum seekers and the sense of community he inspires are testament to the values of Canberra's migrant community.

Other award category winners in 2017 were as follows: Personal Achievement Award, Caitlin Figueiredo, whom I know colleagues have spoken about in this place before, particularly Ms Cheyne; Individual Community Service Award, Kate Barton; Group Achievement Award, Spark, the Ginninderry joint venture training and employment initiative; Arts and Multimedia Award, Lucy Sugerman; and Environment and Sustainability Award, Ryu Callaway.

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

## **Supplementary answer to question without notice Government—building materials policy**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (3.27): Earlier I was asked about representatives on the ACT working group from ACT Fire & Rescue. I can advise that they are Mark Brown, the Chief Officer of ACT Fire & Rescue, and David Foot, the executive director of ESA risk and planning.

## **Leave of absence**

Motion (by **Mr Wall**) agreed to, with the concurrence of an absolute majority:

That leave of absence be granted to Mr Doszpot for today's sitting due to illness.

## **Coroners report—death of Mr Paul Fennessy Papers and statement by minister**

**MS FITZHARRIS** (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (3.27): For the information of members, I present the following papers:

Coroners Act, pursuant to subsection 57(5)—Report of Coroner—Inquest into the death of Mr Paul Fennessy—

Report, dated 1 February 2017.

Government response.

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

Leave granted.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Today I am tabling Coroner Hunter's report and the ACT government's response to her findings and recommendations submitted to me under section 57(3) of the Coroners Act 1997. I would like to thank Coroner Hunter for her extensive and comprehensive report. She made two recommendations, and the government has agreed to both. These findings relate to the tragic death of Mr Paul Fennessy on 6 January 2010. The ACT government wishes to convey its deepest sympathies to Mrs Finlay, and to acknowledge and thank her for coming into the Assembly today, and to Mr Fennessy's family and friends.

## **Marriage equality**

Debate resumed.

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (3.29): Madam Assistant Speaker, it seems as if August is an auspicious month

regarding marriage legislation in Australia. In August 2004, a bill that was passed by the Australian government exclusively redefined marriage as between a man and a woman, and in August 2017 they are now considering removing that exclusivity.

Possibly less well known is that in August 2015 a letter on behalf of 100 Christian church leaders was presented to members of the Australian parliament. The letter advocated for the change that is now being contemplated. It is worth repeating that: the church leaders advocated for marriage equality. I can personally vouch that that is what was going on, as I was there as one of them.

You could be forgiven for thinking that if there is a change to the Marriage Act this year, it will be against the wishes of Christians, who are supposedly overwhelmingly against the idea. That is how it is often portrayed, and certainly the implicit claims by some individual politicians and some lobbyists suggest that.

The truth is that marriage equality has been strongly supported for many years by an increasing number of people of faith. Some, such as Father Rod Bower from Gosford Anglican Church and Reverend Dr Margaret Mayman from Pitt Street Uniting Church, are relatively well known. Others, including the Rainbow Christian Alliance that is based in Tuggeranong, may be less known, but they are no less active or less committed to the reform. It is important to note that these advocates' position is because of, and not despite, their understanding of the faith.

I do acknowledge that it would be both naive and inaccurate to suggest that there is not strong opposition to the reforms from within the Christian faith and lobbying groups which purport to represent Christianity, but I believe that the evidence suggests, and my experience would tend to confirm, that the majority of Christians, along with the majority of people who do not profess that faith or any other faith, support amending the Marriage Act beyond its current exclusive and restrictive definition. It is certainly inaccurate and offensive for those who oppose the change to claim that they represent "the Christian view".

I have noted before that in my former career I have had the privilege of officiating at many weddings. They have been wonderful celebrations of love and relationship. I have also sat with couples who are not able to be married because of the current definition of marriage. It would have been an absolute privilege to lead their wedding ceremonies as well, to celebrate their love and their commitment. And despite what has been claimed by some, if those marriages had been able to occur, my own faith would not have been undermined, the stability of my own marriage would not have been made shakier, and my children would not have suddenly lived in an immoral society. Quite the opposite.

Of course, none of this is to suggest that we should be making decisions as a nation based on the views arising out of people's expressions of faith, whether they are Christian views or other views. That is one of the fundamental misunderstandings of some of the opponents of marriage equality. In fact, it is somewhat strange that there is quite so much discussion regarding religious beliefs in this debate. Religious institutions will still be able to determine their stance on matters of faith. That already occurs, as some authorised celebrants already currently choose not to perform

ceremonies for couples because of the particular religious views of those celebrants. That is already allowed under the Marriage Act.

The proposed changes to the Marriage Act must be a non-religious decision. It is a decision for all of the people of Australia, for people of any faith and for people of no faith. We cannot, and we should not, be limited in this way. Our society is bigger than that. Marriage is bigger than that. And, of course, love is bigger than that.

We know that there is a diversity of views in the ACT. But a diversity of views does not mean that a government should remain neutral. That is a bizarrely conservative view that would suggest that the status quo should never, ever change, or at least that the change to the status quo should not be backed by any government. That is certainly not something on which we on this side of the Assembly would agree. We will, and we must, be respectful. We should also have the courage to stand for inclusion and for the rights of all ACT residents.

Finally, I thank Mr Parton for his comments about his desire to work together in a non-partisan way, and note that many members of the Assembly may wish to campaign for a yes vote in a respectful manner. I would like to reinforce the invitation to Mr Parton—and in fact to all members of the chamber, to their staff, to their friends, and to their family members—to the community mobilisation forum that is being held tonight at 6 pm at the Molonglo Theatre at the ANU. There, the discussion will be, in a non-partisan manner, about ways that people can help get this initiative over the line.

Everyone is welcome to be there. The forum will hear from Tiernan Brady, executive director of equality, about how members of the public can get involved should they wish to help campaign in a non-partisan, respectful way for this change. I look forward to being part of the campaign. I oppose the amendment, and I commend the Chief Minister's motion.

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (3.35): I rise to speak in support of the Chief Minister's motion. The campaign for marriage equality in Australia has been long and at times heartbreaking, but today we find ourselves at an interesting point along the road to equality. Unfortunately, we have now been presented with an option of a postal survey to determine how LGBTIQ Australians should be viewed and treated. We have already seen and heard some of the hurtful debate targeted at same sex couples, their families and the broader community.

Marriage equality is about love and recognising that all love is equal. It is about recognising that LGBTIQ people are just the same as every other Australian. It is not an attack on religion; the change in law will only apply to state marriages and will not impact a person's religious beliefs. Marriage equality will not result in dysfunctional families; same sex couples already foster loving and functional families, with children who are loved and cared for.

Hurtful arguments are irrelevant to the debate. It is important for LGBTI Canberrans, particularly young people, to know that the ACT government will continue to stand up for them and support the campaign for marriage equality. We know that a majority

of Australians support recognising LGBTIQ Australians as equals. This is what will drive us to participate in the survey and turn out an overwhelming yes vote.

While this postal survey is not how we wanted to achieve marriage equality, we cannot lose this opportunity to win. It is critical that every supporter of equality is correctly enrolled to vote. I urge all Canberrans to check and/or update their enrolment details; every vote will make a difference. To the entire LGBTI community and those of us who are allies, I say: talk to your friends, families and neighbours and encourage them to vote yes. If we bring everyone with us throughout this campaign, I am confident we can win this fight and celebrate marriage equality by the end of the year.

I am proud to stand with all of my Labor and Greens colleagues and a number of Canberra Liberals in support of marriage equality. The ACT Barr government will always stand up for the rights of LGBTI people, and I look forward to standing with our brothers and sisters out in the community over the coming weeks.

I appreciate that today those opposite, a few of them, have asked us not to discriminate against those who vote no. To you I say this: what about if we just do not discriminate, full stop? I will be voting yes, and I encourage all Canberrans to vote yes as well.

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (3.38): I rise today to speak in support of marriage equality. The path to equality has not been without its challenges. For every step forward we see, at times we have had to take a step backwards. But it is an important undertaking that many, both here in the Assembly and in the Canberra community in general, are committed to.

LGBTIQ members of our community face myriad barriers in their life that many of us will never know, from coming out to family, who in some cases may not accept them, to facing higher recorded levels of suicide and depression than other people. And while marriage equality will not solve these, it is a significant and salient step in acknowledging that we can and must do more to advance the rights of LGBTIQ identifying Canberrans and therefore equity for all Canberrans.

I will go to a bit of work that we did in 2013 in regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 3 of the ICCPR says it explicitly prohibits discrimination in all forms. It prohibits discrimination in regard to the application of the rights listed within the treaty, and also prohibits general discrimination. The Human Rights Committee has established that discrimination in the terms that it appears in the ICCPR is understood to mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which is based on any ground which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms. So it is quite explicit in regard to discrimination. That is what we see occurring in our community at the moment, and that is what we want to fix.

Marriage equality is not the final step, but we must take that step to ensure full equality for all of our citizens. It is not just the first step we should take, but it is an important step and we need to keep that work going. I therefore commend this motion and encourage all in this place to support it. I encourage all Canberrans to vote yes.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (3.40): I rise to support Mr Coe's amendment but also, importantly, to correct some facts that have been presented in the debate. I think is important to make a number of observations about the debate as it has played out so far in the Assembly. I start by referring to Mr Ramsay's comments. I think he made some pretty good comments, actually. I acknowledge the points that he made and I acknowledge his position on this issue. Certainly, wherever you go there are mixed views within various churches in the community. I think that is a point that needs to be reinforced. There is a range of views on this across our diverse community.

But Mr Ramsay also made the point, which I agree with, that the debate has to be nonpartisan and has to be respectful. I fear that some of the comments that have been made in the debate so far are both partisan and are not respectful. I turn firstly to the comments that Mr Parton picked up on that Mr Barr made that people on his side will be voting yes because they are good people. We have to be very careful with the language that we use that there is no inference here that to vote yes is good, to vote no is bad.

Certainly, that was a clear inference from those comments. If Mr Barr would like to correct that when he closes the debate, I think that would be a good thing. We need to be careful with language. I hope that is what people on both sides of this chamber are saying. Let us make sure that we are careful with that language as we use it.

I also refer to Mr Steel's comments where he called the Prime Minister weak and gutless. If we are trying to have a respectful debate, a nonpartisan debate as Mr Ramsay, the Attorney-General, has called for, to call the only prime minister in the history of Australia who has actually moved anything on same-sex marriage in the parliament weak and gutless I think is not respectful and is partisan.

What we see is that there has been a move by the Prime Minister for a plebiscite. We now have a postal vote but the Prime Minister has moved twice for a plebiscite to get this issue done. I do not think there can be any question that the Prime Minister personally is committed to the issue of same sex-marriage. He has acted twice in the parliament to move this issue forward. He is now acting with a postal vote. So to suggest that he is—

**Mr Barr:** So committed he will not even campaign.

**MR HANSON:** I notice Mr Barr is interjecting in this respectful debate that we should be having. The Prime Minister should not be called weak and gutless on this. You can disagree with him. That is great. You can disagree with his decision to have a postal vote, to have a plebiscite or, indeed, his position on same-sex marriage. But I do not think that, in the context of this debate when we are hearing both sides say, "Let's be nonpartisan and let's be respectful," to call the Prime Minister of Australia weak and gutless reflects that sentiment.

I caution members. I caution Mr Steel. I caution others about their use of language to make sure that it is respectful in this debate. While there are different views on the Labor side and the Liberal side across Australia, this debate should be nonpartisan.

I make the point—I think this is an important one—that if a plebiscite had been supported in the federal parliament, it is very likely that same-sex marriage would now be law. If the plebiscite, when it was first put to the Australian parliament, had been supported by the Labor Party and the Greens in the federal parliament, this debate, I believe, would have been put to the community in a plebiscite and it would have been successful for the same-sex marriage side. We would have that enacted now.

The reason we are still having this debate, the reason that this debate is still occurring, is a consequence of the ALP and the Greens voting no to a plebiscite some time ago. The date for the plebiscite would have been enacted and I believe it would have been passed in the federal parliament already.

It is untrue, as it has been characterised, that the plebiscite is the route to damnation and is such a terrible thing. Until a year ago—indeed, 16 August last year—the ALP did not have a position on it. The ALP federally did not have a position on whether they were going to support the plebiscite. So it is not true, I do not think it is fair and I do not think it is helpful in the debate to try to characterise the plebiscite as some terrible evil when the ALP federally, less than a year ago, did not have a position on whether or not they would support it.

Indeed, when you go back a little further in time to 2013, Mr Shorten actually actively supported a plebiscite. There are quotes from Mr Shorten when he was speaking to the Australian Christian Lobby. He said:

I would rather that the people of Australia could make their view clear on this, than leaving this issue to 150 people.

I think it is not helpful to the debate that, all of a sudden, once a position is changed—and the ALP has changed its position on this a lot of times—as soon as that change is made then on the moral high ground anyone who does not support it is somehow a bigot and so on. That is the way it has been characterised and that equally is not helpful to the debate.

This matter was before the federal parliament in 2013. I acknowledge that the Greens have had a pretty consistent position on this. But in 2013 there was a private member's bill that sought to recognise same-sex marriage. That was knocked back by Labor members in the Senate. It would have got up if it were not for that. I have the legislation here from the federal parliament which I can table in the interest of members. The ALP voted no in the Senate. The Senate was—

**Mr Barr:** There was not a single Liberal vote for—



**MR HANSON:** Here we go. We are talking about the positions that have changed. There was a single Liberal vote. In fact, a Liberal member crossed the floor to vote. The Labor members were the ones who stopped that from getting up. I go back to 2010. Senator Wong made these comments:

... on the issue of marriage I think the reality is there is a cultural, religious, historical view around that which we have to respect. The party's position is very clear that this is an institution that is between a man and a woman."

That reflected the position of Julia Gillard at the time and Kevin Rudd before her. So let us understand the history of this. Comments about prime ministers being weak and gutless have been made in this place. I do not think they are helpful and I do not think they are true, unless we are going to see Labor members labelling all former Labor prime ministers as weak and gutless as an equal charge. I do not think that would be helpful and I am certainly not calling for that.

The poll is going to go ahead. The vote will go ahead. As I said, this could have been resolved had there been a plebiscite. That is not the way it is going to happen. So I urge members to heed the words that were put forward by Mr Ramsay: nonpartisan and respectful. I will be voting yes in the postal vote. I support same sex-marriage. I hope it wins and I hope that there is a vote in the federal parliament before the end of the year. I am very clear on that.

But equally I think it is important that we remember to respect everybody's views as we continue this debate in this place. And as we continue the debate out in the community, let us not be calling people weak and gutless. Let us not have inferences that a yes vote means you are good, a no vote does not mean you are good. Let us recognise that there are mixed views and move ahead with the debate. Personally, I hope—I know there are other members who think the same; Ms Lee, who is sitting over there—that the vote is a yes. But the vote may be a no. Other people will have mixed views on this. Let us be respectful, members. Let us use language that I think takes this debate forward and not drag it down.

**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) (3.50): I rise to speak in support of the Chief Minister's motion and in opposition to Mr Coe's amendment. I am proud to be part of a government and a party that celebrates diversity and stands up for equality. I am proud to stand for values that I believe are reflected in our Canberra community. If we are to live up to our vision of being an inclusive city, we must make a stand in support of marriage equality. If we are going to have this wasteful postal survey then we must campaign for justice and inclusion.

In that regard, I would respond to Mr Hanson's reflection on Mr Steel's comments, and reflect that the Prime Minister, a Prime Minister who believes in marriage equality, has actively chosen to absent himself from this campaign, has actively chosen not to use his leadership position as the Prime Minister of this country to

campaign for something in which he claims to believe. Just as he has done on climate change, he has walked away from his own values and, I suspect, the values of his electorate for political reasons.

As others have said, the fight for marriage rights for LGBTIQ people is a fight for equality, plain and simple, because, while love does not discriminate, the law currently does. The benefits of legal recognition through marriage are substantial. Findings from other jurisdictions have demonstrated that feelings of social inclusion are enhanced among LGBTIQ people when marriage equality is legalised.

However, it is clear that there may be a real cost to LGBTIQ people in the fight to achieve this in Australia. The postal survey process proposed by the federal Liberal government presents a real risk to the wellbeing of LGBTIQ people, particularly young people. We know that LGBTIQ people are already more likely to experience depression and anxiety than the broader population. They are also at greater risk of suicide and self-harm. Among LGBTIQ populations, research clearly shows us that discrimination, abuse, exclusion and prejudice are key contributors to the increased rates of depression, anxiety and self-harm. What we have already seen shows us that prejudice and discrimination will be cornerstones of the campaign against marriage equality.

Let us be frank: there is nothing respectful about the arguments against marriage equality. It is hard to be respectful at the same time that you are disrespecting another person's right to equality. There is nothing respectful about suggesting that the love between two people is less important or less special than the love between another couple simply by virtue of the gender of the people in the couple.

The sense of hurt and discrimination experienced during this campaign will be profound—again, especially for young LGBTIQ people. So I say to all LGBTIQ Canberrans: we are sorry you have to go through this. To all LGBTIQ young people, I say: we are with you and we are proud of you. I commend the Chief Minister's motion.

**MR PETTERSSON** (Yerrabi) (3.54): It is a privilege to speak today on the Chief Minister's motion, unamended. I would like to acknowledge the Chief Minister's longstanding advocacy on this issue. Today, we are sending a message to LGBTIQ Canberrans that we have their back. But we are doing more than just sending a message; today we are taking action. We believe that every Canberran, regardless of their sexuality, has the right to marry the person they love. With this motion the ACT government will campaign for a yes in the marriage equality campaign.

I acknowledge that we are in a bizarre position. The ABS is conducting not a plebiscite but a non-binding postal survey, a survey that will cost \$122 million: money that could be well spent elsewhere. Countless MPs have already confirmed that the result of the survey will not even change their mind. This is frankly ridiculous. But here we are; the campaign for marriage equality must not falter when conservatives throw up these challenges. As a great civil rights campaigner once

remarked, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” It does not happen by chance. You have to fight for progress each and every day.

ACT Labor has had a very clear position on this matter for some time. Back in 2013, the ACT Labor government presented the Marriage Equality Bill, which was then passed by the Assembly. The federal Liberal government challenged our right to legislate these laws and it was overturned by the High Court. But you cannot stop progress—not forever. You can try, as conservatives often do, but there is a momentum to these campaigns that is almost self-sustaining.

I am incredibly proud to be part of a Labor team that will not just be voting yes but will be campaigning and encouraging our communities to vote yes. I am incredibly proud to be part of a government that will also be actively campaigning for a yes vote. I am proud to support this motion put forward by the Chief Minister. I encourage every Canberran to support this campaign.

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (3.56): I too will be supporting Mr Barr’s motion, but not Mr Coe’s amendments. I heard Mr Coe call for a respectful debate on this particular subject. I think that has already gone. Respectful debate requires equality before it gets to the starting line. We are opposed to this postal survey precisely because it is not respectful. But to demand respect when it is not shown to others, well, there is no parliamentary language that adequately describes that.

I do not respect many people. I do not respect sexists. I do not respect homophobes. I do not respect racists. I do not respect people who do not respect others. As a party, as an Assembly and as a territory, we have always stood for equality. It is frustrating that this debate has gone on and on all because a spiteful minority do not want to share. Equal marriage is not going to hurt anyone. It is just going to make people equal. If you think having someone else being treated equal to you takes something away from you, you are already not equal. You are not equal to them at all.

But we cannot be silent, not while equality is denied. The Labor Party is proud of our leadership record when it comes to inclusion and equality. We have been consistent advocates for marriage equality, just as we have always been advocates for stamping out discrimination and exclusion. Whether it is in writing legislation, arguing for fairer workplaces or in advocating for safe schools, Labor has always used its time in government to lead, not to pass the buck on issues as significant as equality on to the community.

I have spoken in this place on previous occasions about how the principles of solidarity inform the union movement’s commitment to a fairer workplace but also a fairer society. This commitment to a fairer society also plays out in the marriage equality debate. Just as workplaces cannot be fair so long as structural inequalities, sexism and discrimination continue to exist, we cannot be a fair society while our LGBTIQ brothers and sisters are denied a basic everyday right that many of us here take for granted.

Finally, I will touch on an expression that is common in the union movement: touch one, touch all. This expression conveys the sense of solidarity that union members

have with workers everywhere, irrespective of how far removed they may be from one's own particular line of work. But it also conveys the solidarity we on this side of the chamber have with the LGBTIQ community.

We are guided by these principles that an attack on one is an attack on all, because we know that rights denied to one cohort undermines progress towards absolute equality. I am proud to be part of this movement and to be on the side that leads, that fights and that will stand alongside those who are denied fairness in our community.

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (4.00): I, too, rise in support of this important motion from the Chief Minister and to oppose the amendment. Continuing on with our theme of quoting others, I would like to quote former British Prime Minister David Cameron, who said to his own party:

Conservatives believe in the ties that bind us; that society is stronger when we make vows to each other and support each other. So I don't support gay marriage despite being a Conservative. I support gay marriage because I'm a Conservative.

How unlucky are we, then, that our conservatives on the big hill prefer to hide and divide, rather than accept that love is love? Instead we get a Prime Minister and a conservative federal government that have gone out of their way to obfuscate a simple issue, rather than accept what everyone already knows: Australia wants marriage equality.

I am proud to be part of a party and a government that stands firmly as an LGBTIQ ally. We believe in respect and dignity for all. What started as a religious institution has become a social and cultural one, and it is time that Australia got with the program. In the words of Peter Tatchell, a gay rights advocate born in Australia but now living in the UK:

Marriage is the internationally recognised system of relationship recognition. It is the global language of love.

The spirit of marriage is not exclusion or judgement. The spirit of marriage is love between two adults who want to spend the rest of their lives together. Sexual orientation should make absolutely no difference.

It stands then that the federal government's cowardice here is a disgrace. But this postal survey is going ahead, so we will work hard to support everyone to get enrolled, to vote and to get the right outcome—the outcome that Australia wants. As Bill Shorten said last week:

Voting 'yes' is not about endorsing this process, it is about refusing to walk past our fellow Australians when they need us.

We will campaign vigorously, as we have all said here today, and we will not be discouraged by any negative campaign.

Finally, I will echo in part what Minister Ramsay said before. Having taken heed of the genuineness of Mr Parton's speech earlier today, both in his support for marriage equality and in wanting to link arms with other supporters, over lunch I contacted Mr Parton and I invited him to the marriage equality community mobilisation forum tonight. I understand it has been communicated directly to Mr Parton that he is very welcome, and I look forward to seeing him there. Like Mr Ramsay, I extend that invitation, and I implore other members in this place, particularly those opposite—and I know that there are more than just Mr Parton, Mr Hanson and Ms Lee who do support marriage equality—to be on the right side and to join the campaign. Come along tonight. To achieve marriage equality, we need as many people as possible who support it to stand together. We need as many people as possible who support it to stand up for human rights, and we need as many people as possible who support it to stand up for humanity.

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (4.04): To close the debate, I thank all members for their contributions. Should the national debate be conducted in the manner that this one has, it would give some hope that perhaps—just perhaps—we will be able to get through this without too much hurt and damage.

However, I fear that, even in the intervening period between when this debate began with my opening remarks and this closing address, events up on the big hill have demonstrated again just how absurd and hurtful this debate is going to be.

Senator Abetz from Tasmania, who I guess we could call a prominent no campaigner, has gone public with a statement that to allow same-sex marriage would be a step towards allowing people to marry inanimate objects. He suggested that in fact people would seek to marry the Harbour Bridge. He has defended these comments publicly in a further media interview, I understand.

I will nominate that as the most absurd comment of this campaign so far. It might remain at the top of the list of the most absurd things that have been said. I do note, though, that humour is often the best way to respond to these sorts of ridiculous assertions, and although Twitter can be full of a lot of hate, it did produce a response to that particular statement from Senator Abetz that I could not help sharing a small chuckle over. Someone observed that marrying the Harbour Bridge could be difficult, as she, the great Harbour Bridge, does involve a lot of maintenance. I will leave it at that.

Suffice to say, in this debate a range of pertinent issues have been raised, and I think it is appropriate to respond to a couple of those and at least to allay some concerns or fears particularly that are associated with the Leader of the Opposition's amendment.

In the first instance, the ACT government's engagement in this process will be to use the time between now and the close of the electoral roll to encourage people who are not on the electoral roll to enrol and to encourage those who are already on the roll to update their address. This will allow them to participate in the non-binding postal survey. I think it is entirely appropriate for the ACT government to utilise our digital

channels—for example, social media, email and the like—to remind people that the rolls close next Thursday afternoon and that if they wish to participate in the voluntary postal survey, they will need to be on the roll; and if they wish to receive their survey form, they need to have their postal address updated with the Australian Electoral Commission. I would hope that no-one would disagree with that as a reasonable action for the ACT government to undertake.

Presuming the postal survey survives the High Court challenge—this will occur and the rulings and hearings on that will take place in early September—and should it actually go ahead, it is also appropriate for the ACT government to utilise various means of communication, be that social media, media releases and otherwise, to remind people to participate in the postal vote survey and advise them of where they can participate, and provide links to various sources of information, for example, if their postal survey does not arrive or if it happens to be raining on the day that the postal survey arrives and their survey form is spoiled, where they might be able to obtain a new form.

The ACT government will also seek to engage with the Australian Bureau of Statistics to see what we can do to streamline and simplify the submission process. The Australian postal service of 2017 is a very different creature from when I was a youngster, when there was a daily postal service. There was a quite extensive network of postboxes and it was quite easy to physically post a piece of mail. In 2017, it is not quite as it was. So we will look to what we can do to assist those who may not be able to get to a postbox to ensure that they are able to participate in the survey.

I understand other Australian state and territory governments will be doing the same. This is much more pertinent, clearly, in rural and remote areas—for example, in the Northern Territory and Western Australia—but there are people in the ACT who may need assistance in that process, and we will be happy to do what we can within the Australian law as it applies to this postal survey.

Equally, the SpringOut Pride Festival, which has been an annual event in this city for at least 18 years, takes place during the postal vote survey period. We have flown the rainbow flags over this city for this festival in the past and we will do so again this year. We will also, through our new office for LGBTIQ affairs, as part of our community engagement, seek to support the LGBTIQ community with a range of measures. We will make, if it is required, additional funding available to a range of community service providers, mental health organisations and others who support the community during traumatic periods.

There is no doubt that what lies ahead will be traumatic for some. It might be difficult for people in this place, because we are used to every element of our public activities and our lives being under a degree of scrutiny; some more than others, clearly, given the nature and profile of their respective positions in this place. But for many people, the concept of their relationship, their life and their family being the subject of discussion, debate or value judgement by everyone else is, frankly, an appalling concept. I just ask you all to think about this for a moment: would you like everyone else to have a vote on your relationship, its legitimacy and its equality before the law?

As we have already seen, this will go beyond just the question of marriage equality. A former Prime Minister has suggested that a no vote is a vote against political correctness; that it is a vote in favour of religious freedom. So already the debate is being significantly expanded. To suggest that extending equal rights to LGBTIQ Australians will somehow undermine religious freedom or further the cause of political correctness is absurd, but it is already a feature of this debate.

There are times in our lives, ladies and gentlemen, fellow members of this Assembly, when we have to stand for something. All too often we debate things in the abstract in this place. But this is something that matters to people. It is going to change people's lives and there is a great risk of doing huge damage to people along the way.

I do not even want to begin to contemplate what will happen in this country if the voluntary postal survey comes back with a no, but it will be devastating for unity in this country. That is why I think it is so important that a yes vote is achieved and why I want the ACT to record the highest participation rate and the highest yes vote, and why we are putting this motion before the Assembly today.

Question put:

That Mr Coe's amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 8

Noes 11

Mr Coe  
Mrs Dunne  
Mr Hanson  
Mrs Kikkert  
Ms Lee  
Mr Milligan

Mr Parton  
Mr Wall

Mr Barr  
Ms Cody  
Ms Fitzharris  
Mr Gentleman  
Ms Le Couteur  
Ms Orr

Mr Pettersson  
Mr Ramsay  
Mr Rattenbury  
Mr Steel  
Ms Stephen-Smith

Amendment negatived.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Appropriation Bill 2017-2018**

[Cognate bill:

Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2017-2018

Cognate papers:

Estimates 2017-2018—Select Committee report

Estimates 2017-2018—Selection Committee—government response]

## **Detail stage**

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure.

Community Services Directorate—Part 1.7.

Debate resumed from 15 August 2017.

**MADAM ACTING SPEAKER:** I remind members that in debating order of the day No 1, executive business, they may also address their remarks to executive business order of the day No 2, and Assembly business orders of the day relating to the report of the Selection Committee on Estimates 2017-2018 and the government response.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (4.19): It is pleasing to see a number of initiatives in the 2017-18 budget in relation to women, but I must admit that they are very hard to identify, which is part of the point of my question earlier today—what is the impact on different groups—and I was specifically speaking about women. I note that the expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children includes an expansion to paediatrics, the high dependency unit and the adolescent unit. All of these are much-needed initiatives; I am not talking against them in any way. But I am concerned that they have been put in the budget papers as initiatives for women, which is bizarre. Are fathers not parents also? Do they not benefit from an expanded paediatrics ward? Are not many adolescents male? By casting these initiatives as initiatives that benefit women we must be really careful not to perpetuate gender stereotypical ideas, and I fear that this is what is happening in the absence of any real gender analysis in the budget and any real assessment of impacts of initiatives on women. It is a way of indicating that women have been considered when, in fact, it is a cursory acknowledgement that women stand to benefit from some of these initiatives.

There are other areas which have been identified, including funding for women in trades and assistance to help mature-age workers enhance their skills. I will talk specifically about mature-age workers because my understanding is that, in fact, while it was mentioned in the budget, it did not actually receive any funding. This is the output area for funding for seniors, and this is one other area where we need some analysis and we have not got it. It is important in a lot of things. It is important in considering the substantial changes that are happening to our taxation base with the move from stamp duty to rates. It is really important in terms of housing. We know the fastest growing group of homeless people are older women. And transport, we know, again, that older people find it more difficult. Yesterday we had the discussion about parking for disabled people. Overwhelmingly disabled people are older people. Either way, whatever age they are, whatever gender they are, we know we are not giving enough emphasis to parking for the disabled, and many other things.

The point I am trying to make is that old people, young people, women, men, intersex et cetera all have different issues, and it is not clear from the budget papers how these different initiatives impact on different groups. As the Greens seniors spokesperson, I say we need to do more. One of the things I am particularly interested in is elder abuse, and there has recently been a commonwealth inquiry into this. It is clear that this is a growing issue of concern and one where I think the ACT may well need to do some work.

I notice the continuing initiatives to increase the number of women joining ACT Fire & Rescue and an investment and commitment to women in sports. Of



course, I applaud both of these. I welcome, of course, the commitment to fund the Women's Legal Centre, because the work they do directly benefits everybody. It directly benefits women engaged in family law and other justice processes where they cannot afford a private lawyer. When we help those who are most vulnerable we become a better city. That is partly women but it is not just women. The CSD needs to deal with women, children and young people, youth protection, multicultural affairs, disability, social inclusion, ATSI, seniors and veterans. All of these groups are very important groups for Canberra, and one of the failings of our budget development process would appear to be, on the basis of Mr Barr's comments, that we do not put enough emphasis on looking at how things impact different groups in our city.

The people who work for the ACT government and the decision-makers here are employed and tend not to be the most vulnerable in Canberra, not the oldest, not the youngest and not the least well off financially, and so we bring our own biases in terms of our decision-making. It is very important to look at the Canberra community as a whole and ensure that what we are doing will support the most vulnerable members of our community.

Equity and fairness means that the people who need help most get the most help. That is one of the things that our budget and particularly the CSD should be concentrating on.

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (4.25): As we discuss appropriations for the Community Services Directorate I wish to raise a small number of issues. This year's budget includes significant spending on increases in child protection and out of home care for children and youth. I do not wish to argue against those increases. In fact, if the need exists we absolutely must meet that need. Investing in the protection and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people is precisely what we should be doing.

On this point I agree fully with what Rebecca Cuzzillo, the policy director of the Youth Coalition for the ACT, said to the estimates committee:

We also welcome the increased investment in child protection and out of home care services.

But, and I quote Ms Cuzzillo again:

We would also like to have seen more investment in prevention and early intervention measures, as this is what will ultimately alleviate the pressures at the tertiary end of our service system.

This is what is so concerning about these funding increases: not that we are spending so much more on essential services but that the need for these services seems to be increasing dramatically. This trend is worrying and suggests that the government is failing to deliver to the people of this territory what it has clearly promised. Let me give one example. The government's out of home care strategy, A step up for our kids, claims that it will shift the pattern of investment to increase expenditure at the front end of the system, aiming to reduce demand for out of home care places, thus averting

significant long-term costs to government and the community. But what have we got in this budget, Madam Assistant Speaker? A nearly \$34 million increase in spending on out of home care places over the next four years.

When I queried this increase in budget estimates hearings, I was later informed that the largest factor was increased demand for the service and the number of children and young people coming into care: increased demand, not a reduction in demand. More and more of our children are entering out of home care and in many cases staying there for a longer period of time, the exact opposite of what we were told would happen under A step up for our kids. This is very worrying.

At the same time it is difficult to find a corresponding increase in funding for prevention and early intervention. In answer to one of my questions on this point, the minister highlighted programs already in place and then also noted a more than \$10 million increase over four years for child and youth protection services. As Ms Cuzzillo suggested, however, CYPS is not exactly at the prevention end of the spectrum. No doubt much good is done by those who work in CYPS to respond to families at risk but by the time such families come to the attention of child and youth protection services, we have moved past prevention to at least the early stages of crisis response.

It is, therefore, important as we go forward through another year to keep our eye on what is happening in this area. As I said earlier, it is essential that we meet increased demand. These are, after all, vulnerable children and young people and it is vital that we provide safe homes for them. If we fail to do so, the cost to society—and I do not mean just a monetary cost—will be far greater. At the same time, I genuinely expect to see a shift in the pattern of investment to increase expenditure at the front end of the system. This is what we have been promised and the government must deliver on that promise.

We simply cannot afford for the demand for out of home care places to just keep rising. The cost in disrupted lives is far too great. Prevention and early intervention must be prioritised, not just with words but with the funding and the focus that will allow them to work.

This brings me to a second concern, also related to vulnerable people and disrupted lives. Another large funding increase in this year's budget has gone to the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. Again, it would be impossible to argue against making sure that the young people who find themselves in Bimberi have all of their needs met. The centre must be fully staffed at all times with qualified workers so that we can avoid the chaos and confusion that create opportunities for things like assaults and brawls to occur.

Educational needs absolutely must be met. Young people often enter Bimberi significantly behind in literacy and in numeracy. Making sure that detainees learn during their period of detention is vital. Most important, of course, is providing for the actual rehabilitation of those who find themselves in the youth justice centre. This is an investment not only of actual funds; the social and financial costs to our community if we do not provide genuine rehabilitation are too great. So if the need is

there, providing the necessary funding cannot be argued against. But, once again, we appear to have cause for concern. For the past few years the number of custody days at Bimberi had been in decline. In the first half of this year, however, the centre has experienced what the current executive director for children, youth and family services referred to during estimates hearings as a relative surge in numbers of young people in Bimberi.

Just as more and more children and young people in this territory are entering out of home care, it appears that more and more children and young people in this territory are now entering the youth justice system, and not just the youth justice system but specifically our detention centre. This is another alarming bit of information from this year's budget.

The government has chosen to pour much-needed funds into Bimberi, but where is the corresponding focus on prevention and early intervention in the budget? The government's blueprint for youth justice tells us that early intervention and prevention are the most effective ways of reducing youth offending and promises that children and young people will be diverted from the justice system wherever possible and practicable with custody being a measure of the last resort. How will we know that the government is succeeding in implementing these principles? The blueprint itself states that one metric is a reduction in detention rates, the opposite of what we are now seeing.

In summary, my takeaway is that the 2017-18 budget is filled with crisis response at the tertiary end of the system but offers little to those who expect the government to be seeking to prevent matters from reaching that end. Ms Cuzzillo stated emphatically that she would:

... continue to call on the ACT government to prioritise early intervention and prevention as a guiding principle when making budgetary decisions.

I take up that call myself this day. Frankly, I am disappointed in this budget and the government's lack of focus on prevention and early intervention, which become clear in these and a number of other areas. I expect better; the people of this territory deserve better.

**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) (4.33): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill 2017-18 and specifically in relation to the Community Services Directorate and my portfolios which are supported by that directorate. It has been said many times that budgets are about values, and I have said many times that vibrant, sustainable and inclusive cities do not just happen; they are built by governments with a vision for a better future. The Barr Labor government is such a government.

We understand how privileged we are to live in this beautiful city and the responsibility we have as MLAs and as a government to keep making it better.

ACT Labor went to the last election with a plan to ensure that our city continues to get stronger, fairer and more vibrant in a time of significant change.

Often the story we hear about Canberra is a story about averages, about a well-educated city with high average incomes. But we know there is a deeper story about Canberra that needs to be told. Those who are doing it tough are not invisible in the eyes of this government. We see them and we will always stand up for them.

This budget recognises the importance of looking beyond the headline figures and delivering the support Canberrans need when they need it. We have made investments in support for Canberrans who might otherwise be left behind, disadvantaged or simply not as engaged and included as they should be: young people, children and families engaged in the child protection system, Canberrans with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans, Canberrans from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Labor values mean that we stand with our neighbours and provide effective services to address their needs.

We do this in partnership with individuals and communities, noting that the community services sector is also undergoing unprecedented change. Many of the old ways of working do not apply in the 21st century. Organisations and governments have to respond to the need for personalised and culturally aware services, because what it is really about is putting people first.

For Canberrans with a disability, the ACT government recognises that it has an important role in providing oversight and policy expertise to ensure that the NDIS delivers for Canberrans. We are providing \$2.2 million over four years for the office for disability to continue the ongoing policy work related to the implementation of the NDIS in the ACT. We are also providing \$200,000 over four years to establish new disability access grants. These grants will support greater social inclusion of people with disability by providing funding for training, increased awareness of disability issues and infrastructure modifications for community organisations.

The government is also improving the responsiveness of our justice system through the development of a disability justice strategy to ensure that people with disability are treated equally before the law. And we are funding a new position of ACT senior practitioner to provide oversight of the use of restrictive practices and work towards their elimination.

In this time of great change for the community service and disability sectors, the budget also committed \$70,000 for SHOUT to continue its operations while it develops the sustainable business model for the important services it delivers to local disability and health-related self-help organisations. We have committed \$200,000 in this budget in addition to the \$50,000 in 2016-17 to develop and commence the implementation of an ACT carer strategy in partnership with Carers ACT.

The ACT government is also continuing its commitment to protect and support our most vulnerable children and young people. This includes \$883,000 to continue the important work of the children and young people death review committee which reviews all child deaths in the ACT, identifies emerging patterns and trends,

undertakes research and makes recommendations aimed at preventing child deaths. As Mrs Kikkert has noted, we are also investing a further \$2.1 million At Bimberi Youth Justice Centre to meet capacity requirements and ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of young people and staff.

This budget delivers a record investment of an additional \$43.8 million over four years into our child protection and out of home care system. This will ensure that we continue to deliver better services to children and young people in Canberra. This package provides additional resources for children and youth protection services in the ACT, boosting the government's investment in new services and reforms through the implementation of A step up for our kids, our comprehensive five-year out of home care strategy.

As Australia responds to the scourge of family violence, our services must respond to increased reporting rates. That is why as part of our package \$10.1 million over four years will go to the front end of our child and youth protection services, funding two new casework teams. For those families who do engage with the child protection system, \$33.7 million has been provided to support children and young people in need of safer environments and to provide additional therapeutic placement options for children who cannot live at home.

We take our responsibilities for children and young people and their families very seriously and have delivered a budget to support them in some of their most difficult times. We also recognise that early intervention is vital. This focus under A step up for our kids has already seen promising results. The uniting children and families ACT program is having a very real impact in keeping children and young people out of the out of home care system, but we know that prevention and early intervention needs to be a focus across the system. Our child and family centres located in Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and west Belconnen deliver a wide range of supports to families and children both within the centres and via outreach services. They are always a joy to visit.

In this budget we are investing \$502,000 to continue the growing the healthy families community building program delivered out of the child and family centres. This program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities with a range of culturally specific, safe and informed services. We, of course, continue to engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through the elected body, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council and directly with the community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. This government recognises that a business-as-usual approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs is not sufficient. We must do more and we must do better.

I was pleased to announce that as part of the budget this government will be supporting new and emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations by establishing a new grants program. Over the next four years seed funding of \$100,000 will be available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have their own solutions and we are working with them to provide more opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans to access culturally strong supports.

We are keen to see more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people starting their own businesses, social enterprises and community organisations. But, critically, we will continue to work closely with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations, appreciating their deep understanding and expertise.

While it is not the direct responsibility of the Community Services Directorate, I would like to note the significant investment in this budget of \$12 million for a new health facility for Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service. I look forward to continuing to work with the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Ms Fitzharris, as this project gets underway.

Within my own portfolio there are two smaller capital projects that will help staff do their important work. This includes an investment of \$700,000 to complete the transfer of critical child protection information to a new client management system. This will enable better access to historical information to support case managers to make the best decisions for children and young people. We have also committed \$326,000 to upgrade the radio system at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

Finally, this government recognises the importance of supporting Canberrans from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who sometimes face discrimination and other systemic barriers that limit their full participation in the life of our community. While culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans already receive support through such services as subsidised training under the skilled capital program or qualifications recognition undertaken by the Community Services Directorate, we know there is more to be done. That is why in this budget we made good on our election commitment to allocate \$1.4 million over four years to assist new migrants looking to enter the workforce by expanding English language programs and by providing a job brokering service for refugees and asylum seekers.

Of course, we will continue to fund many essential community services in this budget across community services, social inclusion, disability, children and youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs and multicultural affairs. As I said earlier, this government responds to a changing city and community. We do not sit still.

In addition to the specific budget measures I have already discussed, recent announcements include: a family group conferencing pilot aimed at keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families together; a review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system to address the unacceptable level of over-representation, something all jurisdictions are grappling with; a task force to take stock of progress under the blueprint for youth justice in the ACT, which has already seen a considerable reduction in the number of young people coming into contact with the youth justice system; and to recommend actions for the second five years of the 10-year strategy.

We will continue to work across government on early intervention and prevention, acknowledging the complex challenges facing too many parents and families who experience intergenerational trauma, family violence, mental illness or drug and alcohol addiction. We know that this requires us all to work together and to work with the community.

We are continuing to work with the community sector on the implementation of the community services industry strategy launched last year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the sector for its constructive engagement through the joint community government reference group. This government will continue to work in the interests of all Canberrans, including those who need our help the most and the community organisations that support them. I commend the bill to the Assembly, knowing this budget will deliver better support when it matters.

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (4.44): I was not planning to speak in this space but Mrs Jones has had to take a sick child to the doctor and I have undertaken to speak on her behalf in relation to the issues related to the women's portfolio. I think that Mrs Jones believes that Minister Berry is trying to find better solutions for women but she also thinks it is clear that we have a long way to go, with much work that still needs to be done.

Mrs Jones has been working to get issues resolved for women and mothers. It is a constant amazement to many of us that wherever we turn it seems that women and mothers are having difficulty finding a smooth and positive work-life balance. Mrs Jones has drawn our attention to this even in this own building where there was no suitable and secure space for women to breastfeed or breast pump. And she has worked over time to have this space improved, and with a positive outcome for any working mothers in the building.

Mrs Jones has also lobbied for a change table and breastfeeding and pumping space in the publicly accessible areas of the Assembly and there is now a change table installed. She has also lobbied for and achieved suitable signage for anyone visiting the building to be able to actually find the facilities. These things may seem small but these things can and do become barriers for women in the workforce and in our community.

At the last election my colleagues and I offered more flexible working arrangements for ACT government employees. This policy would have meant that management would need to deal with requests for flexible working arrangements using an "if not, why not" model, justifying why they could not accommodate requests, putting the onus back on the managers rather than the person requesting flexible working arrangements. Mrs Jones and all the Canberra Liberals stand by this policy as we think it will generally improve the work life balance of many working mothers in the ACT.

Mrs Jones has also advocated for portable toilets to be made available on fire sites where men and women firefighters are stationed for extended periods. Our fires deserve as much support as possible, and a change like this helps. It helps women firefighters as well as men. Had Mrs Jones not raised this matter it is possible that the minister would never have known about it.

Mrs Jones thinks that it is worth while that the ACT government and its Minister for Women conduct a thorough survey of all women in our own government departments to get to the bottom of some of these workplace issues as well as identifying other issues that may be affecting women in our workforce. The ACT government has the

power to make change within its departments and should be leading by example. The ACT government also needs to resolve issues around women's safety in the ACT.

I note that this month the Australian Human Rights Commission released the report *Change the course: national report on sexual assault and sexual harassment in Australian universities*. Here in the ACT we have a number of universities and it is concerning that this report has showed that 1.6 per cent of students were sexually assaulted in a university setting and that 87 per cent of those assaulted did not make a formal report or complaint to the university. It also showed that women are three times as likely as men to have been sexually assaulted in a university setting.

I note the Chief Minister has announced that he will raise this matter with universities and I am keen to hear back on what he proposes. If we want to see women here in the ACT doing as well as they want, Mrs Jones and I strongly suggest a real solution be found to the extraordinarily high number of assaults of young university women in our city.

We also note that the government provided a grant of \$25,000 to the Women's Centre for Health Matters to look at gender and the safe use of public spaces in the ACT. The results are out and show that unfortunately many women do not feel safe in some parts of the ACT. Furthermore, the national survey of community satisfaction with policing shows that only 37½ per cent of ACT women feel safe when they are by themselves, walking or jogging in their neighbourhood at night, and this compares to 77.8 per cent of men.

While it is great that the ACT government has chosen to take action on these issues identified, it must now take action to resolve them. Identification is the first step and the government now needs to follow through. Perhaps there needs to be more consultation with the office for women, which Mrs Jones found out does not get approached by many government directorates and agencies when making policy decisions for women.

We need to find better ways for women to be able to blend the hard work of having a family with having a career. Family should not mean a loss of career for women. We must do what we can in this place to ensure that it is not a loss of a career for women. A lot of young women believe that all the work has already been completed. However, as I have outlined today, there is much more to be done.

We in the Canberra Liberals, along with Mrs Jones, will continue to work and lobby for the women of Canberra to be able to have the family life that they want and the career to earn a good income as well. I hope the ACT government will also work toward these goals.

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (4.50): I am pleased to speak in support of the appropriation bill, and in particular on the measures in the ACT budget to provide services and programs for our seniors and veterans.



The ACT government is committed to building a city in which senior Canberrans are able to lead active, healthy and rewarding lives. An ageing population brings an increased responsibility to protect and support those seniors who have become vulnerable. It also provides a tremendous opportunity to capitalise on one of the largest, most educated generations of social innovators in our nation's history. Initiatives focusing on veterans and seniors are spread throughout the budget, in multiple portfolios. This is reflective of the fact that the government is considering these issues in all areas of its work, looking to improve the lives of those who have served and those in the later stages of life. I would like to draw your attention to just a few of these initiatives today.

This work includes improving access to transport so that senior Canberrans can better retain their independence and stay actively involved in the community. In 2017-18, free off-peak bus travel for seniors and certain concession card holders will continue, allowing them to travel at no cost between 9 am and 4.30 pm and after 6 pm on weekdays, as well as all day on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. In 2017-18 the flexible bus services trial will be expanded to include the inner north, with an investment of over \$1 million in this community transport initiative. This will increase the transport options for those inner north residents who might otherwise struggle to access other forms of transport.

The ACT government is also continuing to increase opportunities for access to employment for mature age workers. The 2017-18 budget includes an investment of \$1 million to assist mature age workers to upskill or to re-skill to take advantage of new employment opportunities. This measure is designed to help contribute to people remaining active, valued and independent as they age, should they wish to remain in employment. This initiative will also benefit the ACT economy, as mature age workers are enabled to find new ways to contribute their valuable skills and experience to the workforce.

In this budget we will strengthen targeted health services, increasing Canberrans' access to specialised care as they age. We are expanding the older persons' community mental health team to provide expert community health services for people over 65. Additionally, a scoping study will be conducted to guide a major investment in broadening the current hospital in the home program to service a wider range of patients. We are also refurbishing and upgrading the acute aged care ward at the Canberra Hospital to improve the quality of inpatient services for our older Canberrans.

The government also has a strong commitment to honouring and supporting those in our community who have served our country in the Australian Defence Force. I will continue to work to ensure that the ACT is a place that is not only welcoming to our veterans but also supportive of them and their families. Employment is known to be a protective factor for veterans against a range of risks, including suicide. In this area, the ACT government is working to put in place measures to enable veterans to take up employment opportunities in the ACT government and the private sector in the ACT.

The ACT government has commenced investigating ways to assist veterans to transition to new employment and volunteer opportunities, both within the ACT government and more broadly across the ACT. We will continue to work with our colleagues in organisations such as Soldier On, the RSL and the numerous other ex-service organisations in the ACT to meet this and other challenges faced by younger veterans, and we look forward to making further announcements regarding this in the future.

In this budget the government continues its participation grants program, where we will be providing funding to organisations that 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 through sport, the arts, skills development and training or other programs promoting social connectedness. We will be providing grants of up to \$10,000 to help those organisations that aim to ensure that our veterans are integral and active participants in the ACT community and those who are supporting the families of veterans. I commend to the Assembly a budget that supports our efforts in regard to these important parts of our community.

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (4.55): The budget allocation for the Community Services Directorate is significant, with an allocation of \$257 million in recurrent and capital injections and 593 FTE directly employed. My focus today is the work done to support people with a disability. When the ACT first announced it was transitioning its disability clients to the NDIS, starting in 2014, there was great excitement and enormous optimism. Three years later, there are still a great many teething problems.

Organisations and clients are falling through the cracks; some are being propped up with short-term funding but with no real direction and certainty; and there is increasing scepticism within a number of sectors that the right balance is yet to be found. Perhaps, as the leading site for the rollout of the NDIS, it is to be expected that there would be many grey areas. However, from talking with various groups within and on the periphery of the disability sector, many fear that things may not be better than before.

During the estimates hearings the minister acknowledged that while there had been a lot of people who had had good experiences with the NDIS, there were and are others still experiencing difficulties across a number of areas: understanding the best direction to take; finding the right plan manager; navigating through a whole new world of service providers competing for work; having significant issues raised about participant pathways; having unexpected outcomes from plan reviews; having delays in getting plans reviewed or adjusted; and encountering the absolute inflexibility to change just one element of a particular participant's plan. That is to name a few of the common issues that were brought to my attention.

During her estimates attendance, the minister referenced the work of the Disability Reform Council and said that this and a number of other issues were being worked through in this forum. Reference was also made to the work of the senior officers working group, who advocate on behalf of the community and the participants in the ACT who are experiencing problems with their plans.

CSD Director-General Michael De'Ath told the committee that he had been given "very clear direction on the ongoing role of the territory government and the directorate in relation to support, advocacy and oversight for all those people who are either affected or are supporting people with a disability". He went on to say that the reason for establishing the office for disability and staffing it with appropriate skills was to "ensure that these ongoing roles and functions are carried out; in particular, the high level, ongoing nature of negotiations and discussions with the commonwealth".

Mr Assistant Speaker, I am encouraged to hear that the issues raised by the ACT government in its submission to the Productivity Commission review of the financial sustainability of the NDIS are continuing to be discussed. It is not unreasonable to expect that contingencies be anticipated and addressed. Many of the glitches have been administrative in nature and are fixable. Payment processes and the online portal, plan design issues, streamlining review processes for plans, additional training and resources for planners—these can all be addressed and improved. I acknowledge the work of the federal Liberal government in having addressed many of these initial issues and the work it is doing to continue to improve the NDIS experience for all participants.

But I remain concerned that while there is a high level policy focus in the senior officials groups and the Disability Reform Council at the ACT level—indeed, the minister just said that the role of the ACT government is to provide ownership and policy leadership—on the issues that directly affect people who live day to day with a disability, the government is failing to provide core support or confidence. These are the people and groups who do not fit neatly into the predetermined NDIS world and seem to now have no-one to turn to. Before the introduction of the NDIS, they did. It was through the ACT Community Services Directorate. Given the relatively small funding for the office and the small amount in the budget for disability access grants of \$50,000 a year to fund training, increased awareness and infrastructure modifications for community organisations, the real concern is that this is rhetoric rather than real value.

We have seen the ongoing issues with a number of not-for-profit groups who, in some instances, have been operating for decades, safe in the knowledge that they had the ongoing support of the ACT government to deliver much needed support services to the Canberra community. An example I draw to the attention of members, one that the minister brought up herself today, is the debate that we had in this very chamber about the future of SHOUT and the 47 groups that it supports, the 47 groups that are sitting uneasy with SHOUT's future up in the air. Some of these are the groups that risk closure because their only failing is that they do not fit neatly into the NDIS defined disability mould. Many of them do not qualify for transitional funding because they will not be transitioning to the NDIS. In some cases, they could be reasonably categorised as allied health; however, when I brought forward the motion imploring the government to support SHOUT earlier this year, the government dismissed many of these groups as disability groups and, therefore, not the responsibility of ACT Health.

The groups that were previously funded under Disability ACT did not choose to be funded under that particular budget line item; it was a decision made by the government. The ad hoc history of funding and responsibility for SHOUT shows a clear lack of responsibility, shunted from disability to health and back again. Perhaps it was just bad luck that they fell into the disability category at the time of transitioning to the NDIS. Perhaps if they had been funded under health they would not have been forced to seek a lifeline from the government earlier this year, to which the government responded with a one-off \$70,000 on the condition that it is to be used to deliver a “sustainable business model”—in other words, a model that lets the government off the hook on funding.

A recommendation of the estimates report, one that I am pleased to see the government has agreed to, is that the minister:

... work with other relevant directorates to develop a clear strategy to ensure ongoing support for community groups in the allied health and disability sectors who are unable to access funds under the National Disability Insurance Scheme framework, but who nevertheless provide valuable services to the disabled and wider ACT community and have done so for many years.

I will be keeping close scrutiny on the government to ensure that they do, indeed, deliver on this commitment and to ensure that it does ensure ongoing support for these local community groups.

The ACT government recognised that there was a need for transitional funding for a number of groups, both directly related to disability and also on the periphery, and lobbied the federal government to provide funds through the ILC grants. Of course, not all groups were successful. Unsuccessful applicants were given no feedback by the NDIA; there is little prospect of them being successful in future applications if they do not know where they failed.

The government has chosen to only note recommendation 123 in the estimates report:

... that the ACT Government write to the National Disability Insurance Agency and request that feedback be provided to unsuccessful ACT applicants for Information Linkages and Capacity building grants.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** Because we have already done it.

**MS LEE:** That is good to hear. Thank you for confirming that, minister. I note that. If you could send me a copy of that, it would be great because all we know on the record is that you were only noting it. So that is good. I do note, however, that the minister says in the government response to the estimates committee:

The ACT Government will continue to work with the Commonwealth to ensure that important and valued community supports and investments are not lost.

I do hope so.

There is an opportunity now, as we move to the latter stages of transition, to assess what was provided before and how we can retain those valued services. Community organisations like SHOUT and radio 1RPH have operated very efficiently with relatively small amounts of public money and provide enormous value through many hundreds of hours of volunteer support work. The work that these groups do saves ACT taxpayers significant amounts through proactive, preventative advice, guidance and self-help before having to resort to more costly formal health intervention. This is why the Canberra Liberals will continue to advocate on behalf of these groups, the groups that are in danger of falling through the cracks. We recognise the important role they play in our community and we are at a loss sometimes to understand why the government talks the talk but has failed on a number of occasions to walk the walk.

It is the government that has the responsibility and a moral obligation to look after our vulnerable Canberrans and the local community groups who support them, the groups who have gone above and beyond to focus on what they do best—providing advice, guidance and a safe place, all on the tightest of budgets—only to now sometimes have the rug pulled out from under them, giving them no certainty about their future or the future of thousands of Canberrans who rely on them. The Canberra Liberals will not remain silent on these issues and will continue to support such groups to help themselves and the Canberra community.

**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) (5.04): I rise to speak about the women's portfolio, on behalf of the Deputy Chief Minister. As I do so, I would like to both commend Ms Lee on her advocacy for the community and reiterate my offer that she is, of course, welcome to request a briefing at any time on any matter in the portfolio, as she has had before. We have had ongoing conversations about the disability portfolio, which I welcome.

The ACT government is committed to achieving authentic gender equality in the ACT. We have worked hard to make significant gains in this area; for example, in women's employment, education, participation and representation in sport and recreation, leadership, representation on boards and committees and, of course, addressing the gender pay gap. But gender equality is about more than leadership, education and pay. While these domains are extremely important and we will continue to forge ahead for change, so also is the right to feel safe both in our homes and in public places. Sadly, some evidence suggests that we are going backwards in some areas.

Alarmingly, 25 per cent of young Australians still believe domestic violence can be excused if the offender gets so angry that he loses control or if he regrets it later. And 20 per cent of young Australians still believe women say no when they mean yes. And one in two young men think that tracking a partner electronically without their consent is acceptable to some degree. These findings from the 2013 national community attitudes towards violence against women survey also found that young

Australians, particularly young men, are more likely than older Australians to hold attitudes that are supportive of domestic violence.

The survey found young people agree with the concept of gender equality in public roles such as education and employment but they are less likely to support gender equality in the private sphere, with more than 22 per cent of young people agreeing that men should take control for decision-making in relationships while 16 per cent of older Australians felt the same way.

It is for these reasons that we continue to fund initiatives which support women and girls in the ACT, through the work of the office for women. We are committed to addressing the attitudes and behaviours which restrict their freedom and deny them the right to feel safe and have their perspectives taken seriously. The first action plan 2017-19, which Minister Berry launched in March this year, was based on extensive consultation with all directorates, the community sector and the ministerial advisory council for women, which will drive its implementation going forward.

The office for women will continue to provide direct support to thousands of women in the community who experience disadvantage or barriers to information, education and support services. This will be done through the women's information line, which provided essential information to almost 3,000 women and linked them into relevant support services in 2016-17. The return to work program assisted another 160 women to overcome barriers to education and employment through the provision of \$1,000 grants. We are committed to continuing these valuable programs in 2017-18.

Grants will also be made available to assist women and girls to realise their dreams via the young women's enrichment program and leadership workshops. The annual ACT women's grants program will continue to fund organisations that have developed innovative projects aimed at improving pathways for women's participation and preventing violence against women.

The office for women will also sponsor a local woman via the Churchill Fellowship to undertake academic research into unconscious bias and barriers to gender equality in countries that have better credentials in this regard than Australia. In the past decade Australia has slipped from 31 to 46 on the World Economic Forum's gender equality ranking. There will be ongoing acknowledgement and celebration of achievements in this area through the violence prevention awards and the ACT women's awards. The office for women will also continue the important work of providing advice on the gender balance for ACT government board and committee appointments and providing secretariat support to the ministerial advisory council on women. There is also work being undertaken to create a more user-friendly electronic version of the women's register to better support the representation of women on ACT boards and committees.

Of course, our commitment to addressing family and domestic violence is ongoing, and the \$30 household levy we introduced last year will continue to fund the important work being undertaken by the office for the Coordinator-General for Family Safety. The ACT government will also work closely with the commonwealth government to reduce violence against women and children. Given that the

ACT prevention of violence against women and children strategy 2011-17 is being finalised at the end of this year, our local initiatives will in subsequent years be aligned with the national plan to reduce violence against women and their children, the third action plan, sometimes referred to as 3AP. This will reduce duplication of reporting requirements, allowing the ACT to focus more attention on supporting the initiatives identified in the safer families package. On behalf of the Deputy Chief Minister, I commend the bill.

**MR MILLIGAN** (Yerrabi) (5.10): The Indigenous affairs portfolio covers many areas: education, health and workforce planning, which I have already spoken briefly on. In this chamber on 7 August last year Chris Bourke presented the *ACT Closing the Gap Report 2015*, only the third for the ACT. The report was intended to bring together information on programs and initiatives, as well as key performance data on the ACT's progress in improving life outcomes for Canberra's Indigenous communities. With that report already 12 months behind on key information, he announced it would be the last one.

No longer would the government report using the national targets set by the COAG agreement. Instead, they would use the seven key focus areas of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement. But this agreement does not include any outcomes or targets; it is just very nice words or, as members of the Indigenous community tell us, "Just a bunch of meaningless words, and we are tired of words." It emerged during the estimates hearings that future reports would use an outcomes framework to be developed alongside the new agreement. But the framework does not exist. What we heard during the estimates hearings from the office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs was that the outcomes framework that would set the targets was "underway". This is two years after the launch of the agreement and a year after it was announced that this would drive future action. So for the last two to three years the directorates have had no real targets to aim for to improve the outcomes for Indigenous Canberrans.

This clearly explains why there is so much dismal failure of this government in the important area of Indigenous affairs. It is easy to miss targets if none have been set. To me, though, it begs the question: why remove the COAG targets if you have nothing to replace them with? If this is of the highest priority, as mentioned by the director in the estimates hearings, why has it still not been developed? In reviewing the budget papers for this year I cannot discover that extra funding was set aside for the development of the outcomes framework or a strategic objective listed for 2017-18 or an accountability indicator. I note that there is an accountability indicator for the development of the next agreement, yet it would seem the current agreement was not completed. The outcomes framework is missing, leaving the directorates with little strategic direction for making a difference for moving forward.

Indigenous affairs is an area that needs a greater level of clarity. The Canberra community, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, deserve to know what efforts are being made to improve the outcomes of Indigenous members of the community. They deserve to know what programs are in place, what money is being spent and how well that money is meeting its targets. We agree with the estimates committee that to continue to move forward the government needs to examine how other jurisdictions

manage funding and reporting to ensure cross-portfolio outcomes. This would ensure that all matters pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are responded to appropriately and with transparency. We agree with the committee's recommendations that for all future budgets and annual reports the ACT government should provide a separate annex detailing Indigenous spending, progress made against targets and other outcomes reached and do this for relevant output classes and accountability indicators.

I want to turn now to another area of the budget for this directorate. I spoke recently in the Assembly about this important area of particular concern—the large and growing number of Indigenous children receiving the support of child and youth protection services. It has jumped from 520 to 730 in the last 12 months. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare annual report on child protection for 2015-16 shows that the rate ratio for Indigenous children receiving child protection services in the ACT was nearly 12 times that of non-Indigenous. That is the highest in Australia. I continue to question: are we in the ACT heading towards a second stolen generation?

What concerns me even more is that this government has not yet understood that to make a difference the Indigenous community needs to be involved. I draw the minister's attention to a recent report released by the ABS based on the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey, which states that to make a difference in educational, employment and training outcomes and to lower engagement with high-risk and antisocial behaviours, Indigenous children need to be connected to their community, culture and local language.

The survey showed that an important part of building connections to community, culture and family for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was spending time with community leaders and elders. Particularly in the early years, investment in culture was critically important. It provided social and emotional benefits not only for the children but also for their families and communities. There was evidence that this investment strengthened communities, bridged cultural divides, fostered resilience, and contributed to reconciliation—all the things that lead to closing the gap and improving outcomes for Indigenous communities.

This government has promised to spend half a million dollars on the growing healthy kids program. In the brochure this appears to be for the Indigenous community, but it is an initiative which does not solely involve the Indigenous community and is actually for the whole Canberra community. Although during the estimates hearings the director reported that Gugan Gulwan was involved in the growing healthy kids strategy in Gungahlin, we have been advised by Gugan that this is not the case. As a side note, there is yet again no additional funding in this year's budget to meet the growing needs of this organisation and to support them in the wonderful work they do in the Indigenous community.

We applaud the current announcement of the pilot for a family group conferencing intervention program. We would like to know what money is being spent on this. Where in the budget is this initiative covered? We wish to know what outcomes are being sought for the family group conferencing initiative and how this will reduce the



number of children in care. What was the list of other tenders received for the pilot? What criteria contributed to the decision that that organisation chosen was the best placed organisation to deliver the pilot program?

We also applaud the establishment of an inquiry into the high numbers of Indigenous children in care. But, again, we want to know what specific money is being spent on the inquiry, when it will start and who will head the inquiry. We call on the government to release the terms of the inquiry forthwith, prioritising this as a matter of some urgency. We call on the minister to table in the Assembly the cost involved for both projects. We agree with the committee's comment that it is important for the Assembly and the community to be fully aware of outcomes and trends moving forward in this important area, especially for Indigenous children receiving child protection services and Indigenous children in out of home care.

We therefore agree with the committee's recommendation that the ACT government report quarterly to the ACT Legislative Assembly on the progress made in reducing the need for out of home care places, with particular attention given to the reporting of Indigenous numbers. Furthermore, we agree that the ACT government report on how 2017-18 funding for the child protection system will be expended, as well as required reporting and accountability targets with particular reference to the plight of Indigenous children.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (5.18): I rise to talk about the veterans' affairs portfolio as part of this line item. I will start by talking about an event that the minister and I went to last week, which was for HMAS *Canberra*. It is a very lovely event that occurs every year to commemorate the loss of HMAS *Canberra* in 1942. It was great to see the minister there. We shared a bit of a chat afterwards.

So that members can be aware of the significant linkage to this city, HMAS *Canberra* was first floated in 1927, and the coat of arms that sits behind the Speaker was actually designed specifically for HMAS *Canberra*. At that stage the ACT did not have a coat of arms. The ship HMAS *Canberra* was to be launched. It needed a badge, a coat of arms, to go with it; hence we have our coat of arms that then formed part of the badge of HMAS *Canberra*.

HMAS *Canberra*, which was a heavy cruiser, then took part in World War II, in a series of operations, including Guadalcanal, and in the battle of Savo Island, where HMAS *Canberra* was lost. Many people are unaware of this, but the ship bearing our city's name was lost, with the loss of 84 lives and 109 wounded.

As the minister will attest, there was an excellent speech on the day, talking about the ferocious battle and the very gallant attempts to save the ship against all odds—the American ship that came and provided the rescue parties, and the ongoing battles that the crew of HMAS *Canberra* fought when they went on to serve on another ship, HMAS *Shropshire*. On the guns they would write “HMAS *Canberra*”; they never forgot.

HMAS *Canberra* (II) was another ship that sailed with our name on it. Currently, HMAS *Canberra* (III) is the biggest ship in the Navy's inventory. It is one of the

biggest amphibious ships, along with HMAS *Adelaide*. HMAS *Canberra* is currently the flagship of the Royal Australian Navy and carries as part of its badge our coat of arms. It is significant and poignant to think of the sailors, soldiers—as it is an amphibious ship—and others that will be on that ship bearing our name and our coat of arms who will be putting themselves in harm's way, particularly if there is a conflict.

I make these points because there is no doubt that there are significant linkages between us, the ADF and the veterans community in this town. As the national capital, we are the home of the headquarters of the ADF, the Army headquarters, Navy headquarters and Air Force headquarters. We have the Russell Offices, which we all know, Campbell Park offices and, of course, Duntroon and ADFA as the training establishment for officers.

I think it is appropriate that, as we have this position, we do what we can to look after those currently serving or ex-service personnel. We have many thousands of them here in the ACT. I note that tomorrow is Vietnam Veterans Day, commemorating the Battle of Long Tan, where 18 Australians died. There will be an event tomorrow at the memorial on Anzac Parade, at 10 o'clock. I may see you there, minister.

**Mr Ramsay:** Indeed.

**MR HANSON:** Yes, I will see you there again. We should share a lift again. There is no doubt that our Vietnam veterans—as with veterans of World War II and World War I, but particularly the Vietnam veterans—were treated very shabbily when they returned. I am very glad that our community is better. I served in a very unpopular war in Iraq, but when I got back no-one condemned me for that. They blamed the politicians, and rightly so. They did not blame the service personnel. It was different for the Vietnam veterans. I think that is a poor episode in our history, and I am glad that history is not being repeated. It is important that we commemorate, remember and acknowledge the service of those veterans who have paid such a heavy price.

Against that backdrop, some of the work that has been done with the establishment of the veterans' affairs portfolio and the Veterans Advisory Council—which were Liberal initiatives, but I am glad that the government took them on—is a positive thing. There is this lingering problem of the speech from Ms Cody. I have given the minister the opportunity on a number of occasions to resolve it. I did so in estimates. I asked him to deal with this issue. Instead of doing so he accused me of being disrespectful and refused to answer the question. He said, “You need to move on; you're just like a hammer on this issue.” I will continue with it because it is important.

Ms Cody came in here earlier and talked about how, with the CFMEU and unions, it is “touch one, touch all”. That is not the language of Defence and veterans, but certainly, if you attack our mates, if you attack one veterans organisation and say such heinous things about the RSL, you can understand how that resonates throughout the veterans community. Veterans across this town are still flabbergasted—and I am deeply connected with a lot of organisations—that those words have gone unchallenged and are not being condemned either by the minister or by the Chief Minister. They remain hanging there.

Many of us who were here for the speech were aware of the issue, but there were some untruths that were spoken—that men are expected to urinate on Aboriginals. Having said what was not true, Ms Cody then said:

The Sussex Inlet RSL are a disgrace. They are a disgrace to themselves, a disgrace to the veterans they claim to represent and a disgrace to Australia.

She also said that they are “people who either are or stand by racists”.

Ms Cody then went on to say that the RSL more broadly had a disgraceful history. Against the backdrop of what I just talked about with HMAS *Canberra* and Vietnam veterans, you can see how Ms Cody’s speech and those words, which have been very well publicised—I was unaware of them until they got blasted out on the front page of the *Canberra Times* and she spoke to the media about it—have resonated very negatively with a lot of people.

There will be Vietnam veterans out there tomorrow who have suffered greatly, who expect their government to support them, to stand by them, and then they read comments like this and note the failure of the minister or the Chief Minister to say, “That was wrong, and unequivocally I apologise and condemn those comments.” We could deal with it; we could resolve this issue, because it lingers. We have apologies, such as to the stolen generations, because they are an important part of healing wounds. There has been a grievous wound caused by Ms Cody to many hundreds of veterans across this town that remains unresolved.

One issue in particular that came out of estimates was when we looked at what programs were being run by the government that are specifically aimed at supporting veterans. I do not know whether the minister will give a tacit acknowledgement, but I think that when that line of questioning came up in estimates the response was inadequate. I asked questions about programs for veterans and we were told about the model railway club and other initiatives. It seemed that there were no specific initiatives aimed at supporting veterans.

I note that in the last sitting there was a question without notice, a Dorothy Dixier, so I imagine that the minister was equally disappointed with the response from some of the officials. I note that he has provided further information. I think it is important that we have specific initiatives aimed at veterans. I encourage the government to pursue that. These initiatives need to be mindful of the unique nature of military service. Just saying, holus-bolus, “You can go along to the model railway club,” is not an adequate response.

I am encouraged by some of the minister’s words—what he said in his speech. I hope that is the way this is progressing; if that is the case, that is good. This is an area that has always been—I would not seek for it to be otherwise—bipartisan. That has always been the case in this place, except for Ms Cody’s intervention. If it were not for that then I would spend more time congratulating the government on taking up some of these initiatives. I wish that we could put that issue behind us, but it will not be put behind us until the minister or the Chief Minister acts on that. I know that there

remains a lot of hurt in the veterans community about that issue. (*Second speaking period taken.*)

In closing, I am disappointed that the budget will not have a specific line for veterans' issues. That was a recommendation that came out of the estimates report which I think would be useful. I know that is a bit of a frustration in other areas as well—women, Indigenous and so on—where it is very difficult to track what is being provided by the government. If they are not going to provide that specific budget line item, I ask that the minister provide a consolidated response so that next year in estimates, when we come to the same line of questioning, he is able to provide a more fulsome response on the specific initiatives that are addressing veterans' issues in the ACT.

I look forward to seeing the minister tomorrow at the Vietnam veterans event, and no doubt at many other events that will occur. As I said, despite the poisoning of the well by Ms Cody, which is really unfortunate, this is an area where we should all be working and striving together to acknowledge the sacrifice of the many thousands of veterans, men and women, that we have living here in our great city.

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (5.30): As shadow minister for youth I am grateful for this opportunity to speak on one more matter relating to appropriations for the Community Services Directorate. I will be brief and to the point. During estimates hearings both Mr Wall and I asked the minister for youth about specific budget measures designed to address youth unemployment and underemployment, which are quite high in the territory. In fact, youth unemployment in the ACT grew from a low of 3.8 per cent in July 2008 to 10.5 per cent in May this year.

In response to our questions, the minister told us that the territory is not unique in having a high unemployment rate for young people. She pointed to the overall state of the ACT economy, including growth in the tourism industry, and she declared that the government already has a range of measures in place to assist young people in securing employment. She also confirmed that this budget includes no specific projects or programs targeting youth unemployment. It is all just business as usual.

She also said that if the Youth Advisory Council proposes specific measures looking at the engagement of young people in the workforce and what more we can do about that, "we will take that seriously". In response, the Select Committee on Estimates recommended that the government "develop specific initiatives that address youth unemployment and underemployment".

This week we received the government's response to the select committee's report, in which the government agreed in principle to this recommendation. This supposed agreement does not appear to be serious, however, if one reads the details. First, the government, unlike the minister, reviews a number of already existing measures that are in place, including education and training. Then the government says that it will:

... continue to explore new options and strengthen collaborative partnerships ...

But to what end? I continue to quote from the response:

... across relevant government and community organisation programs, to improve understanding of how unemployed or underemployed youth may better access and navigate existing employment related vocational education and training initiatives.

That is it. Apparently all of the needed measures are already in place and the government's job is merely to help our unemployed and underemployed young people better understand and use those existing services. This does not sound to me like a commitment to develop specific initiatives that deal with this problem.

Rebecca Cuzzillo, policy director for the Youth Coalition of the ACT, told the select committee:

We are particularly disappointed with the lack of investment in specific initiatives to address ... youth unemployment and underemployment.

So am I. And I am disappointed in the government's lukewarm response to this recommendation from the Select Committee on Estimates. The minister said that she will take seriously any recommendations on this matter proposed by the Youth Advisory Council. Why, I ask, does the minister need to wait on an advisory council? She has the recommendation from the Youth Coalition and the recommendation from the Select Committee on Estimates already. Is this not enough?

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (5.34): In light of this year's budget making a record investment to the care of Canberra's children and young people I would like to take the opportunity to speak of my experience growing up alongside children in care. When I was growing up, my family fostered many children, sometimes for a short time, sometimes for a longer time, and in the case of my siblings, forever.

Each child who came into our care was unique. The reasons they came into care were unique and the care they needed was unique. Growing up with all these children and getting to know their stories firsthand taught me that stability and support is the best thing for each of them and their birth or carer families. That is why, when it is possible, the best place for a child is to be with their birth family. When this is not possible, every effort should be made to ensure that a child has a safe, stable and loving home.

Building on the safer families package announced last year, the measures in this year's budget strengthen the coordinated strategy we have taken with child and youth protection. The 2017-18 budget includes \$10.1 million in additional funding for the child and youth protection service within the Community Services Directorate. This funding will provide two additional casework teams, allowing deeper consideration of each individual case. In addition, we are investing \$33.7 million in an integrated approach with our community partners to provide safer environments and additional support to those children who are unable to live with their birth families. This budget commits to the continued implementation of the government's A step up for our kids reforms and, taken together, these measures put the resources where they are needed most.

Where early intervention can prevent a child from entering care, support will be made available to the child and the birth family to enable this. When this is not possible the focus is on ensuring that the child finds a safe and stable home. When a child is faced with the possibility of being taken under care, no decision is ever taken lightly. This budget enables those decisions to be made with the best interests of the child at heart and for those decisions to be supported with the right services.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Cultural Facilities Corporation—Part 1.8.

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (5.36): One of the best things that has ever been done in this territory by a government is to establish the Cultural Facilities Corporation. Even as a government-owned corporation, it operates in a highly entrepreneurial manner, achieving positive and growing outcomes and taking a pragmatic approach to its work. All of this is despite, or perhaps even in spite of, a government whose arts minister has no strategy for growth in the arts sector.

The Cultural Facilities Corporation has a broad remit. It runs the Canberra Theatre Centre, the Canberra Museum and Gallery and some of the ACT's most iconic heritage landmarks: Lanyon, Calthorpes' House and Mugga Mugga. It offers a wide range of performing arts events at the Canberra Theatre and the Playhouse, visual arts exhibitions at the Canberra Museum and Gallery—or CMAG—and community-based activities at its heritage sites. It cares for and curates the Nolan collection, the Dawn Waterhouse collection and an ever-expanding collection of artworks and other objects. I note, too, that the former Nolan gallery at Lanyon will become the Lanyon heritage centre and will have exhibition and learning spaces for education and community programs.

Given the history of the Nolan gallery and how it came to be, I was quite critical of its closure during the Seventh Assembly. I know that the late Lady Mary Nolan was very distressed by that closure, even to the point of demanding the return of her works that were on loan. But I am pleased with the respect the corporation has shown the Nolan collection by creating a permanent exhibition space at CMAG. I am also pleased to see that the former Nolan gallery now will be put to some very good use to enhance the visitor experience at Lanyon. This is a testament to the corporation's vision.

The Cultural Facilities Corporation is well attuned to the matters of cultural interest and works closely with our community through its four community-based advisory committees. As well as its staff, the Cultural Facilities Corporation engages a team of volunteers who make a positive contribution to the visitor experience at the historic places it manages. The corporation tells me that its volunteers enjoy the work they do because it allows them to develop and share knowledge, practical skills and talents and to make sustained friendships.

The dedication of the volunteers contributes to high satisfaction rates for visitors, thus enhancing their tourism experience in Canberra. On top of all that, the Cultural Facilities Corporation is very proactive in contributing to things like the ACT arts

policy. How disappointed and frustrated the corporation must feel when it sees a finished document that is little more than buzzwords and motherhood statements. Indeed, the government, and particularly the Minister for the Arts and Community Events, could learn much from the corporation's strategic plan. It is a simple but comprehensive document that covers five years and has a range of readily measurable targets. In working to that document the corporation embraces every opportunity it can to build and grow its business, improve customer experience and address community trends.

It is ever aware of the challenges and meets them head on. For example, it has worked closely with all parties to ensure its customers are impacted as little as possible with the development of Constitution Place. Further, it has achieved a commitment for enhanced facilities for its customers when Constitution Place opens to the public. Indeed, the Cultural Facilities Corporation often quietly and in the background works towards future growth and expansion. For some years it has talked quietly about the new lyric theatre for Canberra, and finally this strategy is paying off. There is money in the budget for a proposed consultation on what it might look like. There are still no guarantees; the government is saying nothing will happen in the current budget cycle and that takes us into the next Assembly.

One very laudable objective of the Cultural Facilities Corporation is to be less reliant on government. However, the corporation anticipates an increase in the cost to government per visitor or patron from an estimated actual of \$17.86 in 2016-17 to \$22.87 in 2017-18. It is attributed to an estimated decline in visitor and patron numbers during 2017-18 from what was achieved in 2016-17. This is a disappointing picture and I hope that the corporation's continuing entrepreneurial approach to its public programs will yield a better result.

Indeed, this happened in 2016-17 when actual visitor and patron numbers exceeded the target set for the year. If I go back to the Corporation's annual report for 2010-11, I find that the cost to government per visitor or patron was \$28.74 back then. Even the target for that year was \$24.63; so there has been some improvement over the intervening years. The corporation's own-source revenue has remained relatively stable. The target and outcome for 2016-17 was 46.3 per cent, and the target for 2017-18 is only slightly less, at 45.9 per cent. I am confident that the corporation will remain focused on these elements into the future.

Madam Assistant Speaker, entrepreneurship involves risks and every venture that the corporation puts on, particularly in the performing arts, will involve a degree of risk. But in staging these productions the corporation takes a calculated risk. Sometimes they do not pay off but at other times they can be spectacularly successful. I am sure that the forthcoming production of *Mama Mia!* later this year will be in the category of spectacular successes.

Indeed, I know the entire season is selling extremely well. The corporation's CEO told the estimates committee that they were expecting to sell 30,000 tickets for that season. That will fill the Canberra Theatre 25 times over. This will mean not only better results for the corporation but also, significantly, to the territory's tourism

outcomes. Theatre tickets, hospitality, retail and other tourist activities will all benefit from this production being staged at the Canberra theatre.

I will leave it there, Madam Assistant Speaker. I am positive about the Cultural Facilities Corporation. I am positive about its contribution to Canberra's cultural and heritage life and I am positive about its engagement with the community in the arts. I remain hopeful that this government may one day aspire to meet the benchmarks set by the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (5.43): I am most pleased to speak in support of the appropriation bill, in particular the measures of the ACT budget for the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

Measures contained in the \$21.6 million arts package of the 2017-18 budget include \$280,000 to upgrade lighting at the Canberra Museum and Gallery with more efficient and modern technology. We are also providing \$100,000 to undertake a community consultation process on the future of the Canberra Theatre complex, and more widely the current capacity for performing arts in the territory, to identify what infrastructure may be required to meet the needs of our growing community into the future.

This funding is in addition to the \$8.7 million annually that goes towards funding the Cultural Facilities Corporation which runs the Canberra Theatre Centre, the Canberra Museum and Gallery, the Nolan collection, and historic places Lanyon, Calthorpes' House and Mugga Mugga. The CFC will also receive \$792,000 this year as the final stage of a major upgrade at the Canberra Theatre Centre. This means that, over the six years from 2012-13 to 2017-18, the government has invested nearly \$9.5 million in ensuring the centre remains fit for purpose as the region's premier performing arts centre.

The CFC will receive \$398,000 this year for smaller building works across all its sites. This will fund a range of priority works and upgrades in areas such as water supply and irrigation, fencing, conservation, signage, gallery spaces, exhibition furniture, collection management software, and reception and cafe facilities. This government is most proud of the CFC's stewardship of the ACT's cultural facilities. We are committed to continuing to support the thriving, diverse arts ecology that we are so fortunate to have here in the ACT. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Education Directorate—Part 1.9.

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

## Adjournment

Motion (by **Mr Gentleman**) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.



**Wakakirri**

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (5.46): Three weeks ago I had the absolute delight of attending the dress rehearsal for the 2017 Wakakirri performance at Charnwood-Dunlop Primary School. I am not sure I have adequate words to describe the magic of watching the young boys and girls enthusiastically present their performance. I still have happy memories of what I experienced at this event.

Wakakirri is an Aboriginal word that means “to dance a story”. The Wakakirri program, first established in 1992, is now Australia’s largest performing arts event for schools. Open to every school in the nation, the primary school segment for Wakakirri currently involves over 20,000 students from every state and territory, and over one million people, including me, watch Wakakirri performances each year.

In order to prepare for their performance, students and teachers create an original story and then theatrically retell that story using a combination of dancing and acting, all set to music. Performers can include any combination of performances, music, sets, props and costumes. The only limit is the imagination of those involved, and it is encouraged that the dance stories reflect students’ thoughts, ideas and aspirations.

Wakakirri performances are then taken to professional theatres, where they are showcased in front of the official Wakakirri panel, who are searching for the story of the year, and appreciative audiences. They are also recorded and made available for viewing online. When the 2017 performances are uploaded I encourage everyone to have a look.

The stories that the children create have no limits on them but there is a theme for each year that schools are encouraged to integrate as part of the challenge. This year that theme was the gift. The interpretation of this theme in the dress rehearsal that I was privileged to watch was nothing less than inspiring.

The performance began with three students actively playing video games together. A father then came on the scene and gave each of the three children a book. The first student opened his book, which then came to life as ballerinas from the book took to the stage to dance with great grace and artistic beauty. The second book was then opened, and its contents also came to life on stage, though this time the performance was one of great humour, with a group of clowns bringing laughs to all. The final book was then opened.

I spoke to one of the young performers after the event and asked her what her favourite part of their dance story was. She said she loved how it showed that reading a book is like going on a great adventure, and the performance that emerged from this third book really communicated that reality, as the stage was taken over by a number of wild jungle animals.

The message of this performance is an important one: books do take us to all kinds of places, and literacy is incredibly important. It is likewise important that our children learn to create, and I love how the Wakakirri program gives them a formal framework to do that.

I also love watching our school children learning to have the confidence necessary to perform in front of an audience. I wish to express my thanks to the Charnwood-Dunlop school and all the ACT schools that participated in Wakakirri and the dedicated teachers for all they do to help families raise well-rounded, capable children. I look forward to next year's Wakakirri.

### **Environment—climate change**

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (5.50): I rise today to talk on a topic that is near and dear to my heart, both as a life-long environmental campaigner and because today my granddaughter Bella joins me here in the Assembly. Bella once told me that her favourite place in the world is the reef at the Maldives. Both of us want to see that reef live.

Whether it is here in Australia's Ningaloo, Kimberley or the Great Barrier Reef, or elsewhere in the world such as the Gulf of Mexico, the North Pacific or the Maldives where my granddaughter did her first reef dive, human-induced climate change is killing our reefs. We all know that. We have seen its effects: the bleaching, the drop in water quality, the rise in sea levels. I have seen it in the Great Barrier Reef. But we also know it is not too late. We can still save our reef and we can save all reefs.

Australia's Great Barrier Reef is unique in its diversity and complexity and its natural ecosystem. It is home to more than 1,500 different species of fish, 400 species of coral, 4,000 species of mollusc and hundreds of birds and other sea life. Most of this is endemic to the reef and not found elsewhere in the world. As the world's largest coral reef system, the Great Barrier Reef has been recognised for its unique value. It has been listed as a World Heritage site since 1981, with the reef meeting all four of the World Heritage Committee's criteria for natural sites with outstanding universal value.

There are strong connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the reef, with over 70 recognised traditional owner groups having historical connections with the Great Barrier Reef. Across the length of the Great Barrier Reef, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history is found in lore, customs, music and art that have been inspired by the interactions and connections with the unique ecosystems supported by the Great Barrier Reef.

Unfortunately, rather than seeing our federal government act with urgency to protect and preserve our reef, we are seeing the government lead us into a climate disaster. Adani's Carmichael coalmine, the expansion of the Abbott Point export terminal and the shipping of coal through the middle of the Great Barrier Reef will all put it further at risk.

I do not need to reiterate to this audience how the ACT is doing its part to stop climate change but I thought I would take this opportunity to talk to the Assembly briefly about some community activity all around the world, especially in developing island nations, that is raising awareness of climate change and the catastrophic effects on our oceans and reefs. Back in 2009 the President of the Maldives held their cabinet

meeting underwater to show their very real future. I admit they held it for only 30 minutes but it was not just some stunt.

The 2007 IPCC reported that a sea level rise of only two metres would render the entirety of the Maldives uninhabitable. And what is the current IPCC prediction? At least one metre by 2100. In fact, more recent predictions have been a lot more disturbing, a lot higher than that. That is potentially 400,000 innocent people who built their lives on an island, worked on an island and lived on an island, either displaced or dead. In my last term in the Assembly I went to Kiribati and it is in the same situation. The average height above sea level is less than a metre. This is a real issue that we all need to act on.

The Maldives and the ACT are united in their resistance to climate change, and the big corporations and the governments of the world need to join us. Everyone needs to join us to preserve our environment for the future.

### **Go-karting**

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (5.54): The other day I had the chance to meet and watch some amazing women go-karters. I attended a race meet at the Canberra Kart Racing Club to watch some of Canberra's fastest young drivers take on the circuit. Although many of them are far too young to drive on our streets, they can really rip it up on the track, often reaching speeds of around 140 kilometres per hour.

It is really thrilling to watch these youngsters, some as young as seven, so passionately participate in what is traditionally a male-dominated sport. Unlike other sports, there is no gender separation on the track and competitors are separated only by age and by the type of kart they drive. Not only are these young girls enormously successful in Canberra race meets but many of them hold state and national championships and have dreams of racing professionally into the future.

I had the opportunity to race against some of these champion racers at Power Kart Raceway recently. As someone who finished 10 seconds and four laps behind the fastest competitor, believe me when I say they are extremely skilled and super-fast. They made established road users and motorbike riders like me look like L-platers. They are often asked why they do it. They told me it is the adrenaline rush; it is the friends they make; but, most of all, it is because they can beat the boys.

Like many women in sport, they are not without their challenges. It is harder to get sponsorship; they cannot get the right clothes in Australia; and when they do import them from overseas, it is boys' stuff anyway. The advantage of a mixed competition on the track is that each competitor is totally equal, distinguishable only by their skill.

I congratulate the Canberra Kart Racing Club for supporting and empowering young women and girls in a traditionally male-dominated sport to reach their full potential. It is great to live in a city where young women are given more opportunities every year. So I encourage everyone in this chamber and in the broader community, as we head into the last few weeks of many sporting calendars, to rock up to a local football field,

motor racing track or whatever your favourite sport is playing and support a local women's team.

I would briefly like to thank Kiara and her dad, Jason, for inviting me back out to the Canberra Kart Racing Club this Sunday to watch the girls yet again beat those boys around the track.

### **Multicultural events**

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (5.57): I rise today to speak about my recent activities with the multicultural community. A couple of months ago I was fortunate enough to represent the Minister for Multicultural Affairs at the Federation of Chinese Culture of Canberra Chinese School Cultural Day. There were several dances, musical performances and a Chinese dragon dance performance, among many others. After the performances I had the pleasure of joining in a traditional Chinese tea ceremony.

A few weeks later I also had the opportunity to attend a ceremony hosted by the Australian School of Contemporary Chinese, the ASCC. I had the pleasure of welcoming a delegation of 40 students from the ASCC's friendship school, No 2 Middle School, affiliated to Shandong University. These schools have a relatively new relationship, beginning their delegation exchanges in 2014. The school expects their exchanges will continue to grow since the opening of the International Cultural Centre of Australia and the Trilong International Travel Service earlier this year.

China is one of Canberra's key international partners and is at the heart of the ACT government's international engagement strategy. There are more than 6,000 Chinese students studying in Canberra and our city is home to more than 15,000 residents of Chinese heritage. Mandarin is the second most spoken language in Canberra, other than English.

I was also able to meet with the Indian community in June when I attended the Telangana Association cultural night. The evening celebrated the culture of the Telangana community and acknowledged the foundation of the Telangana state in 2014, which is the most recent Indian state to be created. While boundaries and borders can change quickly, the language, the culture and the community that the Telangana Association represents has remained firm, and it was a pleasure to join the Telangana community to celebrate this.

Later in June the Indian High Commission and the Federation of Indian Associations ACT hosted a yoga event to celebrate the International Day of Yoga. The United Nations General Assembly declared the day three years ago in recognition of the 5,000-year old practice which originated in the Indian subcontinent. It was great to join representatives from the High Commission and the Federation of Indian Associations ACT as well as all the participants on the day to celebrate an ancient practice that aims to transform both the body and the mind.

Just this week I had the pleasure of attending the celebration of the 70th anniversary of India's independence. It was great to meet some of my constituents and other

representatives from the Indian community and celebrate this milestone with them. These community groups are a critical bridge for new and established migrants to connect with their customs and heritage and help to preserve Canberra's multiculturalism. The Chinese and Indian communities make a great contribution to the life of this city, particularly in my electorate of Yerrabi. I look forward to watching them grow and celebrating their future success.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 6 pm until Tuesday, 22 August 2017, at 10 am.**

## Answers to questions

### Sport—diving (Question No 258)

**Mr Milligan** asked the Minister for Sport and Recreation, upon notice, on 12 May 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development*):

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the situation of the ACT Diving Team being excluded from the games to represent the ACT at the Pacific School Games in December 2017.
- (2) Why are decisions being made on the basis of financial risk minimisation.
- (3) Why, even though they offered to cover their own costs, School Sports ACT still refuses to let the Diving team attend.
- (4) Why did School Sports ACT suggest 7 students were enough back in December and then change their mind to require 8-10 students in March.
- (5) Is the Minister aware that this will negatively impact on their opportunities to compete at the elite level.
- (6) What is the cost per student for those attending the Games in all sporting activities including (a) what are the travel costs and who covers these, (b) what are the accommodation costs and who covers these, (c) what are the participation costs and who covers these, (d) how much does the Directorate cover for these costs, (e) what is the total cost to the student and (f) what is the total cost to the Directorate.
- (7) What will the Minister do to address this matter in favour of the students who are so marginalised and disadvantaged by this decision.

**Ms Berry:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Yes, I responded to a letter from Mr Milligan about diving students wishing to participate in the Pacific School Games on 12 May 2017.
- (2) School Sport ACT is expected to exercise responsible financial management.
- (3) The decision not to send ACT diving team to the Pacific School Games was an operational decision made by School Sport ACT, taking into consideration a range of factors including costs and the current level of performance of students wishing to compete at an event.
- (4) The decision not to send ACT diving team to the Pacific School Games was an operational decision made by School Sport ACT, taking into consideration a range of factors including costs and the current level of performance of students wishing to compete at an event.
- (5) It is unfortunate the ACT is not participating in the diving at the Pacific Schools Games however the decision was made by School Sport ACT, taking into consideration a range of factors including costs and the current level of performance of students wishing to compete at an event.

- (6) (a, b, c, e) The Education Directorate does not collect information about the individual costs to each student participating in the Pacific School Games.  
(d, f) The Education Directorate does not contribute towards the costs to send representative teams to the Pacific School Games.
- (7) The decision not to send the ACT diving team to the Pacific School Games was an operational decision made by School Sport ACT, taking into consideration a range of factors including costs and the current level of performance of students wishing to compete at an event. Appeals on decisions made by School Sports ACT can be made to the ACT School Sport Council via email at [info@schoolsportact.org.au](mailto:info@schoolsportact.org.au) or in writing to:

ACT School Sport Council  
ACT Sports House  
100 Maitland Street  
HACKETT ACT 2601.

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### **Canberra Hospital—safety checks (Question No 296)**

**Mrs Dunne** asked the Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, upon notice, on 12 May 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Regulatory Services*):

- (1) Did WorkSafe ACT inspectors visit The Canberra Hospital on or after 5 April 2017 in response to the fire; if not, why and when will a visit be made; if so (a) when, (b) what conclusions did WorkSafe ACT inspectors draw, (c) what remedial action did they recommend, (d) what follow-up action did they take, (e) did they issue notices of any kind under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and (h) what were those notices.
- (2) During the period 1 July 2012 to 4 April 2017 (a) were routine inspections made by WorkSafe ACT inspectors at The Canberra Hospital, (b) when were those inspections made, (c) what was the nature of those inspections and (d) what were the outcomes.
- (3) During the period 1 July 2012 to 4 April 2017 (a) were incident-related inspections made by WorkSafe ACT inspectors at The Canberra Hospital, (b) what were the incidents that triggered those inspections, (c) when were those incidents, (d) when were those inspections and (e) what were the outcomes.

**Mr Ramsay:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) (a) WorkSafe ACT attended at The Canberra Hospital (TCH) on 5 April 2017 at approximately 8.00pm.
- (b) The inspection found that during a routine isolation procedure being conducted on the main distribution switchboard (DB), a mechanical fault occurred (origin unknown due to the resultant fire damage) causing the DB to arc and a basement fire. Ageing DB infrastructure contributed to the event, in addition to a metal object dislodging and falling within the confines of the DB. A risk of asbestos and other hazardous compounds was evident once the fire was extinguished.
- (c) WorkSafe ACT issued a verbal prohibition notice on ACT Health (on 5 April 2017) restricting access to authorised personnel only to the basement area. A

written prohibition notice was issued on 6 April 2017 – this was lifted after certified clearance declaring the area was safe. A prohibition notice was also issued to Shaw Building Group (the contractor carrying out works at the TCH) (6 April 2017) to undertake a review of their safe working systems.

(d) In consultation with Shaw Building Group, and upon receipt of the reviewable documents, the prohibition notice was lifted on 10 April 2017.

(e) See response to (c).

(f) See response to (c).

(2) WorkSafe ACT does not have a routine inspection schedule for TCH.

(3) (a) Yes.

<i>(b) what were the incidents that triggered those inspections?</i>	<i>(c) when were those incidents?</i>	<i>(d) when were those inspections?</i>	<i>(e) what were the outcomes?</i>
Electrical cord damage on treatment bed	05/10/2012	17/10/2012	Various outcomes arose from the inspections including the provision of advice, education and guidance and compliance related action including the issuance of notices.
Staff assault	15/07/2013	06/08/2013	
Hot water pipe burst	28/09/2013	04/10/2013	
Damage to plant	04/10/2013	04/10/2013	
Electric shock	03/01/2014	03/01/2014	
Window panel fell during construction	06/01/2014	06/01/2014	
Electrical shock to client	29/10/2014	29/10/2014	
Uncontrolled leakage of a substance	18/02/2015	04/03/2015	
Burst waste pipe in plant room	08/04/2015	06/05/2015	Investigations have been concluded on all incidents and no outstanding actions are recorded.
Water pipe hit during excavation works	25/08/2015	07/10/2015	
Electrical incident	06/09/2015	07/09/2015	
Person trapped in lift	14/10/2015	27/01/2016	
Fall from ladder	23/11/2015	04 and 10/02/2016	
Unsecure work site	18/01/2016	18 and 28/01/2016	
Asbestos discovered	09/04/2016	09/04/2016	
Nitrus Oxide release	21/08/2016	23 and 25/08/2016	
Burst water pipe	06/10/2016	06/10/2016	
Kitchen fire	21/02/2017	21/02/2017	

NOTE: WorkSafe ACT does not attend all reported incidents. The need for a physical inspection is made based on a determination of the incident and its risk to health and safety (for example, a bullying complaint may not require an inspection) and a review of the remediation actions taken by the Person Conducting the Business or Undertaking (PCBU). The review also determines if the



PCBU needs to provide further evidence of remediation undertaken which may include documents and photographic evidence. While a physical inspection may be required, the incident may not be prioritised as needing an immediate response. In these cases the inspection may be made some time after the incident has occurred.

### **Schools—non-attendance (Question No 300)**

**Mr Wall** asked the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What is the number of students who have had in excess of seven unexplained absences in a school year, by grade level, for each government school and college from 2014 to present.
- (2) What is the number of official procedures initiated by principals in response to students having over seven unexplained absences in a school year, by grade level, for each government school and college from 2014 to present.
- (3) What is the number of compliance notices issued by the Director-General to parents of students who have missed in excess of 7 unexplained school absences in a school year for each government school and college from 2014 to present.

**Ms Berry:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Table 1 provides the number of students recorded as having more than seven unexplained absences in a calendar year for year 7 to 12 between 2014 and 2016. This data may not reflect an explanation subsequently provided.

Unexplained absences have not been provided for kindergarten to year 6 as this data is not available in a format that is accessible to allow this question to be answered.

Data is not provided in Table 1 for colleges in 2014 as absence data was not analysed by explained and unexplained absences at that time.

An explained absence refers to when a parent/carer has provided the school with an explanation as to why their child was absent from school.

An unexplained absence refers to when there has been no parent/carer explanation provided to the school for a student's absence.

**Table 1: Number of students with more than seven unexplained absence days in a calendar year by school - high school and college**

#### **2014**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Year 12</b>
Alfred Deakin High School	65	13	20	23	9		
Amaroo School	87	9	25	32	21		
Belconnen High School	201	29	37	64	71		
Calwell High School	219	31	61	68	59		

School Name	Total	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Campbell High School	117	18	36	27	36		
Canberra High School	159	24	53	50	32		
Caroline Chisholm School	107	18	24	30	35		
Dickson College	14	np	np	np	10	na	na
Gold Creek School	133	19	33	47	34		
Harrison School	111	20	31	36	24		
Kingsford Smith School	148	45	33	35	35		
Lanyon High School	107	23	18	27	39		
Lyneham High School	101	9	25	26	41		
Melba Copland Secondary School	161	34	35	51	41	na	na
Melrose High School	184	24	56	36	68		
Mount Stromlo High School	189	32	35	57	65		
Namadgi School	74	14	18	27	15		
Telopea Park School	88	13	20	29	26		
UC High School Kaleen	87	8	29	21	29		
Wanniassa School	85	17	23	21	24		
Woden School, The	37	np	12	np	13	na	na

**2015**

School Name	Total	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Alfred Deakin High School	74	8	22	24	20		
Amaroo School	159	31	31	44	53		
Belconnen High School	151	20	32	49	50		
Black Mountain School	5	np	np	np	np	np	np
Calwell High School	210	41	38	66	65		
Campbell High School	138	20	27	49	42		
Canberra College, The	298					134	164
Canberra High School	185	24	36	57	68		
Caroline Chisholm School	161	41	36	38	46		
Dickson College	370	np	np	np	8	169	185
Erindale College	424				12	211	201
Gold Creek School	155	35	32	44	44		
Gungahlin College	512					230	282
Harrison School	131	31	30	30	40		
Hawker College	221					93	128
Kingsford Smith School	194	45	48	47	54		
Lake Tuggeranong College	454				10	244	200
Lanyon High School	94	7	35	19	33		
Lyneham High School	110	8	14	37	51		
Melba Copland Secondary School	268	30	42	53	65	28	50
Melrose High School	183	29	41	55	58		
Mount Stromlo High School	158	26	44	39	49		
Namadgi School	89	20	19	25	25		

School Name	Total	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Narrabundah College	201					82	119
Telopea Park School	114	16	21	43	34		
UC High School Kaleen	99	26	15	30	28		
UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra	348					184	164
Wanniassa School	96	23	13	34	26		
Woden School, The	42	np	8	16	6	7	np

**2016**

School Name	Total	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Alfred Deakin High School	105	31	14	31	29		
Amaroo School	128	28	40	27	33		
Belconnen High School	121	23	26	29	43		
Black Mountain School	9	np	np	np	np	np	np
Calwell High School	163	31	40	41	51		
Campbell High School	121	17	24	34	46		
Canberra College, The	257					128	129
Canberra High School	121	16	19	36	50		
Caroline Chisholm School	160	30	38	50	42		
Dickson College	353	np	np	np	8	174	168
Erindale College	303				9	146	148
Gold Creek School	183	38	51	47	47		
Gungahlin College	430					217	213
Harrison School	90	14	25	19	32		
Hawker College	150					71	79
Kingsford Smith School	180	34	45	51	50		
Lake Tuggeranong College	424				13	193	218
Lanyon High School	112	32	20	37	23		
Lyneham High School	76	9	14	24	29		
Melba Copland Secondary School	244	38	28	39	58	45	36
Melrose High School	198	36	54	52	56		
Mount Stromlo High School	148	26	43	35	44		
Namadgi School	111	29	27	32	23		
Narrabundah College	145					62	83
Telopea Park School	134	20	30	39	45		
UC High School Kaleen	103	23	28	24	28		
UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra	336					168	168
Wanniassa School	81	16	26	16	23		
Woden School, The	39	6	np	9	13	np	np

np: not published to prevent the possibility of inadvertent identification of individuals.

NA: Not available

- (2) An Information Notice is generated if there is a belief that the attendance and participation requirements are not being met. Prior to 2016, data on Information Notices was not available in a format that is accessible to allow this question to be answered. In 2016, eight Information Notices were generated. In 2017, nine Information Notices have been generated as of 19 July 2017.

<b>Year Level</b>	<b>2016 Number of Notices</b>	<b>2017 Number of Notices</b>
4	1	2
6	1	0
8	2	4
9	1	2
10	3	1

- (3) From 2014 to present, zero compliance notices have issued by the Director-General to parents of students who have missed in excess of seven unexplained school absences in a school year.

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### **Schools—cross-border funding (Question No 301)**

**Mr Wall** asked the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What is the number of students, by grade level, attending an ACT government school with a residing address in NSW, for each government school and college for this current year.
- (2) What cross-border funding arrangements are in place for NSW residents attending an ACT government school.
- (3) What is the number of students, by grade level, attending an ACT non-government school with a residing address in NSW, for each non-government school and college for this financial year.
- (4) What cross-border funding arrangements are in place for NSW residents attending an ACT non-government school.

**Ms Berry:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The number of students, for each school or college, with a residing address in NSW, enrolled in an ACT public school as at the February 2017 School are provided in Table 2.

Note: Data are provided by schooling level to prevent inadvertent identification of individuals that might result if reported by grade level.

Table 1: Number of NSW residents enrolled in ACT public schools - February 2017 school census

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Preschool - year 6</b>	<b>Year 7 - 10</b>	<b>Year 11 - 12</b>
Ainslie School	5		
Alfred Deakin High School		14	
Amaroo School	23	18	
Aranda Primary School	np		
Arawang Primary School	6		
Belconnen High School		10	
Black Mountain School		8	np
Bonython Primary School	np		
Calwell High School		23	
Calwell Primary School	15		
Campbell High School		318	
Campbell Primary School	84		
Canberra College, The			53
Canberra High School		8	
Caroline Chisholm School	10	10	
Chapman Primary School	np		
Charles Conder Primary School	np		
Charles Weston School	np		
Charnwood-Dunlop School	5		
Cranleigh School	np		
Curtin Primary School	4		
Dickson College			160
Duffy Primary School	4		
Erindale College		7	81
Evatt Primary School	22		
Fadden Primary School	5		
Farrer Primary School	6		
Florey Primary School	np		
Forrest Primary School	32		
Franklin Early Childhood School	np		
Fraser Primary School	12		
Garran Primary School	10		
Gilmore Primary School	np		
Giralang Primary School	7		
Gold Creek School	29	25	
Gordon Primary School	np		
Gowrie Primary School	9		
Gungahlin College			86
Harrison School	15	11	
Hawker College			8
Hawker Primary School	4		
Hughes Primary School	12		
Isabella Plains Early Childhood School			
Jervis Bay School	63		
Kaleen Primary School	5		
Kingsford Smith School	np	np	

School Name	Preschool - year 6	Year 7 - 10	Year 11 - 12
Lake Tuggeranong College		np	26
Lanyon High School		5	
Latham Primary School	7		
Lyneham High School		20	
Lyneham Primary School	13		
Lyons Early Childhood School	np		
Macgregor Primary School	np		
Macquarie Primary School	6		
Majura Primary School	11		
Malkara School	6		
Maribyrnong Primary School	20		
Mawson Primary School	16		
Melba Copland Secondary School		15	8
Melrose High School		28	
Miles Franklin Primary School	41		
Monash Primary School	10		
Mount Rogers Primary School	8		
Mount Stromlo High School		9	
Namadgi School	7	5	
Narrabundah College			12
Narrabundah Early Childhood School	21		
Neville Bonner Primary School			
Ngunnawal Primary School	9		
North Ainslie Primary School	8		
O'Connor Cooperative School			
Palmerston District Primary School	6		
Red Hill Primary School	29		
Richardson Primary School	4		
Southern Cross Early Childhood School	np		
Taylor Primary School	9		
Telopea Park School	12	27	
Theodore Primary School	10		
Torrens Primary School	np		
Turner School	7		
University of Canberra High School Kaleen		23	
University of Canberra Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra			43
Wanniassa Hills Primary School	np		
Wanniassa School	10	7	
Weetangera Primary School	np		
Woden School, The		7	
Yarralumla Primary School	26		

np: Counts <4 are not published to prevent the possibility of inadvertent identification of individuals.

- (2) NSW residents attending ACT schools are considered a disadvantage to the ACT (advantage to NSW) under the Commonwealth Grants Commission's horizontal fiscal equalisation process. This process forms part of the calculation used to determine the distribution of GST to States and Territories.

- (3) The number of students, for each non-government school or college, with a residing address in NSW, enrolled in an ACT non-government school as at the February 2017 School are provided in Table 2.

Note: Data are provided by schooling level to prevent inadvertent identification of individuals that might result if reported by grade level.

Table 2: Number of NSW residents enrolled in ACT non-government schools – February 2017 school census

School Name	Preschool - Year 6	Years 7 - 10	Year 11 - 12
Blue Gum Community School	14	7	
Brindabella Christian College	61	45	12
Burgmann Anglican School	38	40	28
Canberra Christian School	5		
Canberra Girls Grammar School	59	94	46
Canberra Grammar School	69	102	64
Canberra Montessori School	12		
Communities@Work Galilee School		4	
Covenant Christian School	8	9	
Daramalan College		236	93
Emmaus Christian School	12	19	
Good Shepherd Primary School	33		
Holy Family Primary School	45		
Holy Spirit Primary School	48		
Holy Trinity Primary School	10		
Islamic School of Canberra	13		
Marist College Canberra	44	93	40
Merici College		195	91
Mother Teresa School	44		
Orana Steiner School	50	34	5
Radford College	31	62	33
Rosary Primary School	36		
Sacred Heart Primary School	13		
St Anthony's Parish Primary School	9		
St Bede's Primary School	26		
St Benedict's Primary School	62		
St Clare of Assisi Primary School	25		
St Clare's College		159	46
St Edmund's College Canberra	106	248	110
St Francis of Assisi Primary School	54		
St Francis Xavier College		62	25
St John Paul II College		49	11
St John the Apostle Primary School	17		
St John Vianney's Primary School	6		
St Joseph's Primary School	12		
St Jude's Primary School	np		
St Mary MacKillop College		258	120
St Matthew's Primary School	16		
St Michael's Primary School	8		

School Name	Preschool - Year 6	Years 7 - 10	Year 11 - 12
St Monica's Primary School	20		
St Thomas Aquinas Primary School	13		
St Thomas More's Primary School	44		
St Thomas The Apostle Primary School	5		
St Vincent's Primary School	11		
Sts Peter & Paul Primary School	29		
Trinity Christian School	29	43	29

- (4) The Commonwealth Government is the majority funder of non-government schools. NSW residents attending ACT schools are considered a disadvantage to the ACT (advantage to NSW) under the Commonwealth Grants Commission's horizontal fiscal equalisation process. This process forms part of the calculation used to determine the distribution of GST to States and Territories.

### Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—alcohol and drugs (Question No 302)

**Mr Milligan** asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) Further to the strategic priority for the Health Directorate (Annual Report 2015-2016) to provide increased tobacco, alcohol and other drug treatment services, including supportive accommodation, with regards to the ATSI peoples, what program or facilities have been implemented for the indigenous community (a) for drug rehabilitation, (b) for alcohol rehabilitation, (c) to reduce smoking rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples and (d) which of these programs were educative rather than therapeutic or clinical.
- (2) What money was invested in each of the programs or facilities in part (1), specifically what monies were spent for (a) programs or facilities that were designed for drug rehabilitation, (b) programs or services that were designed for alcohol rehabilitation and (c) programs that were designed to reduce smoking rates among ATSI peoples.
- (3) What were the outcomes of the money spent in part (2), specifically what monies were the outcomes for the money spent on (a) drug rehabilitation programs and facilities, (b) alcohol rehabilitation programs and services and (c) programs to reduce smoking rates among ATSI peoples.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) ACT Health invests more than \$18 million annually on drug treatment and support services in the ACT.

This includes a \$6 million investment over four years announced by the ACT Government in 2016 for drug treatment and support services. This included \$115,000 per annum for Gungan Gulwan.

The services purchased by ACT Health include:

- information and education



- support and case management
- withdrawal
- counselling
- rehabilitation

The services are delivered across a range of settings. For example, ACT Health funds the delivery of bed based residential rehabilitation services.

The types of services purchased by ACT Health align with the national minimum data set and enable ACT Health to monitor the amount of treatment episodes provided. Annually about 12 per cent of drug treatment episodes provided by ACT services are for people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Specific initiatives to reduce smoking rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in addition to the above, include funding provided to Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service for a Tackle Smoking Program, including the employment of a dedicated Tobacco Control Worker to provide smoking cessation and reduction education, programs, brief interventions and counselling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers, and support for accessing free or subsidised Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), where indicated. In 2016-17, total funding to Winnunga for harm reduction and to tackle smoking is \$564,552.09.

Gugan Gulwan also provides smoking cessation and reduction information, referral and support as part of its Street Beat youth outreach program. In 2016-17, total funding to Gugan Gulwan for the Street Beat program is \$118,070.90.

One-off funding of \$212,000 was allocated in the 2015-16 Budget for targeted smoking cessation activities. Activities funded through this allocation included resource development, professional development opportunities and strengthening existing programs at Winnunga and Gugan Gulwan.

- (2) Drug Treatment and Support Services work with people who present with problems relating to a broad range of drugs. This range includes analgesics such as heroin, sedatives such as alcohol and stimulants such as nicotine. The outcomes expected from the treatment and support services purchased are:
- reductions in the severity of dependence, amount and/or frequency of drug use, harmful drug use and related behaviours; and
  - improvements in mental health, physical health and social and emotional well-being and functioning.

It is not possible to separately identify funding invested by ACT Health in each program as some organisations are funded to deliver more than one type of program.

- (3) ACT Health has not yet received data from Drug Treatment and Support Services for 2016-17 about the number of people treated and the number of drug treatment episodes provided.

Outcomes from the activities funded by the one-off allocation in 2015-16 for smoking cessation include resource development, staff professional development and strengthening existing programs at Winnunga and Gugan Gulwan.

**Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—bush healing farm  
(Question No 303)**

**Mr Milligan** asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What is the final and full cost to date of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm to the Canberra community, including costs of (a) the initial feasibility study, including cost of travel for participants in the study, (b) land purchase, (c) building, (d) land remediation, including the costs for removal of asbestos, (e) building the access and egress road, (f) bridge construction and (g) legal costs in the ACAT case.
- (2) What was the cost involved in development of the model of care for (a) model v 7.0 October 2010, (b) model v 1.2 August 2012, (c) engaging Winnunga and ATODA for developing this model of care in 2015-16 and any other costs involved at this time and (d) development of the draft model of care in 2016-17 as presented to the meeting on 8 March 2017.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The total cost of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm was provided in response to QoN E17-551.  
A breakdown of costs associated with items a) to g) are outlined below:
  - a. \$93,234.00
  - b. \$1,400,000.00
  - c. \$7,033,194.26
  - d. \$1,240,222.82
  - e. \$40,307.42
  - f. \$206,147.00
  - g. \$20,586.85
- (2) The models of care, referred to in questions 2(a), 2 (b), and 2 (d) are versions of the same model of care and represent different stages of drafting. The total cost to develop this was \$196,928.74.

In relation to question 2(c) Winnunga Nimmityjah, ATODA, and Karralika Programs were contracted to develop an additional model of care. ATODA was further contracted to review and advise ACT Health concerning broader ACT alcohol and other drug withdrawal services.

The amounts paid to these organisations was:  
Winnunga Nimmityjah - \$143,000  
ATODA - \$255,500  
Karralika Program - \$22,000

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**Health Directorate—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment  
(Question No 304)**

**Mr Milligan** asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) Within the Health Directorate (a) what is the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) employees, (b) is the target for the Directorate being met; if not,

why not and what efforts are being made to increase the number of ATSI employees to meet the required target, (c) what levels are ATSI employees typically employed at and (d) what is the highest public service level.

- (2) How many ATSI peoples are employed within the hospitals as (a) nurses, (b) doctors, (c) other health professionals and identify these categories, (d) what is the target employment of ATSI peoples for each of these areas and (e) what measures, if any, is the Directorate taking to increase the number of ATSI staff in each of these areas.
- (3) What steps has the Directorate taken to educate and equip staff, both in the hospital system and the public service, to be (a) more culturally aware of not just ATSI peoples, (b) more culturally aware of ethnically diverse groups in the ACT and (c) who runs the cultural programs, if any.
- (4) What mentoring and leadership programs have been established in the Directorate that target current ATSI staff members and nurtures them to get the skills and experience to progress in public service careers.
- (5) What is the retention rate of indigenous employees and what initiatives are aimed at retaining indigenous staff in the Directorate.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1.
  - (a) As at the final pay period for May 2017, 0.98 per cent of the ACT Health workforce identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. ACT Health has a total of 7414 employees at the 31 May 2017; with 73 self identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
  - (b) The target for the directorate is not being met at this time, however every opportunity is being taken to encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons to apply for positions through the implementation of the ACT Health Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-18 and the ACT Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Action Plan 2013-18.

ACT Health has established a statement to re-enforce its commitment to building a culturally diverse and inclusive workplace, by strongly encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply for all positions.

This statement is featured on the ACT Health website for advertised positions, including another statement advising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training is available for all staff.

ACT Health also has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Support Network which provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to come together to share information and ideas, strengthen the network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care workers in the ACT and region and support its members.

ACT Health Employment Services attend to calls from the general public who are interested in applying for a job or a hiring manager wanting to advertise a position. In accordance with ACT Health Recruitment Procedure, hiring managers are encouraged to consider giving support to applicants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

A total of 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified positions have been established within ACT Health. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are employed across various classification groups including:

- Administration.
- allied health
- dental
- general
- junior medical officers
- nursing staff
- technical officers.

ACT Health employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers across various business areas. A total of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers operate within ACT Public Hospitals (Canberra Hospital and Calvary Healthcare ACT) and three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers operate within the Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Services Division.

Information on candidates and selection panels requiring representation of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff member is included on the following Human Resources forms: Selection Report, Delegate's Selection Report Checklist and Contact Officer Guide.

Under each of the individual ACT Public Service (ACTPS)/Sector Enterprise Agreements, there are leave entitlements which acknowledge that in certain circumstances Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees may require access to cultural leave.

These leave entitlements allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to attend and participate in:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ceremonies;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander meetings; and/or
- NAIDOC Week activities.

Through the All Staff News Bulletin, staff and managers are regularly informed of cultural leave provisions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

The ACT Public Service Murranga Murranga Employee strongly encourages ACT Public Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to attend and participate in all Network discussions.

- (c) There is no "typical" level of employment, there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed across the breadth of all health related Enterprise Agreements and includes entry level administration, health assistants and nursing to Registrars, Senior Officers and Allied health Professionals.
- (d) The diversity of professions represented in ACT Health provides the opportunity to identify the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions which are the highest ACT PS level for each of the categories by enterprise Agreements:
- Senior Officer Grade A - Administration,
  - Registered Nurse Level 3 - Nursing,
  - Health Professional Level 4 - Allied Health,
  - Registrar - Medical.

2.
  - (a) Twenty-six (26) nurses.
  - (b) Three medical officers.
  - (c) Thirteen (13) health professionals in Allied Health positions and 24 employed in administrative roles.
  - (d) There is no specific target for employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in the health professions. The target is applied to ACT Health as a directorate.
  - (e) ACT Health has recently completed work to enable the recruitment of Aboriginal Health Workers in multiple roles using four Enterprise Agreements. There are four types of Aboriginal Health Worker categories, according to job roles.

These are:

1. Aboriginal Community Health Worker: This role provides better access, liaison, health promotion and preventative health services to the Aboriginal community
2. Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer: This non-clinical role provides advocacy, support and liaison within an acute care health setting, eg: hospitals and multipurpose services.
3. Principal Aboriginal Health Worker: This role provides relevant graduate tertiary level clinical/professional services to the Aboriginal community.
4. Aboriginal Health Practitioner (protected title) (AustLII, 2013): This is a new health professional role which commenced on 1 July 2012, and is registered with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner Board of Australia. The role provides direct clinical services to the Aboriginal community and holds a Certificate IV Aboriginal Primary Health Care (Practice) qualification. Several positions have been filled recently using this strategy.

Since 2011, ACT Health provides ongoing funding for the Australian National University (ANU) Medical School to deliver the Peter Sharp Scholarship Program. There are three initiatives under the Scholarship Program:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health stream placement, which offers all students in the ANU Medical School – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health stream support for travel and accommodation costs related to attending activities such as cultural immersion programs, conferences or workshops;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student recruitment initiative, that supports the enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the ANU Medical School; and Peter Sharp Scholarship, which supports the education and accommodation of a medical student in the ANU Medical School Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health stream.

ACT Health continues to offer two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enrolled Nursing Scholarships (per semester) through the Nursing and Midwifery Office. There are two students enrolled in this course under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enrolled Nursing Scholarship at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT).

Each year, the Chief Allied Health Office offers to subsidise the fees of identified students undertaking the Certificate IV Allied Health Assistance qualification through the CIT (by extension to the Yurauna centre at CIT).

In 2014 and 2016, the ACT Health Chief Allied Health Office and the Policy and Stakeholder Relations Branch sponsored the Health Fusion Interprofessional Team Challenge at the Indigenous Allied Health Australia National Conference.

In February 2017, two Aboriginal Australian School Based Apprenticeship students have been engaged into identified apprentice positions. They will undertake a Certificate II in Information, Digital Media and Technology whilst gaining work experience in the Government and Communications Branch, ACT Health.

3.

- (a) ACT Health conducts Orientation course which all employees must attend, modules of this course are devoted to the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Framework and ACT Health values covering employees Code of Conduct as an ACT Government employee and appropriate behaviours of an employee.

A mandatory training course is required to be completed by all employees; the course “Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and clients” is under the internal ACT Health Essential Education provided by the Staff Development Unit.

As well as the above course, Managers are required to undertake the “Human Rights” course as part of their Essential Education requirements (i.e. mandatory training)

In 2016, ACT Health’s organisational responsiveness to diversity issues was enhanced by expanding the focus of the Multicultural Health Policy Unit, formed in 2013. The renamed Multicultural Health **and Diversity** Policy Unit (MHDP Unit) has a primary focus on the following population groups, noting that they will often overlap:

- People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds;
- People of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex (which includes Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people; and
- People with disabilities.

The Unit works to facilitate a more integrated and consistent response to diversity, particularly in relation to developing the broader cultural competence of ACT Health, in both clinical and non-clinical operational areas. This includes the development of face-to-face and e-learning training on cultural competence delivered at the organisational level through the Staff Development. The MHDP Unit also delivers tailored information and education to operational areas or teams. A comprehensive intranet site has also been developed to support staff in working with diversity.

Other areas of activity that are related to cultural competence include:

- Addressing limited health literacy and providing comprehensive language services;

- Provision of culturally appropriate and sensitive services and information;
  - Improving access to services;
  - Minimising additional clinical safety risks;
  - Improving engagement, participation and representation of these groups;
  - Establishing and maintaining meaningful partnerships;
  - Development of training and resources for staff; and
  - Support of staff who may identify with these groups.
- (b) As described in answer to question 3 (a), the MHDP Unit, actively promotes the importance of working sensitively with people from CALD backgrounds. The MHDP Unit developed the organisational strategic document Towards Culturally Appropriate and Inclusive Services – A Co-ordinating Framework for ACT Health (2014-18). This key document highlights the importance, particularly from the clinical risk perspective, of the capacity of ACT Health staff working sensitively with people from CALD backgrounds who may have widely differing cultural beliefs about health and illness and, most importantly of providing access to interpreters for people with limited English proficiency. The MHDP Unit developed a Language Services Policy and associated procedure which mandates the use of accredited interpreters in defined circumstances, together with a Guide to Language Services. Training in working with interpreters is available, both face to face and through an e-learning package. There has been an increase of 97 per cent (from 2011/12 to 2015/16) in interpreter bookings through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National).
- (c) The ACT Health Staff Development Unit conducts the mandatory training as well as internal programs. The MDHP Unit delivers tailored programs to individual operating areas.
4. ACT Health offers a number of leadership and management programs to all staff seeking to develop their leadership and management capabilities, including formal qualifications and short programs.

These programs include:

- Senior Doctor Leadership Program – for Clinical/Unit Directors.
- People Manager Program – for frontline supervisors/team leaders to middle managers.
- Emerging Manager Program – for staff who aspire to be in or have recently moved to a supervisor/team leader role.
- Let's talk...performance –for team leaders/supervisors/managers of all levels.
- Respect at Work – Manager's Seminar - for team leaders/supervisors/managers of all levels.
- Leadership Network – The network is attended by the Director-General, Deputy Director-Generals, Executive Directors and nominated 100 leaders/emerging leaders.
- Leading Teams through Change – for team leaders/supervisors/managers of all levels that are directly responsible for leading their teams through change.
- Frontline Clinical Leadership Program – specifically designed for frontline clinical leaders.
- Conducting a Preliminary Assessment – designed for supervisors/managers/leaders at all levels.

ACT Health has customised the whole of government Performance Template to reflect ACT Health values, as well as, providing instruction to staff to ensure that

performance discussions take into consideration key ACT Health documents, including the ACT Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Plans and Agreement and the ACT Health Multicultural Co-ordinating Framework. This information is available on the ACT Health webpage for Performance Planning Discussions Program.

5. The ACT Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Retention data table below demonstrates 31 per cent of the 2009 cohort remains in employment to date.

According to the ACT State of the Service report, the most commonly reported strategies to retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training;
- the promotion of the ACTPS as an employer of choice; and
- advertising employment opportunities through a variety of media sources including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander publications and media.

<b>Table Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Identified Employee Retention Summary in 2009-2016</b>									
		<b>Calendar Year</b>							
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Year retained	0	26	37	51	59	61	75	83	78
	1	21 (81%)	26 (70%)	40 (78%)	44 (75%)	52 (85%)	59 (79%)	61 (72%)	
	2	16 (62%)	23 (62%)	30 (59%)	37 (63%)	41 (67%)	46 (61%)		
	3	14 (54%)	17 (46%)	28 (55%)	31 (53%)	36 (59%)			
	4	12 (46%)	16 (43%)	25 (49%)	27 (46%)				
	5	12 (46%)	16 (43%)	20 (39%)					
	6	12 (46%)	13 (35%)						
	7	8 (31%)							

\* The numbers of employees in the table are sourced from the first pay day after 1 July of each calendar year.

\* Example to read the data: In 2009, there were 26 identified employees. After 1 year in 2010, the 21 of these 26 retained and retention rate is 81%. After 7 years in 2015, the 8 of these 26 retained, the retention rate is 31%.

## **Education Directorate—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment (Question No 305)**

**Mr Milligan** asked the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) Within the Education Directorate (a) what is the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) employees, (b) is the target for the Directorate being met; if not, why not and what efforts are being made to increase the number of ATSI employees to meet the required target, (c) what levels are ATSI employees typically employed at and (d) what is the highest public service level.
- (2) How many ATSI peoples are employed within schools as (a) a primary school teacher, (b) a high school teacher, (c) a college teacher, (d) a teacher assistant, excluding Koori pre-schools, (e) a teacher assistant at a Koori pre-school, (f) a principal, (g) what is the target employment of ATSI peoples for each of these areas and (h) what measures, if any, is the Directorate taking to increase the number of ATSI staff in each of these areas.



- (3) What steps has the Directorate taken to educate and equip staff, both in the schools and the public service, to be (a) more culturally aware of not just ATSI peoples, (b) more culturally aware of ethnically diverse groups in the ACT and (c) who runs the cultural programs, if any.
- (4) What mentoring and leadership programs have been established in the Directorate that target current ATSI staff members and nurtures them to get the skills and experience to progress in public service careers.
- (5) What is the retention rate of indigenous employees and what initiatives are aimed at retaining indigenous staff in the Directorate.

**Ms Berry:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1)
  - a) The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within the Education Directorate is 1.49 percent.
  - b) The target was met in 2015 and 2016, but not in 2017. The ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment target for the Education Directorate for June 2017 was 107. The actual headcount was 99.

**Education Directorate ACTPS Head of Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander target head count and achieved head count, 2015 to 2017**

Target Headcount June 2015	Actual Headcount June 2015	Target Headcount June 2016	Actual Headcount June 2016	Target Headcount June 2017	Actual Headcount June 2017
72	73	79	91	107	99

The Education Directorate actively participates in ACTPS Inclusion Employment programs and in 2017 has recruited two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees. The Directorate ensures teacher recruitment and administrative advertisements are placed in the *Koori Mail* and the *National Indigenous Times*.

In 2017 the Education Directorate employed one Aboriginal graduate through the ACTPS Graduate Program. In 2016 this was also the case and this graduate has been supported in their secondment to ACT Legal Aid.

The Directorate is continuing the Community Yarns Project. Community Yarns are an opportunity for the Directorate to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members interested in or wanting to hear more about employment and career pathways in the Directorate. A Community Yarn was held during the ACT NAIDOC Family Day on 2 July. The next Community Yarn will be held at the Ngunnawal Centre, University of Canberra.

- c) The most common classifications of employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are classroom teacher (37) and school assistant (37).
  - d) The highest classification of employment is a School Leader A (school principal).
- (2) The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in ACT Public Schools is 75. This does not include casual staff.

- a) There are 20 primary school teachers.
  - b) There are seven high school teachers.
  - c) There are five college teachers.
  - d) There are 25 school assistants (excluding Koori preschools).
  - e) There are four Koori preschool assistants.
  - f) There is one principal.
  - g) There is no specific target employment number in these classifications.
  - h) The Directorate is actively working to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers through the following measures:
    - (i) the Community Yarn Project in universities (described above);
    - (ii) *Our Mob Our Stories* promotional materials – sharing the stories and journeys of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including teachers, school assistants and school leaders; and
    - (iii) the Directorate's recruitment marketing team targets teacher training institutions that have a high percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- (3)
- a) The ACTPS is committed to creating a positive, respectful, supportive and fair work environment where employee differences are respected, valued and utilised to create a productive and collaborative workplace.

The aim is to provide a workplace that enables equal employment opportunities for all applicants and employees and highlights the fundamental importance of each employee acting in a way that respects the inherent dignity of the person.

The Directorate actively supports programs and celebrates events, such as Harmony Day, to increase cultural awareness by staff and students of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in the ACT.

In the early childhood sector authorised officers (Early Childhood Regulatory requirement) require evidence of cultural competence across many elements of the Early Childhood National Standard.

The Education Directorate regulates all early childhood education and care services under the Education and Care Services National Law. The National Law has a strong focus on valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, as well as cultural diversity. Cultural competence training is included in the training course undertaken by authorised officers before they are able to undertake assessment and rating in the Early Childhood regulatory role. The Directorate aims to promote a strong understanding of different ways of being and knowing across our work.

- b) As described in point a) above.
- c) Cultural programs have been provided by:
  - i) Australian Centre for Cultural Competence;
  - ii) Kathryn Hyden;
  - iii) Tracy Whetnell; and
  - iv) Yurauna Centre CIT.

In October and November 2017 principals, directors and senior executive will undergo a three tiered cultural integrity training opportunity. This will be delivered over three days and facilitated by Scott Gorringer and David Spillman (Murri Matters Consulting) and Grant Sarra (Grant Sarra Consulting Services).

The Directorate, as part of the implementation of the *Reconciliation: Keeping it Alive Reconciliation Action Plan* has commenced developing a guide for all employees to have cultural integrity goals in either performance development plans or professional pathway plans for teachers and principals.

- (4) The Directorate launched its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Mentoring program in April 2017. The program was developed in collaboration with the Directorate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network.
- (5) The Directorate does not have access to data on retention rates for Indigenous staff. The Directorate conducts an annual *Our Mob Our Voices Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Survey* and the feedback and results of this annual survey provides the foundation for program development, focused on staff retention and development.

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**Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate—  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment  
(Question No 306)**

**Mr Milligan** asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) Within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (a) what is the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) employees, (b) is the target for the Directorate being met; if not, why not and what efforts are being made to increase the number of ATSI employees to meet the required target, (c) what levels are ATSI employees typically employed at and (d) what is the highest public service level.
- (2) What steps has the Directorate taken to educate and equip staff to be (a) more culturally aware of not just ATSI peoples, (b) more culturally aware of ethnically diverse groups in the ACT and (c) who runs the cultural programs, if any.
- (3) What mentoring and leadership programs have been established in the Directorate that target current ATSI staff members and nurtures them to get the skills and experience to progress in public service careers.
- (4) What is the retention rate of indigenous employees and what initiatives are aimed at retaining indigenous staff in the Directorate.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1.
  - a) As at 17 May 2017, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who chose to identify as such on the payroll system was 1.1%.
  - b) No. The Directorate is implementing a range of initiatives contained within its Workforce Diversity Strategy to assist in increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees including:
    - encouraging and promoting the benefits associated with self-identification;
    - investigation into the causes of staff not indentifying in the payroll system;

- participation in the ACTPS Indigenous Employment Traineeship Programs - four staff have been employed over the last two financial years;
- work is underway to develop a CMTEDD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy. This will include identifying positions and potential traineeship/apprenticeship opportunities; and
- development and implementation of the CMTEDD Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (launched in May 2017), demonstrating our commitment to providing a culturally inclusive workplace and improving the outcomes of Aboriginal and/or

Torres Strait Islander staff, to position ourselves as an employer of choice. Initiatives under the RAP include:

- engaging with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on employment strategies, including professional development, career planning and progression, and incorporating these into future policy;
- including a Diversity Statement when advertising all vacancies, which encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply;
- promoting a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to advertise and target employment opportunities in the Directorate;
- reviewing HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.

c) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are employed at all levels across the Directorate, with Senior Officers and Administrative Officers being the two most common classification groups respectively.

d) Contract Executive.

2.

a) As noted in response to Q1, the Directorate has a Workforce Diversity Strategy. This strategy supports the five diversity cohorts including people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse staff. The Workforce Diversity Strategy includes a number of actions that go towards educating and equipping staff to be more culturally aware. These include:

- a review of Induction to include Access and Inclusion;
- a review recruitment guidelines to recognise the specific needs of diversity groups;
- inclusion of diversity related competencies into the Directorate's Core Capability Framework;
- incorporation of Access and Inclusion matters within CMTEDD management training programs;
- provision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Cultural Awareness Training;
- recognition of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week;
- investigation and implementation of Indigenous leadership professional development opportunities;
- identification of positions within the ACTPS Graduate Program;
- participation in the ACTPS Employment Inclusion Programs including ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship;
- investigation of work experience opportunities and school based apprenticeships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders students;
- recognition of Harmony Day;
- investigation into the representation of people from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds across CMTEDD to identify any areas of concern;

- promotion and utilisation of the ACTPS Work Experience Program to support Canberrans from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to enter the workforce;
- development LGBTIQ workforce awareness training;
- provision of Disability Confidence training;
- promotion significant diversity Days including Harmony Day and International Day of People with Disability;
- CMTEDD promoted National Reconciliation Week 2017 by launching its Reconciliation Action Plan. Over 100 members of staff and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community attended; and
- an event is planned for NAIDOC Week 2017 and information regarding NAIDOC Week leave entitlements will be communicated to staff.

b) From June 2016 to date, CMTEDD has conducted four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training sessions, including a dedicated session for CMTEDD executives. A total of 76 staff attended these sessions. A further training session is scheduled for 13 July 2017.

In addition, see response to 2a.

c) Curiyo Pty Ltd – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training; CIT Solutions – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training; internal learning and development staff – Recruiting a Diverse Workforce training and promotion of significant events; and Australian Network on Disability - Three Disability Confident training sessions for both staff and managers has also been conducted.

3. CMTEDD has four staff members participating in the ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development Program. Two staff are Administrative Officers and two are Senior Officers.

The Directorate's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group continues to operate. The Working Group is responsible for establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network as one of the actions under the CMTEDD RAP.

All employees, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, participate in regular performance and development conversations, which provide the opportunity to discuss potential training, mentoring and other strategies for professional development.

4. 91.7% (permanent employees). See response to 1, 2 and 3 above.

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### **Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment (Question No 307)**

**Mr Milligan** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) Within the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (a) what is the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) employees, (b) is the target for the Directorate being met; if not, why not and what efforts are being made to

increase the number of ATSI employees to meet the required target, (c) what levels are ATSI employees typically employed at and (d) what is the highest public service level.

- (2) What steps has the Directorate taken to educate and equip staff to be (a) more culturally aware of not just ATSI peoples, (b) more culturally aware of ethnically diverse groups in the ACT and (c) who runs the cultural programs, if any.
- (3) What mentoring and leadership programs have been established in the Directorate that target current ATSI staff members and nurtures them to get the skills and experience to progress in public service careers.
- (4) What is the retention rate of indigenous employees and what initiatives are aimed at retaining indigenous staff in the Directorate.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) As at May 2017 the headcount for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in TCCS was 38, representing 2.1% of the workforce.

TCCS' target was 33 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees by 30 June 2017. TCCS is currently exceeding this by five (5). During 2016-17, TCCS has increased the number of employees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander by 12.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are employed across a broad range of position classifications which reflect the operational nature of the directorate's business. The highest public service level is at an executive classification. The breakdown by classification is provided below. TCCS strategies are detailed in the questions below.

The table below provides classification levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as at May 2017.

<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees – breakdown by classification</b>	
<b>Number of positions</b>	<b>Position Title</b>
2	Admin Service Officer 1
2	Admin Service Officer 2
2	Admin Service Officer 4
1	Admin Service Officer 6
1	Apprentice
3	Apprentice Workshop
6	Bus Operator
1	Contract Executive
10	General Service Officer 3/4
1	General Service Officer 4
1	General Service Officer 5
4	General Service Officer 5/6
1	General Service Officer 9
1	Senior Tech Officer C
1	Technical Officer 2
1	Technical Officer 3
<b>38</b>	<b>Total</b>

- (2) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training is mandatory for all senior officers (Grade C and above) and executives. 87% of the current cohort as at end June 2017 have attended or are scheduled to this training.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training is also available for all employees through the TCCS Training Calendar. Training has been delivered by the Yurauna Centre and Curiyo.

In line with the TCCS Reconciliation Action Plan, TCCS is also investigating the delivery of an on-country cultural appreciation program for TCCS employees.

Awareness of ethnically diverse groups is promoted in RED training and through celebrating significant days and events relating to cultural diversity. Training in engaging with other cultures is also available to TCCS employees through the ACT Public Service Training Calendar.

- (3) TCCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are participating in the Whole of Government Indigenous Leadership program which includes a mentoring component. TCCS also promotes the Murrunga Murrunga Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee network to TCCS employees and facilitates informal peer support amongst Indigenous employees.

- (4) The TCCS overall retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander permanent employees is at 88%.

TCCS is implementing a range of diversity employment strategies that focus on four key areas including leadership and planning, attracting and recruiting a diverse workforce, developing and retaining a diverse workforce, and improving workforce diversity data.

TCCS retention strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees include funding a Diversity Employment Scholarship to support Indigenous employees to progress to more senior roles, a Manager Development Program that includes places reserved for Indigenous employees and the promotion of the ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees Network (Murrunga Murrunga).

TCCS also launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in September 2016 which outlines practical strategies relating to our employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as activities to support education and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and history both within our organisation and outward through our work with the community.

The RAP sends a signal to the community that TCCS is an organisation committed to reconciliation by building cultural respect, strengthening relationships and creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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### **Justice and Community Safety Directorate—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment (Question No 308)**

**Mr Milligan** asked the Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Acting Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs*):

- (1) Within the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (a) what is the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) employees, (b) is the target for the Directorate being met; if not, why not and what efforts are being made to increase the number of ATSI employees to meet the required target, (c) what levels are ATSI employees typically employed at and (d) what is the highest public service level.
- (2) What steps has the Directorate taken to educate and equip staff to be (a) more culturally aware of not just ATSI peoples, (b) more culturally aware of ethnically diverse groups in the ACT and (c) who runs the cultural programs, if any.
- (3) What mentoring and leadership programs have been established in the Directorate that target current ATSI staff members and nurtures them to get the skills and experience to progress in public service careers.
- (4) What is the retention rate of indigenous employees and what initiatives are aimed at retaining indigenous staff in the Directorate.

**Mr Ramsay:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Justice and Community Safety (JACS) Directorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, targets, classification, cultural programs, mentoring and leadership are broken down as follows:
  - a) The total percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in JACS is 2.64 per cent (which equates to 48 employees whom self-identify against a total employee headcount of 1817 as at 31 May 2017).
  - b) JACS are on track and achieving well against our employment target of 41 (set by the Head of Service on 6 April 2017) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
  - c) The following table gives a classification breakdown of our Indigenous employees.

Classification	Number of Employees
Administrative Service Officer Class 2	2
Administrative Service Officer Class 3	4
Administrative Service Officer Class 4	2
Administrative Service Officer Class 5	2
Administrative Service Officer Class 6	16
Senior Officer Grade C	2
Senior Officer Grade B	2
Contract Executive	1
Correctional Officer Class 1	9
Fire Brigade 2	1
Fire Brigade 4	3
Ambulance Support Officer 1	1
Ambulance Paramedic	1
Intensive Care Paramedic Level 1	1
Para Legal Grade 2	1
Grand Total	48



d) The highest paid Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee in JACS is a Contract Executive.

(2) Steps the Directorate has taken to educate and equip staff to be more culturally aware of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples include the Directorate's commitment under its Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-2019 for 90% of staff who have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, volunteers and customers to attend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness learning activities. These activities include:

- a) staff participation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training programs; and
- b) participation in events of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the JACS RAP Working Group and Ambassadors incorporating:
  - i) Reconciliation Week in which JACS hosted a barbeque lunch on 1 June 2017 which showcased reconciliation in action in the Directorate
  - ii) National Sorry Day where staff participated in the Bridge walk on 26 May 2017
  - iii) National Close the Gap Day on 16 March 2017, with a screening of a documentary film 'Footprints on Our Land' which portrayed the life and legacy of Ngunnawal Elder Aunty Agnes Shea. This was a joint event hosted with the Human Rights Commission
  - iv) NAIDOC Week celebrations, which included:
    - (A) ACT NAIDOC Awards Ball on 2 July 2016
    - (B) NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony on 4 July 2016
    - (C) Annual Combined ACT Corrective Service (ACTCS) and Southside Community Services Art Exhibition which showcased artworks from Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and the community
    - (D) ACTCS organised the AMC Family Day on 11 July 2016 as part of the NAIDOC celebrations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees. The celebration was also attended by local representatives from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, family members and children and ACTCS staff. ACTCS also held an annual NAIDOC Art Exhibition in partnership with Southside Community Services.

JACS will also be participating in similar events for NAIDOC 2017.

b) JACS participation in more culturally aware ethnically diverse groups in the ACT. These include:

- i) "Engaging with Different Cultures" training; and
- ii) the ACT Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) Address and Conversation: Diversity in the Australian Federal Police

c) JACS has a broader focus on diversity and inclusion space being the first ACT Directorate to implement an all encompassing commitment through the JACS

Inclusion Statement 2016-2019. Within this statement there are four key focus areas to drive JACS executive and staff to achieve better outcomes against our diversity targets and to also ensure that our workforce mirrors the community we serve. A copy of this Inclusion Statement can be found at **Attachment A**.

- (3) To support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to progress in public service careers, JACS:
- a) engages coaches for two senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees
  - b) provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across the Directorate to perform higher duties
  - c) supports participation in the ACT Public Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Development Program
  - d) Allocates places for participation in events to increase networks.  
Such as:
    - i. Menslink Business Breakfast;
    - ii. International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference;
    - iii. Diploma of Project Management qualification program; and
    - iv. Indigenous Women's Leadership Symposium in August 2017.
  - e) Encourages participation in the current Work in the Assembly Program
  - f) Encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in the Murranga Murranga<sup>1</sup> Employee Network. The Network provides ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees an opportunity to contribute, through the Network, to embed the ACT Government commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

- (4) JACS Retention rate of Indigenous employees was provided by Shared Services. Retention rate is defined as "The percentage of permanent employees present at the beginning of the period still with the organisation at the end of the period."

The formula used is 
$$\frac{[\text{Headcount (Ongoing)}(\text{Start of period}) + \text{External recruits (Ongoing)} - \text{Terminations (Ongoing)}]}{[\text{Headcount (Ongoing)}(\text{Start of period}) + \text{External recruits (Ongoing)}]} \times 100.$$

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander retention rate for JACS for 2016-17 (up to end May 2017) is 94.9 per cent.

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

<sup>1</sup> Murranga means: Hand in Ngunnawal Language.

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## Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate— Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment (Question No 309)

**Mr Milligan** asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) Within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (a) what is the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) employees, (b) is the target for the Directorate being met; if not, why not and what efforts are being made to increase the number of ATSI employees to meet the required target, (c) what levels are ATSI employees typically employed at and (d) what is the highest public service level.
- (2) What steps has the Directorate taken to educate and equip staff to be (a) more culturally aware of not just ATSI peoples, (b) more culturally aware of ethnically diverse groups in the ACT and (c) who runs the cultural programs, if any.
- (3) What mentoring and leadership programs have been established in the Directorate that target current ATSI staff members and nurtures them to get the skills and experience to progress in public service careers.
- (4) What is the retention rate of indigenous employees and what initiatives are aimed at retaining indigenous staff in the Directorate.

**Mr Gentleman:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1a) The percentage of ATSI employees as at March 2017 is 3.19% (headcount of 19), this exceeds the target by over 100%.

1b) ATSI target headcount for June 2017 is 9.

1c)

Classification level	ATSI Headcount Total
Admin Service Officer 1	1
Admin Service Officer 2	1
Admin Service Officer 4	2
Admin Service Officer 5	3
Admin Service Officer 6	2
General Service Off 5/6	3
General Service Off 7	1
Park Ranger 2	2
Professional Officer 2	1
Technical Officer 3	1
Snr Park Ranger 3	1
Senior Officer C	3

1d) The highest classification level is a Senior Officer Grade C.

2a) EPSDD has a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in place which articulates several actions and targets under three major headings of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. Actions have included celebrating and promoting National Reconciliation Week and cultural awareness training. During 2017 the EPSDD RAP Working Group has been working towards developing an Innovate RAP.

2b) EPSDD schedules regular Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Framework training for all staff and EPSDD has an established cohort of RED Contact Officers who undertake regular refresher training.

- 2c) Training has been provided by the Canberra Institute of Technology.
- 3) All EPSDD staff are required to complete a Performance Plan through the ACTPS Performance Framework which identifies development opportunities. EPSDD successfully nominated an ATSI staff member for a nationally recognised Leadership course. An internal training day was organised for Murumbung staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in NRM, Heritage and Greening Australia, topics included:
- Leadership: understanding leadership styles;
  - Who do you consider a leader and why;
  - How to communicate your cultural values in leadership;
  - How to be confident to negotiate and influence change; and
  - Personal vision/mission statement: Message stick – who I represent and what I stand for.

EPSDD are participating in the 2017 ACT Public Service Indigenous Employment Traineeship Program. EPSDD currently has 4 participants on the program.

- 4) The current retention rate of ATSI employees is 100%. This figure is calculated based on permanent staff only. Retention opportunities are provided through various programs including the active RAP working group, studies assistance and flexible working arrangements. Initiatives aimed at supporting and retaining indigenous staff in the Directorate are the Murumbung Ranger Program and Murumbung Mentoring Program.

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### **National Multicultural Festival—stall allocation (Question No 310)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Acting Minister for Multicultural Affairs*):

- (1) What was the total number of (a) commercial stalls, (b) community stalls, including multicultural community stalls and (c) multicultural community stalls at the 2017 National Multicultural Festival.
- (2) How are stall locations allocated to stall holders for the Festival.
- (3) Were there designated stall locations for commercial stalls; if so, where were they located.
- (4) Do commercial stall holders get to pick a location on a “first come first served” basis or is there another process that determines where commercial stalls are located; if the latter, what is the process by which locations are selected for commercial stalls.
- (5) Were there designated stall locations for multicultural community stalls; if so, where were they located.
- (6) Do multicultural community stall holders get to pick a location on a “first come first served” basis or is there another process that determines where multicultural community stalls are located; if the latter, what is the process by which locations are selected for multicultural community stalls.

- (7) Is this process of stall allocation the same for Festivals in previous years; if not, what was the process for all Festivals in the previous 10 years.
- (8) What factors determine a stall location to be a prime location and which areas of the Festival were (a) identified as prime locations and (b) measured with the largest footprint.
- (9) Was there a plan that provided for a balanced distribution of commercial, community and multicultural community stallholders in prime locations; if so, what were the details of the plan.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The total number of stalls at the 2017 National Multicultural Festival was:
  - (a) 26 Commercial stalls.
  - (b) 151 Community stalls.
  - (c) As above. No distinction was made between multicultural community and other community stalls.
- (2) Stalls are allocated based on a number of factors. These include the package stall owners request ie one, two or three days, expressed stall owner position preference including if there is a particular showcase they want to be near, and when they pay to secure their stall.
- (3) There were no designated stall locations for commercial stalls.
- (4) Commercial stalls are allocated on the same basis as other stalls: stated preference and payment to secure the stall. Commercial stallholders often choose to be in Garema Place and City Walk between Garema Place and Canberra Centre's main entrance.
- (5) There were no designated stall locations for community stalls. Community stalls were spread out across the footprint based on the number of days they applied for and showcases they were connected to.
- (6) There was no designated area for the multicultural community groups, stall allocations were made as per the response to question 2. Garema Place, City Walk and Petrie Plaza are considered to be the prime locations and we try to rotate the communities each year to make sure all communities get equal opportunity.
- (7) The same allocation process has been used for previous Festivals.
- (8) Prime locations for stalls are determined as those situated in areas of high foot traffic.
  - (a) Areas considered prime locations include Garema Place, City Walk and Petrie Plaza.
  - (b) These areas make up the largest portion of the Festival footprint at approximately 60 percent.

- (9) The overall Festival stall plan is decided by a cross-government Festival working group based on competition with existing shop owners, weather, surface dryness and drainage, spatial constraints, security and public safety, consumer behaviour and existing infrastructure and stall holder requests and preferences.

To ensure a balanced distribution, the following issues are considered:

- rotating community stalls each year to make sure all communities get an equal opportunity;
- the number of liquor stalls in each area;
- equal distribution of similar products across the footprint;
- groups of temporary structures in which LP gas is used;
- charcoal BBQ operators;
- security and access requirements by ACT Ambulance, ACT Police and Embassies;
- van sites; and
- the location of showcases.

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### **Motor vehicle inspection station—relocation (Question No 311)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Regulatory Services*):

- (1) What was the total cost of the project to relocate the Motor Vehicle Inspection Station from Dickson to Hume.
- (2) How long did it take to relocate the Motor Vehicle Inspection Station from Dickson to Hume.
- (3) When did the Hume Motor Vehicle Inspection Station commence operation.
- (4) How many motor registry and other staff are based at the Hume location.
- (5) What is the annual cost to operate the Hume Motor Vehicle Inspection Station.
- (6) How many vehicles have been inspected at the Hume Motor Vehicle Inspection Station since it was opened.

**Mr Ramsay:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The total cost of the project to relocate the Motor Vehicle Inspection Station from Dickson to Hume was \$433,602.

This consisted of:

- the cost to develop the Registration of Interest and Request for Tender documentation (approximately \$86,000 (excl GST));
- relocation and operational costs of the Dickson MVIS to Hume including:
  - i. rent and fitout costs – \$96,595 (excl GST)
  - ii. statutory outgoings – \$40,000 (excl GST)

- iii. variations required during constructions to make facility operational – \$110,561 (excl GST)
  - iv. staff relocation from Dickson to Hume – \$5,830; and
  - variations required during construction by Shared Services ICT and Security - \$94,616 (excl GST).
- (2) It took one business day to relocate the Motor Vehicle Inspection Station from Dickson to Hume (Monday, 15 May 2017).
  - (3) The Hume Motor Vehicle Inspection Station commenced operation on Wednesday, 17 May 2017.
  - (4) There are 20 vehicle safety standards staff and 17 Traffic Camera Van Operators based at the Hume location.
  - (5) The annual cost to operate the Hume Motor Vehicle Inspection Station is \$744,970 plus statutory outgoings, consisting of:
    - a. rent – \$665,400 (excl GST) per annum (plus 3% per year)
    - b. fitout rent – \$39,570 (excl GST) per annum (fixed)
    - c. statutory outgoings – \$40,000 (excl GST) per annum.
  - (6) There have been 1,426 vehicles inspected at the Hume Motor Vehicle Inspection Station since it was opened (as at 23 June 2017).

### **ACT public service—contractors (Question No 312)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) How many consultants or contractors are employed in positions in the ACT Public Service.
- (2) Is the appointment of consultants or contractors at odds with the Government's commitment, set out in the ACT Public Service Recruitment Guidelines, to minimise the use of consultants/contractors in the ACT Public Service.
- (3) Is it necessary for prior approval to be obtained before the process to appoint a consultant or contractor is commenced; if so, describe the process to obtain approval.
- (4) Is there any liaison with, or notification to, external bodies such as UnionsACT or the Community and Public Sector Union, before a consultant or contractor is engaged.
- (5) Who is responsible for approving the engagement of consultants or contractors in the ACT Public Service.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Consultants and contractors are not employees of the ACTPS, are engaged on a contract for service and details of those personnel may be contained in the individual contract terms. This information is not held centrally, but by individual directorates.

- (2) No. While the Government's preference is to create permanent jobs, from time to time the ACTPS has the need to engage contract labour (as consultants or contractors) to meet skills gaps, short term work requirements or to perform work not usually performed by Government employees.
  - (3) Each directorate sets its own approval process for the engagement of consultants and contractors. The *Government Procurement Regulation 2007* sets out the requirement that for a contract value of up to \$25,000 one quote is required; \$25,000 - \$200,000 three quotes are required; and above \$200,000 an open tender is required. In addition, on reasonable grounds the responsible Director-General may exempt the entity from these requirements.
  - (4) Generally, other than through the consultative requirements of the enterprise agreements, no consultation on the engagement of a contractor or consultant occurs. The agreed MOU on Procurement of Works and Services by the ACT Government requires that unions are notified of the list of tenderers for the employment of labour, generally in the construction and cleaning industries.
  - (5) Please see the answer to question 3.
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### **Access Canberra—shopfront closure (Question No 313)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Regulatory Services*):

- (1) When was the decision made to close the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront.
- (2) Who approved the decision to close the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront.
- (3) When was the closure of the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront announced and how was that announcement made and communicated to stakeholders.
- (4) Was any consultation undertaken with stakeholders before the decision was made to close the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront; if so, set out the nature of that consultation and the period allowed for the consultation.
- (5) What services had been offered at the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront before it was closed.
- (6) How many people accessed the services at the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront in financial years (a) 2014 15, (b) 2015 2016 and (c) for the period in 2016 17 until the shopfront was closed.
- (7) How many people accessed the land titles and revenue services at the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront in financial years (a) 2014 15, (b) 2015 2016 and (c) for the period in 2016 17 until the shopfront was closed.
- (8) What services are offered at other Access Canberra shopfront locations that were not offered at the Fyshwick shopfront.



- (9) What is the nature of the land titles and revenue services available at Dame Pattie Menzies House at 16 Challis Street Dickson.
- (10) What factors determine the services offered at each Access Canberra shopfront.
- (11) How many Access Canberra staff were based at the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront.
- (12) Will there be any redundancies following the decision to close the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront; if so, how many people will be made redundant.
- (13) What options are available to residents of south Canberra who may need to make a cash transaction with Access Canberra following the closure of the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront and the decision that the new Access Canberra Woden shopfront will be electronic only using debit or credit card, not cash.
- (14) What options are available to residents of central Canberra, including areas such as Civic, as well as the suburbs of the inner north and inner south, to use the services offered at Access Canberra shopfronts.
- (15) Is consideration being given to varying the services at any of the remaining Access Canberra shopfronts; if so, outline the nature of the changes being considered and advise when the community will be advised of the outcome of that consideration.

**Mr Ramsay:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. The decision to close the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront was made in line with the Whole of Government Accommodation Strategy in early 2016.
2. The Deputy Director-General of Access Canberra approved the decision to close the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront.
3. The closure of the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront was communicated to stakeholders in various ways over a number of months prior to the closure on 23 December 2016 including:
  - staff corresponding with key industry, business and community groups who were frequent users of the Fyshwick shopfront;
  - changing application forms to reflect the new arrangements and remove the references to Fyshwick Shopfront;
  - erecting signage a couple of months prior to closure to indicate that the shopfront was closing;
  - handing postcards detailing the new arrangements to customers who attended the shopfront;
  - updating the Access Canberra website;
  - placing regular posts on social media;
  - in-queue messaging to 132281 callers;
  - updating staff instructions/information in the Customer Relationship Management system to assist shopfront and Contact Centre staff to deal with customer enquires; and
  - updating staff email signature blocks to include messaging about the closure.
4. While stakeholders were not explicitly consulted on the closure of the Fyshwick shopfront, since the Fyshwick shopfront opened, customers would consistently provide

feedback that the location was inaccessible and not on a major public transport route. This feedback was one consideration in the decision to close the shopfront.

In May 2015 the Access Canberra Gungahlin Service Centre was opened and a pilot implemented to expand services to include those only traditionally available at the Fyshwick shopfront. These included birth, death and marriage registrations, business and industry licence registrations and Working with Vulnerable People applications. This pilot proved to be successful so the other shopfronts were upgraded to Service Centres. Tuggeranong became a Service Centre in February 2016, Belconnen in July 2016 and Woden in February 2017. Service Centres offer opening hours spanning from 8am to 6pm, providing more flexibility to customers and allowing customers the convenience of transacting in a location of their choice.

5. The following services were offered at the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront before it closed:

- birth, death and marriage registrations
- land titles and revenue services (stamp duty payment assessments)
- liquor licensing
- Working with Vulnerable People applications
- Gambling and Racing Commission administration
- business industry licensing (including security, high risk work, traders, agents)
- fair trading advice and complaints
- associations and charitable collections
- Justice of the Peace administration.

6. The number of who people accessed the services at the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront in financial years:

(a) 2014-15	51,553
(b) 2015-16	58,515
(c) 2016-17 (until the shopfront was closed)	23,917

7. The number of who people accessed the land titles and revenue services at the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront in financial years:

(a) 2014-15	<b>Land Titles 9608</b>	<b>Revenue 857</b>
(b) 2015-2016	<b>Land Titles 10689</b>	<b>Revenue 9214</b>
(c) 2016-17 (until the shopfront was closed)	<b>Land Titles 4534</b>	<b>Revenue 3668</b>

8. **Attachment A** outlines the services that were available at Access Canberra shopfront locations that were not offered at the Fyshwick shopfront.

9. Land titles and revenue services previously provided at the Fyshwick shopfront are now provided at Dickson, in the Dame Pattie Menzies shopfront, to support streamlining with other property services offered at that location, such as development application services.

10. Access Canberra has been transitioning the former Canberra Connect shopfronts into Service Centres since December 2014. Service Centres have been fitted with new technology including touch screens and a new queuing system, and have an increased number and type of transactions that can be processed. A number of the simpler transactions (vehicle registrations, rates payments, MyWay top-ups, etc.) have been made available online, with staff in the Service Centres educating customers how they

might more easily complete these transactions from their home, work, etc. using the touch screens. The reduction in this customer traffic has allowed the successful introduction into the Service Centres of the more complex transactions previously only available at Fyshwick.

Land title, stamp duty and fingerprinting services for security guard applications transferred to the Environment, Planning and Land Shopfront at Dame Pattie Menzies House in Dickson on 1 December 2016. The decision to move the Land Titles Office to Dickson was made because the transactions associated with this area are complex in nature and require a specific level of knowledge and delegation to complete. The majority of transactions undertaken are paid for by cheque, which would mean payments could not be processed in the Gungahlin and Woden Service Centres due to them accepting credit or debit card payment only.

Land title and revenue transactions are also more aligned to the land and leasing related services already provided at the DPMH shopfront and, in many cases, customers can now transact in the one location where previously they would have had to make a trip to Dickson and Fyshwick. This change now brings together land and planning services in a single location and is the first step taken to horizontally integrate service delivery to meet specific needs of relevant industries and segments of the community. Customer feedback has been excellent so far.

11. Approximately 120 Access Canberra staff were based at the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront.
12. There were no redundancies as a result of closing the Access Canberra Fyshwick shopfront.
13. and 14

The Gungahlin and Woden Service Centres accept debit and credit card payments only. Tuggeranong and Belconnen Service Centres and the Dickson Motor Vehicle Registry Shopfront also accept cash and cheque payments. Most transactions that can be undertaken in the service centres or shopfronts are also available online and/or at other locations such as Australia Post and recharge agents – see **Attachment A**.

Civic Drivers Licence Service, in the Civic Library, is located 5 kilometres away from Dickson and processes drivers licence and proof of identity cards only. Belconnen Service Centre is located 8.5 kilometres and Gungahlin Service Centre is located 9 kilometres away from Dickson. Public transport is readily accessible to the City and Gungahlin from Northbourne Avenue.

Touch screens have been installed in the Access Canberra Building Services Shopfront at Mitchell and in the Environment, Land and Planning Shopfront in Dame Pattie Menzies House in Dickson. Customers can also visit these locations and complete many online transactions as well.

15. Access Canberra's service delivery model is evolving in line with the Whole of Government Accommodation strategy; changes to legislation; technology; and customer expectations. As changes to service centre and shopfront services are considered, a communications plan is developed to ensure relevant stakeholders and the community are advised. The vehicle inspection station has been relocated to Hume since June 2017, driver licence examiner services will relocate to Gungahlin in early July and the Dickson Motor Vehicle Registry building is expected to close in

September to allow for construction of the building of the new ACT Government building. A range of communication strategies are being developed.

**Services provided in shopfronts prior to closure of Fyshwick Shopfront**

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Civic Driver Licence Service – Civic Library**

- ACT driver licence, Proof of Age Card and ACTION Gold Card transactions only

**Building Services Shopfront – Darling Street Mitchell**

- house and drainage plans
- building file searches
- plumbing, drainage and gasfitting plan approvals and booking inspections
- the administrative tasks associated with the building approval process
- enquiries and processes associated with building, electrical, gas and plumbing licensing and standards
- counter, phone and general enquiries about a range of application, procedural and process matters
- building & lease conveyancing requests;
- Energy Efficiency Rating matters
- tax depreciation packages

**Environment Land and Planning Shopfront – Dame Pattie Menzies House, Challis Street Dickson**

- administrative tasks associated with the development application process
- sale of maps and land information
- information about land zoning
- information about policies and projects
- issuing of compliance certificates
- sale of property sales data
- processing of land activity notices
- exemption declaration applications

**Access Canberra Service Centres (Belconnen, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong, Woden) and Dickson MVR Shopfront – approx 130 services including:**

- Working With Vulnerable People registrations
- proof of age cards
- seniors cards
- motor vehicle registration and renewal
- duty payable upon registration or transfer of a motor vehicle
- written off motor vehicles
- ACT driver licence and vehicle registration proof of identity and residency requirements
- Infringements
- ACT numberplate information
- rideshare, hire cars and taxis
- Action Gold Cards

**Access Canberra transactions available at Australia Post**

- Motor vehicle registration renewal

**Transactions available online via touch screens in Access Canberra Service Centres and Shopfronts (except Civic and Dickson MVR)**

- Accredited Driving Instructor Or Heavy Vehicle Assessor Accreditation payments
  - ACT Building and Construction Fees and Levies
  - ACT Health Account
  - ACT Migration Program
  - ACT Nomination – Business Innovation and Investment Program
  - ACT Teacher Quality Institute
  - ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board Request for Letter of Professional Standing (LOPS)
  - ACTION Bus Charter Payment
  - Adult Entertainment Industry
  - Ambulance Account
  - Ambulance Levy Return
  - Animal Welfare Act Infringements
  - Application for a General Construction Induction Card
  - Application for a young people's event in an adults only area at licensed premises
  - Application for Certificate of Compliance
  - Application for Construction occupation licence in the ACT under mutual recognition
  - Application for Extension of Time to Complete the Building and Development Provisions of the Crown Lease
  - Application for Lifelong Dog Registration
  - Application for Permit for Trade Promotion Lottery
  - Application for Permit to Conduct a Raffle
  - Application for Reconsideration of a decision under Tree Protection Act 2005
  - Application for Second-hand dealer and Pawnbroker Licences
  - Application for student concession MyWay card
  - Application for Tobacco Licence - New or Renewal
  - Architect registration or Construction occupations licence Renewal
- 
- Backflow Device Report
  - Birth Certificate
  - Building Conveyancing Enquiries and Energy Rating Package
- 
- Certificate of Electrical Safety
  - Certificate of rates land tax and other charges
  - Change of name certificate
  - Charitable Foundations Donor Form
  - CIT Student Fee
  - CIT Student Print or Copy - Add Value
  - City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy
  - Civil partnership certificate
  - Civil union Certificate
  - Community Pharmacy Licence Transfer of Ownership
  - Community Pharmacy New Licence Application
  - Connect and Participate (CAP) 2017 EXPO stallholder payment
  - Construction Licence Application
  - Construction Occupation Acceptance of Offer
  - Construction Occupation or Architect registration replacement card
  - Contaminated land search - application
  - Criminal Infringement Notice payment

- Death certificate
- Development Application payment
- Dog tag replacement (yellow)
- Domestic Animals Act Infringements
- Driveways, Stormwater Easement clearances, Waste Management Plans and Landscape Management Protection
- Election ACT – Failure to vote penalty
- Employment agent and owners corporation managing agent licence annual payment
- Energy rating submissions
- Environment Protection Infringement Notice
- Fee advice payments - Environment and Planning
- Financial Assistance Scheme - Recovery from Offenders
- Firearm Licence Payment
- Fireworks Display Permit Application
- Fisheries Act Infringements
- Food Business New Registration Application
- Garbage, recycling (wheelie) bins or hoppers: new or additional
- Gas Start of Work Notice
- General Insurance Duty Return
- Green Waste Bins - Ordering and Maintenance
- Housing ACT Caravan Park Licence fees and Electricity payment
- Housing ACT half cost fencing payment
- Housing ACT Maintenance payment
- Housing ACT Rental payment
- Hydraulic certificate of compliance
- Hydraulic Start of Work Notice
- Land tax payment
- Lease Conveyancing Enquiry
- Library Fee Payment
- Life Insurance Duty Return
- Liquor Licence - Renewal or Quarterly Payment
- Litter Act Infringements
- Marriage Certificate
- Motor Vehicle Dealer payment
- Motor Vehicle Repairer Licence Annual Payment
- Motor Vehicle Sale and Repair Licences
- MyWay Card recharge
- MyWay purchase and registration
- National Quality Framework (NQF) annual fee payments
- Nature Conservation Act Infringements
- Ngunnawal Plant Use Book Purchase
- Non-commercial liquor permit application or renewal

- Order printed ACT legislation
- Parentage search certificate
- Payroll Tax Return
- Pest Plants and Animals Act Infringements
- Plant Item Registration
- Prepaid Parking Ticket
- Provision of Lease Advice
- Public Passenger Services Infringement Payments
- Public transport payments (application and licence fee)
- Public Unleased Land Act Infringements
- Public Unleased Land Act Work Approval
- Public Unleased Land Permits
- Radiation Licence Application
- Radiation Source Registration
- Raffle or Lottery – application to amendment an approval
- Rates Payment
- Real Estate, Business & Stock and Station Agent Licence Application for an Individual
- Real estate, Business & Stock and Station Agent Licence Registration Annual Payment
- Real estate, business & stock and station agent licence renewal for a corporation
- Real estate, business & stock and station agent licence renewal for an individual
- Real estate, Business & Stock and Station Salesperson Registration Annual Payment
- Real Estate, Business & Stock and Station Salesperson Registration Application
- Real estate, business & stock and station salesperson registration renewal
- Recycling and waste account application fee
- Recycling and waste correction to charges for failure to weigh out
- Recycling and waste debt collection/legal action recovery costs
- Recycling and waste Extra bin or hopper payment
- Recycling and waste interest on overdue accounts
- Recycling and waste invoice dispute fee
- Recycling and waste landfill account
- Renew vehicle registration
- Replacement card - Asbestos Assessor Licence
- Replacement card - Asbestos Removal Licence
- Replacement card - Construction Induction (White Card)
- Replacement card - Salesperson Licence
- Replacement card - Security Industry Licence
- Replacement card - Working with Vulnerable People
- Replacement Registration Certificate/Label
- Residential Building Depreciation Information
- Residential land rent Payment
- Restorative Justice Contribution payment
- Sanitary Drainage Plans: Residential
- Second-hand Dealers Pawnbrokers Licence annual payment
- Shopping trolley retailer collection notice payment
- Simple Cannabis Offence Notice (SCON)
- Sportsground Hire payment

- Temporary Public Road Closure payment
  - Temporary Traffic Management Plan Authorisation payment
  - Tidbinbilla annual pass
  - Traffic Control Data payment
  - Traffic Control Devices Plan Authorisation payment
  - Traffic infringement
  - Traffic management – approval to use a closed road
  - Traffic management – work as executed map or plan payment
  - Tree Protection Act Infringements
- 
- Working with Vulnerable People Registration renewals
- 

### **Canberra—CBR marketing (Question No 314)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Economic Development*):

- (1) What is the cost to design and establish the (a) CBR Canberra website (canberra.com.au), (b) CBR Canberra Facebook page, and (c) CBR Canberra Twitter and Instagram feeds.
- (2) Was an external provider engaged to develop the website and social media feeds referred to in part (1); if so, provide the name of the external provider contracted for the work and the period of the contract.
- (3) What has been the cost to maintain the following website and social media feeds since establishment: (a) CBR Canberra website (canberra.com.au), (b) CBR Canberra Facebook page, and (c) CBR Canberra Twitter and Instagram feeds.
- (4) Was any further promotional material developed for CBR Canberra and what were the costs to design and produce that material.
- (5) What was the nature and costs of any promotional material, including electronic material, developed with the CBR Canberra branding and used to promote the outcomes of the ACT Population Projections 2017 and outline the distribution of the promotional.
- (6) How many staff, by classification, are attached to the CBR Canberra team.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The CBR Canberra program implementation is delivered under a funded partnership agreement with the Canberra Business Chamber (CBC). This reflects the overall strategy to place greater ownership of the brand with the external or user community it has been designed to support. The CBC employs a full time Project Officer to deliver activities and initiatives under the guidance of a Brand Strategic Advisory Board, with funding provided by the ACT Government.



The work for design and development of canberra.com.au was undertaken under this contractual and funding framework. The CBC has advised of the following design and establishment costs:

- (a) \$91,150 - canberra.com.au
  - (b) \$1,000 - Facebook
  - (c) \$250 - Twitter and Instagram
- (2) CBC has advised that Canberra companies Coordinate, contentgroup and Threesides Marketing were the three external providers engaged over the 2016-17 financial year.
- (3) CBC advise of the following maintenance costs:
- (a) \$54,387 - canberra.com.au (ongoing content development, site management and new blog content).
  - (b) \$16,105 - Twitter and Facebook (generation of posts and moderation).
  - (c) \$19,091 - Instagram and social feed on canberra.com.au (generation of posts and moderation).

(4)

Promotional materials	Investment
Canberra: Brilliant Possibilities video with CCB (50% Match funded)	\$10,500
Canberra PLAY video (50% Match funded with CCB)	\$2,000
ICT Sector video with CollabIT (50% Match funded)	\$2,500
CBR Business Partnership video	\$5,000
Facts and Stats flyer (1000)	(design) \$2,100 (print) \$1,120
CBR Business Partnership Guide	\$1,098
We Are CBR Decals	\$1,884
We Are CBR Stickers	\$3,436
We Are CBR Bags	\$2,084
Six large CBR banners (5m x 2m)	(design) \$1,540 (production) \$9,084
CBR Pull-up banners x 2	\$940
CBR lapel pins x 2000	\$5,477
CBR Balloons x 2000	\$2,209
CBR caps (100)	\$1,250
CBR T-shirts (200)	\$3,132

- (5) There was no CBR related program expenditure associated with the release of ACT Population Projections 2017.
- (6) One full time Project Officer is engaged by the CBC to deliver activities under the funding agreement. Two ACT Government staff members (SOGA and ASO5) provide support to the CBR project and the CBC funding agreement, as part of their broader set of duties. The Deputy Director-General Enterprise Canberra is an ACT Government representative on the Brand Strategic Advisory Board.

**Canberra—flags and banners  
(Question No 315)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Economic Development, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) How much revenue was received from the hire of flags and/or banner poles under the Flags and Banners Operational Guidelines in the financial years (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16 and (d) 2016-17 to date.
- (2) Who hired flag and/or banner sites and what was the purpose for the hire in the financial years (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16 and (d) 2016-17 to date.
- (3) When were the Flags and Banners Operational Guidelines issued.
- (4) Who approved the Flags and Banners Operational Guidelines.
- (5) When were the costs for hiring flags and/or banner poles last revised.
- (6) On average, how many people are required to undertake a flag and/or banner installation.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The answer to question (1) is provided in the attached table.
- (2) The answer to question (2) is provided in the attached table.
- (3) The current guidelines were issued in 2012 and are available at:  
[http://www.economicdevelopment.act.gov.au/act\\_property\\_group/flying\\_flags\\_and\\_banners\\_in\\_canberra](http://www.economicdevelopment.act.gov.au/act_property_group/flying_flags_and_banners_in_canberra).

These guidelines were reviewed in May 2017 and will be replaced on the internet by the end of June 2017.

- (4) The guidelines are approved by ACT Property Group.
- (5) The hiring fees are reviewed at the beginning of each financial year.
- (6) Two.

*(Copies of the attachments are available at the Chamber Support Office).*

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**Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission—staffing and costs  
(Question No 316)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Acting Treasurer*):

- (1) How many staff, by ACT Public Service classification bracket were employed by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC) in the financial years (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16 and (d) 2016-17 to date.

- (2) What is the total amount of office space leased by the ICRC and what was the cost of leasing that space in the financial years (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16 and (d) 2016-17 to date.
- (3) In relation to the Senior Commissioner for the ICRC, (a) is the position of Senior Commissioner a full-time position, (b) is the current Senior Commissioner Canberra-based, (c) if the current Senior Commissioner is not Canberra-based (i) how many days a week does the Senior Commissioner spend in Canberra and (ii) what extra costs are incurred by the Senior Commissioner being based outside of the Territory and (d) were former Senior Commissioners Canberra-based.
- (4) What is the nature of costs recovered from the companies regulated by the ICRC.
- (5) Does the ICRC expect that the costs recovered from the companies regulated by the ICRC will be passed onto consumers or be absorbed by the companies.

**Ms Berry:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1)
- a) In 2013-2014, the ICRC employed 10 staff (9 full-time and one part-time), comprising 3 Administrative Officers, 1 Executive Officer and 6 Senior Officers.
  - b) Since 2014-15, the ICRC only reports the total number of staff in the agency and not a breakdown by staff classifications, to ensure its commitment towards privacy for staff, given its general low number of staff members.
    - In 2014-2015, the ICRC employed 4 full time staff.
  - c) In 2015-16, the ICRC employed 6 full time staff.
  - d) In 2016-17 (as at 22 June 2017), there are 10 full time staff employed by the ICRC.
- (2) The requested information is presented in the table below.

Financial year	Amount of office space (m <sup>2</sup> )	Office rental and operating costs (\$)
a) 2013-14	330	171,000
b) 2014-15	330	185,000
c) 2015-16	330	179,000
d) 2016-17	330	139,000 <sup>1</sup> (estimated)

<sup>1</sup> The ICRC's office rental and operating costs reduced in 2016-17, because the space was shared with staff from the Public Trustees Office for the period 26 August 2016 through to 6 March 2017.

- (3)
- a) The Senior Commissioner of the ICRC is a part-time statutory position.
  - b) No, the current Senior Commissioner is not Canberra-based.
  - c) (i) The number of days the Senior Commissioner spends in Canberra varies significantly and is based upon work requirements at any particular time.
  - (ii) The extra costs associated with a Senior Commissioner that is not Canberra based include relevant travel and accommodation costs, as allowed for by the relevant ACT Remuneration Tribunal Determination (No. 6 of 2016).

- d) All previous Senior Commissioners of the ICRC were Canberra-based.
- (4) The ICRC operates largely on a cost recovery basis, seeking to recover the actual costs incurred by the ICRC in undertaking regulatory activities for regulated entities. Costs are recovered through a number of mechanisms, including annual licence fees for utilities, the energy industry levy for all energy operators and direct reimbursement by regulated entities for the costs associated with major pricing investigations.
- (5) It is a decision of regulated entities as to how and if they choose to pass on regulatory costs to their customers, incurred as a result of regulation undertaken by the ICRC.

## Budget (Question No 317)

**Mr Coe** asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What is the total amount of capital and current funding that remains unallocated in the ACT Budget in the financial years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20 and (d) 2020-21.
- (2) In the financial years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20 and (d) 2020-21 what is the total amount of (i) unallocated capital works provisions and (ii) unallocated recurrent provisions in the ACT.
- (3) What is the total projected FTE for the ACT public service in the financial years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20 and (d) 2020-21.
- (4) What is the projected FTE for each ACT Directorate and agency in the financial years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20 and (d) 2020-21.

**Mr Barr:** The answers to parts 1 and 2 of the Member's question are as follows:

There are two distinct types of capital and recurrent provisions – the first type includes general provisions which have not been allocated to particular agencies, while the second type includes provisions which have been set aside against specific projects and which will be allocated to the relevant agency in future budgets:

<b>General provisions</b>	<b>2017-18 \$'000</b>	<b>2018-19 \$'000</b>	<b>2019-20 \$'000</b>	<b>2020-21 \$'000</b>	<b>Total \$'000</b>
Infrastructure Investment Provisions (Capital) <sup>1</sup>	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	300,000
Capital Delivery Provision <sup>2</sup>	-131,176	-35,548	131,176	35,548	0
Other capital - Provision for asset sales	0	-6,500	-6,500	-6,500	-19,500
Recurrent provisions	41,624	63,464	83,663	132,983	321,734
<b>Total</b>	<b>-89,552</b>	<b>121,416</b>	<b>308,339</b>	<b>262,031</b>	<b>602,234</b>

<b>Specific project provisions</b>	<b>2017-18 \$'000</b>	<b>2018-19 \$'000</b>	<b>2019-20 \$'000</b>	<b>2020-21 \$'000</b>	<b>Total \$'000</b>
Infrastructure Investment Provisions (Capital) <sup>3</sup>	16,000	63,371	148,858	238,075	466,304
Provision for devices for students	4,033	4,053	4,428	4,652	17,166
Recurrent provisions <sup>4</sup>	42,592	127,988	223,132	311,308	705,020
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,625</b>	<b>195,412</b>	<b>376,418</b>	<b>554,035</b>	<b>1,188,490</b>

Notes:

1. Refer to Table 5.2.1 (page 194) and page 200, 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 3. This is a future works provision for new initiatives in the forward years and is not allocated to any specific project.

2. Refer to Table 5.2.1 (page 194) and page 200, 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 3. This provision re-profiles the program funding allocations to reflect the likely delivery outcome of the Capital Works Program, improving the accuracy of the overall budget estimates. While agencies are funded to deliver capital projects according to agreed timelines, there are risks to the delivery of each project.
3. Refer to Table 5.2.1 (page 194) and page 200 Budget Paper No. 3. This provision is for specific projects for which the budgets are yet to be settled, or which are commercially sensitive.
4. The recurrent amounts include the expense side of the renewable energy certificates (refer to page 37, 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 3).

The answers to parts (3) and (4) of the Member's question are as follows:

Total full-time equivalents (FTEs) for the 2017-18 Budget year are expected to be 20,905 (for all government agencies and business enterprises), as published on page 427 of 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 3. The Government does not forecast agency FTEs for the forward estimates period, although staffing and associated expenses are published in the financial statements for the whole of government as well as for individual agencies.

### **Budget—rates (Question No 318)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Acting Treasurer*):

What is the average rates for 2017-18 and for each of the out-years of the Budget for (a) single dwellings and (b) units for each suburb in Australian Capital Territory.

**Ms Berry:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Average rates for 2017-18 for (a) single dwellings and (b) units for each suburb of the Territory (where sufficient data is available to ensure privacy of rate payers) are in Table 1 below.

Rates by suburb for single dwellings and units are based on the Average Unimproved Values (AUVs) for each property within the suburb. Rates for the forward estimates of the 2017 18 Budget are not available because AUVs for those years are not yet available.

**Table 1: Average residential general rates for 2017-18 by suburb and dwelling type.**

	(a) Single dwellings	(b) Units
<b>INNER NORTH</b>		
AINSLIE	\$3,523	\$2,321
BRADDON	\$3,887	\$1,242
CAMPBELL	\$4,126	\$1,540
CITY		\$1,006
DICKSON	\$2,986	\$1,349
DOWNER	\$2,830	\$1,540
HACKETT	\$3,041	\$1,501
LYNEHAM	\$2,695	\$1,206
O'CONNOR	\$3,644	\$1,615
REID	\$4,949	\$1,447

	(a) Single dwellings	(b) Units
TURNER	\$5,056	\$1,373
WATSON	\$2,522	\$1,158
<b>INNER SOUTH</b>		
BARTON	\$6,002	\$1,508
DEAKIN	\$4,659	\$1,674
FORREST	\$9,411	\$2,139
GRIFFITH	\$5,091	\$1,446
KINGSTON	\$3,520	\$1,439
NARRABUNDAH	\$3,226	\$1,468
PIALLIGO	\$5,717	
RED HILL	\$5,141	\$2,549
YARRALUMLA	\$5,236	\$2,875
<b>WODEN DISTRICT</b>		
CHIFLEY	\$2,668	\$1,564
CURTIN	\$3,017	\$1,488
FARRER	\$2,843	\$1,596
GARRAN	\$3,572	\$1,392
HUGHES	\$3,121	\$1,524
ISAACS	\$2,591	\$1,959
LYONS	\$2,643	\$1,308
MAWSON	\$2,746	\$1,652
O'MALLEY	\$4,428	\$2,844
PEARCE	\$2,798	\$1,546
PHILLIP	\$1,789	\$1,305
TORRENS	\$2,584	\$1,599
<b>WESTON DISTRICT</b>		
CHAPMAN	\$2,848	\$1,365
DUFFY	\$2,250	\$1,442
FISHER	\$2,242	\$1,249
HOLDER	\$2,199	\$1,492
RIVETT	\$2,065	\$1,505
STIRLING	\$2,167	\$1,446
WARAMANGA	\$2,170	\$1,482
WESTON	\$2,212	\$1,471
<b>BELCONNEN DISTRICT</b>		
ARANDA	\$3,127	\$1,777
BELCONNEN	\$1,787	\$1,083
BRUCE	\$2,626	\$1,273
CHARNWOOD	\$1,622	\$1,258
COOK	\$2,625	\$1,646
DUNLOP	\$1,615	\$1,272
EVATT	\$1,867	\$1,266
FLOREY	\$1,972	\$1,495
FLYNN	\$1,873	\$1,390
FRASER	\$1,899	\$1,418
GIRALANG	\$2,007	\$1,527
HAWKER	\$2,819	\$1,565
HIGGINS	\$1,938	\$1,496
HOLT	\$1,703	\$1,204
KALEEN	\$2,156	\$1,376
LATHAM	\$1,797	\$1,357

	(a) Single dwellings	(b) Units
MACGREGOR	\$1,609	\$1,321
MACQUARIE	\$2,402	\$1,324
MCKELLAR	\$2,021	\$1,592
MELBA	\$2,025	\$1,456
PAGE	\$2,120	\$1,470
SCULLIN	\$1,911	\$1,424
SPENCE	\$1,824	\$1,394
WEETANGERA	\$2,914	\$1,720
<b>TUGGERANONG DISTRICT</b>		
BANKS	\$1,721	\$1,453
BONYTHON	\$1,854	\$1,388
CALWELL	\$1,906	\$1,293
CHISHOLM	\$1,881	\$1,492
CONDER	\$1,790	\$1,300
FADDEN	\$2,171	\$1,800
GILMORE	\$1,905	\$1,393
GORDON	\$1,806	\$1,241
GOWRIE	\$1,864	\$1,570
GREENWAY	\$1,789	\$1,290
ISABELLA PLAINS	\$1,793	\$1,329
KAMBAH	\$1,970	\$1,429
MACARTHUR	\$2,052	\$1,414
MONASH	\$1,991	\$1,360
OXLEY	\$2,012	\$1,514
RICHARDSON	\$1,775	\$1,244
THARWA	\$1,668	
THEODORE	\$1,777	\$1,341
WANNIASSA	\$1,959	\$1,437
<b>GUNGAHLIN – HALL DISTRICT</b>		
AMAROO	\$1,792	\$1,517
BONNER	\$1,535	\$1,186
CASEY	\$1,637	\$1,102
CRACE	\$1,744	\$953
FORDE	\$1,863	\$1,242
FRANKLIN	\$1,796	\$906
GUNGAHLIN	\$1,756	\$1,116
HALL	\$3,458	\$1,127
HARRISON	\$1,761	\$939
JACKA	\$1,562	\$1,065
MONCRIEFF	\$1,555	
NGUNNAWAL	\$1,622	\$1,262
NICHOLLS	\$2,133	\$1,605
PALMERSTON	\$1,788	\$1,632
<b>MO LONGLO DISTRICT</b>		
COOMBS	\$2,018	\$1,126
WRIGHT	\$2,198	\$926
<b>JERRABOMBERRA</b>		
JERRABOMBERRA	\$5,597	
OAKS ESTATE	\$1,635	\$872
SYMONSTON	\$8,856	

**Housing—rateable dwellings  
(Question No 319)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) How many rateable dwellings (or dwellings/households paying rates) are in the Australian Capital Territory as at 7 June 2017 and how many are (a) single dwellings and (b) units dwellings.
- (2) What is the projected number of rateable dwellings (or dwellings/households paying rates) in the Australian Capital Territory for the financial years (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- (3) How many of the rateable dwellings in part (2) are (a) single dwellings and (b) units dwellings.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The rates IT system will only produce the number of rateable properties on the day the query is raised. As of 19 June there were 111,554 single dwellings paying rates. There were also 45,796 residential units paying rates.
  - (2) and (3) – The Government does not explicitly forecast the number of rateable dwellings. General rates revenue is set in aggregate which takes into account the expected growth in overall population.
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**Canberra Business Chamber—funding  
(Question No 320)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 9 June 2017: *(redirected to the Minister for Economic Development)*

- (1) How much funding was provided to the Canberra Business Chamber by ACT Directorates and agencies in (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2014-15, (d) 2015-16 and (e) 2016-17.
- (2) What funding is expected to be provided to the Canberra Business Chamber in 2017-18 by ACT Directorates and agencies.
- (3) Which programs under the Canberra Business Chamber have received funding from the ACT Government and what was the amount of funding provided under each program.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

I have interpreted your question to apply from point of establishment of the Canberra Business Chamber, a legal entity which became operational on 1 October 2014. My answer also focuses on program related contracts which are, in the main, the principal funding arrangements between the Canberra Business Chamber and the ACT Government.



(1) Table 1 refers for years 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17.

(2) Table 1 refers for 2017-18.

(3) Table 1 refers.

<b>Table 1</b>				
<b>Program Name</b>	<b>2014-15 \$ ex GST</b>	<b>2015-16 \$ ex GST</b>	<b>2016-17 \$ ex GST</b>	<b>2017-18 \$ ex GST</b>
Healthy Weight Initiative	-	93,500	134,500	165,000 (anticipated)
Brand Canberra	-	500,000	500,000	500,000
Light Rail Business Link	-	500,000	500,000	275,000
Trade and Export Programs	35,000	125,000		200,000
CM Export Awards	135,000	135,000	135,000	135,000
ACT Wage Advice Service	-	40,000	40,000	40,000
Actsmart Business Energy and Water Program	-	26,675	-	-
Actsmart Business Recycling Program	-	36,575	-	-
Climate Change and Energy Waste Program	-	-	14,300	-
Healthier Work Program	-	10,000	7,500	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>170,000</b>	<b>1,466,750</b>	<b>1,331,300</b>	<b>1,315,000</b>

Clarifying Notes:

- **Does not include** smaller one-off transactions (for example, payments for hosting specific issue policy forums or policy advisory work, payments to defray costs of trade mission participation where Chamber staff played an expanded role, payments to participate in Chamber events or small event sponsorships, and so on).
- In relation to 2014-15, totals **do not include**:
  - \$160,000 (ex GST) was paid to the former Canberra Business Council for delivery of the ACT Digital Enterprise Program, a Commonwealth funding initiative that was funded from a grant awarded to the ACT Government.
  - \$105,000 (ex GST) was paid to the former Canberra Business Council to deliver the Canberra BusinessPoint Program over the three month period July to September 2014. That program ceased at the end of September 2014 in its ACT Government funded form.

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**Infrastructure—audit  
(Question No 321)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Urban Renewal*):

- (1) In relation to the audit of city infrastructure conducted by the ACT Government's City Activation Team (a) what was the duration of the audit, (b) were WorkSafe ACT and emergency services organisations involved in the audit, (c) what was the cost of the audit, (d) were external consultants or organisations engaged to assist in the audit, (e) which city areas or facilities were audited and (f) what were the main findings of the audit.
- (2) What were the findings of the city infrastructure audit in relation to Civic Square.

**Mr Gentleman:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The City Activation Unit recently conducted an audit of city electrical infrastructure in collaboration with TCCS and Access Canberra.
  - a. The physical audit was conducted between January and February 2017 by representatives from TCCS City Presentation and Place Management. A further detailed assessment of all publicly accessible electrical infrastructure was conducted by representatives from the Access Canberra Electrical Inspectorate between March and May 2017. The results of these audits are currently being loaded into the Parks and City Services reference map.
  - b. WorkSafe ACT and emergency services organisations were not involved in the audit.
  - c. The audit was undertaken using existing resources within the specified Directorates.
  - d. No external consultants or organisations were engaged to assist in the audit.
  - e. The audit was conducted over the central city area:
    - i. Garema Place;
    - ii. City Walk;
    - iii. Petrie Plaza;
    - iv. Ainslie Place;
    - v. Civic Square; and
    - vi. Glebe Park.
  - f. The results from the audit are still being finalised.
- (2) Civic Square has significant infrastructure. The full results of the audit are currently being compiled.

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### **Land Development Agency—lease valuations (Question No 322)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) How many leases, including rural leases, were purchased by the Land Development Agency where only one formal valuation was sought for the financial years (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2014-15, (d) 2015-16 and (e) 2016-17 to date.

- (2) Why was only one formal valuation sought before the purchase was finalised for the rural leases (a) Burraburroo (purchased on 30 March 2015), (b) Milapuru (purchased on 31 July 2015), (c) Fairvale (purchased on 24 November 2015) and (d) Huntly (purchased on 8 April 2016).

**Ms Berry:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

(1)(a) 2012-13, Nil leases

(1)(b) 2013-14, One lease:

- Dickson Block 6 Section 72\*

(1)(c) 2014-15, Two leases and the purchase of one parcel of Commonwealth land:

- Belconnen Block 859
- Burraburroo - Tuggeranong Blocks 1405, 1470, 1471
- Commonwealth Land - Pialligo Block 5 Section 12

(1)(d) 2015-16, Five leases:

- Belconnen Block 858
- Milapuru - Stromlo Block 19
- Fairvale - Stromlo Block 518
- Huntly - Stromlo Blocks 412, 413, 426, 487, 489
- Dickson Block 25 Section 72\*

(1)(e) 2016-17 to date, Nil.

\*Note: One formal valuation was sought by Economic Development.

- (2) An independent market valuation was sought consistent with the *Planning and Development (Land Acquisition Policy Framework) Direction 2014 (No 1)*.

### **Sport—Stromlo pool (Question No 323)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Sport and Recreation, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What is the status of the project to construct a 50 metre pool at Stromlo Forest Park.
- (2) What is the status of the design and construction tender for the Stromlo Pool.
- (3) Why has the “Your say on Stromlo Pool” page on the ACT Government’s “Your Say” website not been updated since 8 February 2017.
- (4) Why wasn’t the summary of community consultation feedback published on the “Your Say” website in February 2017 as indicated on the website.
- (5) Will construction of the Stromlo Pool commence at the end of 2017 as advised on the “Your say on Stromlo Pool” webpage.

**Ms Berry:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Request for Tender documentation for Stromlo Pool is currently being finalised and the ACT Government will soon invite tenders for the design and construction of the facility.
  - (2) Refer to answer 1.
  - (3) The Stromlo Pool page on the "Your Say" website was updated on 9 June 2017.
  - (4) Collating and reviewing the information provided during the consultation process took longer than anticipated. A summary of the feedback is provided on the "Your Say" website.
  - (5) Yes, construction works are anticipated to commence in 2017.
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**Urban renewal—policy  
(Question No 324)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Urban Renewal, upon notice, on 9 June 2017  
(*redirected to the Acting Minister for Planning and Land Management*):

- (1) What is the status of the development of an urban renewal strategy for the City and Gateway Corridor.
- (2) How many submissions were received on the discussion paper on the Urban Renewal Strategy.
- (3) When will the draft Urban Renewal Strategy be released for community consultation.
- (4) Will all members of the community have the opportunity to comment on the consultation of the draft Urban Renewal Strategy or will consultation be limited to a representative sample.
- (5) What is the amount budgeted for the development of the City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy.
- (6) Have any external organisations been engaged to work on the City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy; if so, list those organisations and the value of any contracts.
- (7) Has any provision been made in the City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy for public or supportive housing.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy is scheduled to be finalised in 2017.
- (2) 21 written submissions  
107 survey responses  
160 attendees at 'Meet the Planners' sessions  
131 stakeholders attended workshops  
50 urban planning students provided their ideas on the project

- (3) Specific timeframes for consultation have not yet been determined.
- (4) Options for community engagement are not yet finalised.
- (5) \$1,483,593 (excl. GST)
- (6) Hassell Limited - \$1,361,991 (excl. GST)
  - Atkins - \$93,912 (excl. GST)
  - Pegrum and Judd - \$2,900 (excl. GST)
  - Elton Consulting - \$22,000 (excl. GST)
  - Apricot Zebra - \$2,790 (excl. GST)
- (7) Yes.

### **Roads—Barton Highway roundabout (Question No 325)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, upon notice, on 9 June 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Transport and City Services*):

- (1) How many traffic incidents (crashes) have been recorded at the Barton Highway/Gundaroo Drive/William Slim Drive roundabout in each financial year since 2004-2005.
- (2) How many traffic incidents (crashes) have been recorded at the Barton Highway/Gundaroo Drive/William Slim Drive roundabout in the financial years since the intersection was signalised.
- (3) Has any analysis been conducted of the traffic incidents which have been recorded at the Barton Highway/Gundaroo Drive/William Slim Drive roundabout since the intersection was signalised to assess if further upgrades to the intersection are required; if so, what were the findings of that analysis.
- (4) Has any analysis been conducted of the traffic flows on surrounding roads since the Barton Highway roundabout was signalised; if so, what were the findings of that analysis.
- (5) What was the estimated cost of the project to install traffic light signals on the Barton Highway roundabout.
- (6) What was the actual cost of the project to install traffic light signals on the Barton Highway roundabout.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1)

Financial year	Total number of crashes
01/07/2004 – 30/06/2005	46
01/07/2005 – 30/06/2006	62

Financial year	Total number of crashes
01/07/2006 – 30/06/2007	74
01/07/2007 – 30/06/2008	66
01/07/2008 – 30/06/2009	66
01/07/2009 – 30/06/2010	105
01/07/2010 – 30/06/2011	104
01/07/2011 – 30/06/2012	110
01/07/2012 – 30/06/2013	82
01/07/2013 – 30/06/2014	108
01/07/2014 – 30/06/2015	112
01/07/2015 – 30/06/2016	80
01/07/2016 – to date (please note – 2017 crash data to be finalised)	55

- (2) The traffic signals at the Barton Highway/Gundaroo Drive/William Slim Drive roundabout became operational on 20 December 2016. Since then there have been 23 reported crashes at this intersection (noting that the 2017 crash data is not finalised).
- (3) As a result of observations of the intersection operation an additional traffic signal pedestal and lantern has been installed and some changes to the turning guidelines have been implemented. Some of the existing traffic signal lanterns have also been adjusted.

Analysis of the impacts of any intersection improvements is not generally done until after one year of operation, when travel patterns have settled over a full year and the year's data can be analysed and compared to the original arrangements prior to the improvements being introduced.

- (4) No, as per the above response it is practice to collect travel data over a year to compare to prior travel patterns to measure the success and impacts of the intersection improvements.
- (5) The Barton Highway / Gundaroo Drive / William Slim Drive intersection signalisation project was funded by the Federal Government's Roads to Recovery fund based on a budget estimate of \$10 million.
- (6) The cost of delivering the project matched the budget of \$10 million.

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### **Gungahlin—power outages (Question No 326)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Regulatory Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017  
(redirected to the Treasurer):

- (1) Has the Government been kept informed by ActewAGL of the power outages to Gungahlin suburbs in 2017.
- (2) When was the Government first advised by ActewAGL of the issues surrounding the reliable supply of power to Gungahlin suburbs.

- (3) Which Gungahlin suburbs were affected by power outages and the (a) dates each suburb lost power and (b) time period of each outage.
- (4) What has been the cause of the outages.
- (5) What is being done to ensure Gungahlin residents have access to a reliable source of electricity.

**Mr Barr:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) ActewAGL has provided advice to the Government as and when requested.
- (2) 6 June 2017.
- (3) & (4) The Gungahlin suburbs affected by power outages, the dates each suburb lost power, the time period of each outage and the cause of the outages are listed in the table below.

Date	Duration of Interruption*	Suburbs Impacted	Cause
08/05/17	165 minutes	Amaroo, Bonner, Jacka, Moncrieff, Ngunnawal	Fault in HV switch gear
15/05/17	120 minutes	Amaroo, Bonner, Jacka, Moncrieff, Ngunnawal	Network Protection Setting Operation
17/05/17	104 minutes	Gungahlin, Ngunnawal	Third Party damage
24/05/17	119 minutes	Bonner, Forde, Gungahlin, Ngunnawal, Jacka, Amaroo	Network Protection Setting Operation
01/06/17	72 minutes	Franklin, Gungahlin, Mitchell, Ngunnawal & Palmerston	HV Cable fault
02/06/17	110 minutes	Gungahlin, Harrison, Kenny, Kinlyside, Mitchell	HV Cable Fault

*\* Please note duration of interruption represents the longest period any customer was off supply. Customers are normally restored in a staggered manner as fault location work progresses.*

- (5) ActewAGL Distribution have made immediate changes to reduce the chance of further unplanned interruptions including:
- Repair of the faulted cables;
  - To minimise potential load imbalances during the winter peak period planned upgrade works within the area have been suspended until the lower demand period normally experienced in Spring. This includes a protection system upgrade, intended to improve reliability through improved fault location, reducing the duration of interruptions;
  - Feeder extension work planned to manage future growth in the Gungahlin area has been brought forward by two years with work now to commence this calendar year. ActewAGL Distribution is also investigating additional feeder augmentation to further secure supply into the future for the area.
  - Reviewing our maintenance program and how it relates to these incidents in addition to normal maintenance efficacy reviews.

**Transport—ticketing systems  
(Question No 327)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) Why was it necessary for a delegation to travel to North America to learn about public ticketing systems.
- (2) Was consideration given to studying ticketing systems in Australian jurisdictions.
- (3) When was the decision made that a delegation should travel to North America and who made that decision.
- (4) When did the delegation travel and what was the composition of the delegation which travelled to North America.
- (5) What was the total cost of the delegation travel to North America to learn about new ticketing systems.
- (6) What was the total cost of the delegation travel to North America including  
(a) international airfares, (b) travel costs within North America, (c) accommodation, (d) sustenance, (e) hospitality, (f) travel allowances, (g) meeting costs and (h) other costs.
- (7) Did any members of the delegation meet their own travel costs; if so, how many of the delegates paid their own costs and what was the amount paid.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The International Association of Public Transport (UITP) held its Global Public Transport Summit in Montreal, Canada, from 15 to 17 May 2017. It is a unique, premier international event with a long history covering all urban transportation modes. Immediately following the summit, UITPANZ co-ordinated an eight day North American study tour covering rail, bus, light rail, road transport, and other relevant modes. It also covered a wide range of issues, including technology, systems, operations, maintenance, strategy and policy matters.

The delegation attended the UITP Global Public Transport Summit and subsequent UITPANZ Study Tour. I intend to make remarks regarding the summit and study tour in due course.

- (2) TCCS continues to assess both national and international ticketing systems in preparation for the proposed procurement of a new ticketing system for Transport Canberra.
- (3) A decision was made in February 2017. The travel of myself and my transport advisor followed consultation with the Chief Minister. I approved the travel of the accompanying TCCS official.



- (4) The delegation attended the Global Public Transport Summit from 15 to 17 May 2017 and the study tour from 18 to 25 May 2017. Attendees from ACT Government were:
- Ms Meegan Fitzharris, MLA, Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services
  - Mr Blair Thompson, Senior Advisor to the Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services
  - Mr Duncan Edghill, Deputy Director-General, Transport Canberra and City Services
- (5) The total cost of the delegation's travel expenses was \$67,000.
- (6) Please refer to the response to question 5.
- (7) Any personal costs incurred during the period of travel and paid for by delegates (and not the ACT Government) are not a public matter.
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**Waste—bins  
(Question No 328)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) How many waste bins are located in public spaces, such as local shopping centres, parks and reserves, in the ACT.
- (2) How many waste bins are located near bus stops and bus interchanges.
- (3) How frequently are bins located in public spaces emptied.
- (4) In relation to the commitment to install 100 recycling bins in the city (a) when will the bins be installed, (b) where will the additional bins be located and (c) will any additional bins be installed in suburban spaces.
- (5) Are there any plans to install more general waste bins in public spaces around the Territory.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) 1124 bins are located at local shops, group and town centres shopping areas, town and district parks, community parks, and district playing areas including sportsgrounds. Rubbish bins located in nature reserves are not managed by TCCS. They are managed by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (ESPDD).
- (2) 47 rubbish bins are located at bus interchanges. Rubbish bins are not installed at bus stops.
- (3) The frequency that a bin is emptied depends on the usage of the bin. Frequency ranges between daily in high visitation areas to fortnightly in lower use areas. On average rubbish bins are emptied three times per week.

- (4) (a)-(c) The installation of the 100 recycling bins across Canberra is currently being considered.
- (5) Installation of additional bins in public spaces is determined based on need.

### **Roads—Horse Park Drive (Question No 329)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What are the stages, and the cost of each stage, of works to upgrade Horse Park Drive.
- (2) When was each stage originally scheduled to be completed.
- (3) Is completion of the works on Horse Park Drive behind schedule.
- (4) What is the status of the works on Horse Park Drive.
- (5) What is being done to limit the inconvenience for residents who drive along Horse Park Drive.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

(1)

Stage 1	Mulligans Flat Road to Anthony Rolfe Avenue including all intersections (Part of \$57m authorisation in 2016-17 ACT Budget)
Stage 2	Anthony Rolfe to Wells Station Drive (including Anthony Rolfe / Horse Park Drive Intersection) (associated with the Throsby Development). (\$22.4m as part of a CMTEDD project)
Stage 3	Federal Highway to Wells Station Drive (excluding all intersections). (Part of \$57m authorisation in 2016-17 ACT Budget)

(2)

Stage 1	Scheduled for completion by mid-2019.
Stage 2	Complete.
Stage 3	Scheduled for completion by mid-2019.

(3) No.

(4)

Stage1	Construction underway – expected to be completed in early 2019.
Stage 2	Construction complete.
Stage 3	Construction due to commence in early 2018

- (5) Asphalt works are undertaken at night to minimise disruption. Temporary traffic arrangements have been put in place to ensure that a single lane in each direction remains open to traffic at all times. Speed reductions to 40 km/h and traffic switches are being undertaken only outside peak periods. Traffic speeds remain at 60km/h during peak periods. A communications plan is enacted involving media releases, social media, letter box drops and electronic variable message signage.

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### **Weston Creek dog park (Question No 330)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What is the status of the project to develop a Weston Creek dog park.
- (2) Have key stakeholders and nearby residents been engaged to provide feedback on the newly identified site at Duffy as indicated on the “Your Say ACT: New Weston Creek dog park” which was last updated on 28 November 2016; if not, when will key stakeholders and nearby residents be approached.
- (3) Which key stakeholders have been engaged, or will be engaged, to provide feedback on the new site of the Weston Creek dog park.
- (4) Why wasn’t the Duffy site included in the wider consultation of the shortlisted sites in Holder, Chapman and Waramanga.
- (5) What amount has been budgeted to develop a dog park in Weston Creek.
- (6) When is construction of the Weston Creek dog park expected to commence.
- (7) When is the Weston Creek dog park expected to be opened.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member’s question is as follows:

- (1) The responses to the Request for Tender for construction are currently being evaluated to determine the successful tenderer.
- (2) Yes. The first round of consultation conducted in 2016, which considered three shortlisted locations at Chapman, Holder and Waramanga, showed limited community support for these locations. Consequently a site in Duffy, near the corner of Warragamba Avenue and Eucumbene Drive (Block 4, Section 55), was suggested by the Weston Creek Community Council.

A second round of consultation was undertaken in late 2016 on the proposed Duffy site, including a presentation to the Weston Creek Community Council at a public meeting letter box drop to 120 Duffy and Stromlo Village residents in the immediate vicinity of the site and the Your Say website was updated with information on the selected location in Duffy.

The public notification period as part of the Development Application was open for six weeks, providing stakeholders and the community with an opportunity to comment on the design.

- (3) The following stakeholders were provided information and asked for feedback during the process to select the site at Duffy:
- a. the community;
  - b. the Weston Creek Community Council;
  - c. the ACT Equestrian Association;
  - d. EPSDD;
  - e. Icon Water (Sewer & Water);
  - f. ActewAGL (Electricity);
  - g. Jemena (Natural Gas);
  - h. TransACT (Telecom);
  - i. Telstra (Telecom);
  - j. CMTEDD;
  - k. HD – Health Protection;
  - l. ED – Schools Planning;
  - m. JACS – Emergency Services, ACT Fire and Rescue, Risk Planning; and
  - n. the National Capital Authority.
- (4) Over twenty sites were initially investigated as potential locations for the Weston Creek dog park, including Duffy.
- (5) \$320,000 was committed in the 2016-17 Budget.
- (6) Construction is expected to commence in September 2017.
- (7) The park is planned to be open for use by the community in early 2018.

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**Transport—light rail  
(Question No 331)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) Since the project to construct the Light Rail project has commenced what (a) was the number of occasions other infrastructure, such as the NBN, damaged in the construction, (b) type of infrastructure was damaged during the construction process and (c) was the total cost to repair damaged infrastructure.
- (2) Since the project to construct the Light Rail project has commenced how many (a) occupational health and safety (OHS) incidents have been logged, (b) workers reported an injury following an OHS incident, (c) OHS incidents resulted in workers' compensation claims being lodged, (d) work days were lost due to OHS incidents and (e) OHS incidents involved electrical shocks to workers.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The table below identifies the type of infrastructure that has been damaged since the commencement of the Light Rail project. To date the NBN has been damaged twice

during excavation work undertaken by Canberra Metro. One of these instances resulted in an outage of the NBN service, while the other did not result in an outage of the service, but damage to the NBN conduit only. The majority of infrastructure damage related incidents have involved street lights or traffic lights and are minor in nature. Costs for rectification of any damage to utility infrastructure is borne by the contractor under the total cost of the project. There is no additional cost to the Territory.

Infrastructure Type	Water	Traffic Light	Street light	Water Asset	NBN	iiNett
Number of Occasions	2	3	5	2	2	1

- (2) The table below identifies the number of OHS incidents, injuries logged by Canberra Metro, compensation claims, work days lost and electrical incidents that have been reported since the commencement of the Light Rail project, to the end of May 2017. Of the 110 incidents reported, 27 resulted in injuries of a minor nature. The remaining 83 incidents were in relation to near miss events or unsafe acts.

The Territory and Canberra Metro strongly encourages the reporting of near miss events. There has been no workers compensation claims lodged to date. There has been only 1 lost time injury recorded, a knee injury reported in April 2017, resulting in 39 days lost to the end of May 2017.

<b>No. of OHS Incidents*</b>	110 (5 of which were reported to WorkSafe ACT)
<b>No. of Injuries Reported</b>	27
<b>No. of Compensation Claims</b>	Nil
<b>No. of Work Days Lost</b>	39
<b>No. of Electrical incidents</b>	1

These numbers are as at 9 June 2017.

\* This number is considered normal for the size of the project.

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### **ACTION bus service (Question No 332)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) How many (a) new buses are due to be acquired and operational and (b) buses will be retired each year for the next five years.
- (2) How many (a) drivers, (b) bus maintenance staff and (c) other operational staff are currently available for work, broken down by (i) full-time, (ii) part-time and (iii) casually employed.
- (3) How many full-time equivalent (FTE) drivers were employed for each of the last five years.
- (4) How many FTA drivers are expected to be employed over the next five years.

- (5) What is the FTE to bus ratio for (a) drivers, (b) bus maintenance staff or mechanics and (c) other operational staff.
- (6) How many buses will be available for redeployment to other routes after the light rail replaces them along Gungahlin-City corridor.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Pre Election Budget Update 2016 provided funding to purchase 80 new buses associated with the staged introduction of seven new rapid bus routes from 2017 to 2020. TCCS anticipates that up to 40 new buses will be acquired during the 2017-18 financial year. Fleet purchases and retirements beyond 2017-18 will depend on the timing of the introduction of the new rapid bus routes and associated operational requirements.
- (2) The table below sets out employment numbers as of May 2017.

	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Part Time</b>	<b>Casual</b>
<b>Drivers</b>	406	261	52
<b>Maintenance</b>	96	14	8
<b>Operational</b>	54	5	-

- (3) The table below sets out the number of FTEs employed over the last five years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>FTE</b>
<b>2012-13</b>	617.85
<b>2013-14</b>	626.25
<b>2014-15</b>	623.12
<b>2015-16</b>	622.21
<b>2016-17</b>	666.79

- (4) TCCS estimate an additional 32 FTEs through 2017-18, with the total employment increasing from an estimated 859 FTEs at June 2017 to 891 FTEs at June 2018. The decision regarding staffing numbers beyond 2017-18 will depend on the timing of the introduction of the new rapid bus routes and associated operational requirements.
- (5) The following table sets out the FTE to bus ratio for the requested categories as at May 2017 based on a fleet of 428 buses:

<b>Employee Type</b>	<b>Total FTE</b>	<b>Per Bus Ratio</b>
<b>Drivers</b>	678.8*	1.59
<b>Maintenance</b>	128.0	0.30
<b>Operational</b>	65.7**	0.15

\* This FTE count for drivers includes both route drivers and Special Needs Transport (SNT) drivers

\*\* This FTE for operational staff includes SNT attendants

- (6) At present, approximately 37 buses service the Gungahlin – City corridor during the morning peak period. Planning for the re-organisation of bus services associated with the introduction of Light Rail in the second half of 2018 is still underway. No decisions have been made at this stage regarding the redeployment of specific services.

### **Transport and City Services—street sweeping (Question No 333)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What is the budget allocation for street sweeping services in the financial years (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2014-15, (d) 2015-16, (e) 2016-17 and (f) 2017-18.
- (2) What was the actual expenditure on street sweeping services in the financial years (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2014-15, (d) 2015-16 and (e) 2016-17 to date.
- (3) What is the street sweeping schedule for the ACT.
- (4) Is additional street sweeping scheduled for connecting roads in the ACT; if so, list the roads where more frequent street sweeping is undertaken.
- (5) How many vehicles are used to conduct street sweeping services in the ACT by make, model and age of vehicle.
- (6) What is the reliability, availability and serviceability of the ACT's street sweeping machine fleet.
- (7) Is there a proposal to purchase new machines or additional machines to provide increased street sweeping services in the ACT; if so, when will the additional machines join the fleet.
- (8) How many staff are assigned to the street sweeping program.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

#### **(1) Street Sweeping Budget**

2012-13	Not separately budgeted
2013-14	Not separately budgeted
2014-15	\$1,346,000
2015-16	\$1,400,000
2016-17	\$1,800,000

Note: The current financial year budget allocation has not been finalised.

## (2) Street Sweeping Actual expenditure

2012-13	\$1,223,000
2013-14	\$1,403,000
2014-15	\$1,355,000
2015-16	\$1,525,000
2016-17	\$1,169,000

- (3) The annual street sweeping schedule is published on the TCCS website at:  
[http://www.tccs.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/421943/Annual-sweeping-program-August-2014.pdf](http://www.tccs.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/421943/Annual-sweeping-program-August-2014.pdf)
- (4) The annual street sweeping schedule includes sweeps of major roads.
- (5) TCCS operates five Hino trucks with Macdonald Johnson sweeping units fitted. One truck was procured in October 2012 and four trucks procured in October 2013.
- (6) The sweepers are provided under a fleet lease agreement which includes all maintenance and repairs, including six monthly servicing.
- (7) No further procurement for street sweeping vehicles is currently planned or budgeted. Leases are renewed periodically.
- (8) Five staff are assigned to drive vehicles plus a part time officer responsible for coordination of the program.

### **Transport—flexible bus service (Question No 334)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What is the cost of operating the Flexible Bus Service in the financial years (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 2016-17 to date.
- (2) What is the total number of trips on the Flexible Bus Service that have been recorded in the financial years (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 2016-17 to date.
- (3) For the financial years in parts (1) and (2), how many trips were for the following zones: (a) Zone 1 – Belconnen, (b) Zone 2 – Inner South/Woden/Weston, (c) Zone 3 – Tuggeranong and (d) Zone 4 – Gungahlin.
- (4) Will the Flexible Bus Service be extended to eligible passengers living in the Molonglo Valley; if so, when will the service be extended to Molonglo Valley residents.
- (5) How many and what type of vehicles are used to provide the Flexible Bus Service.
- (6) How many of the vehicles used to provide the Flexible Bus Service are fully accessible and feature air conditioning or climate control.



**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The cost of operating the service including the Community Transport Coordination Centre are as follows:

(a) \$883,000                      (b) \$954,000                      (c) \$1,068,000 (May YTD)

- (2)

(a) 6,026 trips                      (b) 12,083 trips                      (c) 17,233 trips

- (3) Prior to the introduction of the electronic booking system (RouteMatch) in early March 2015, records were not kept in regard to trips per zone. Records were able to be included after RouteMatch and the trips are as follows:

(a) 2014-15	(b) 2015-16	(c) 2016-17
Zone 1 - 239	Zone 1 - 3,492	Zone 1 - 5,014
Zone 2 - 653	Zone 2 - 4,884	Zone 2 - 6,151
Zone 3 - 429	Zone 3 - 3,310	Zone 3 - 5,178
Zone 4 N/A	Zone 4 - 33	Zone 4 - 246

- (4) The Inner South/Woden/Weston Flexible Bus Service includes services to the Molonglo Valley.

- (5) There are six, 21-seater, white Rosa Mini buses currently used to provide the Flexible Bus Service.

- (6) All the buses are wheelchair accessible with low steps and feature air conditioning.

### **Transport—passenger information system (Question No 335)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What was the cost of developing the NXTBUS system.
- (2) What was the cost of installing and implementing the NXTBUS system.
- (3) What is the annual cost of maintaining the NXTBUS system.
- (4) Does Transport Canberra record the numbers of customers who use the NXTBUS system; if so, list the usage for the financial years (a) 2014 15, (b) 2015 16 and (c) 2016 17 to date.
- (5) What is the average uptime (or availability) of the NXTBUS system.
- (6) How much downtime, broken down into scheduled and unscheduled downtime, has the NXTBUS system experienced in the financial years (a) 2014 15, (b) 2015 16 and (c) 2016 17 to date.

- (7) What was the cause of the intermittent technical issues experienced by NXTBUS in early January 2017.
- (8) Is the supplier of the NXTBUS system bound to a Service Level Agreement that guarantees uptime (or availability) for the system; if so, what level of uptime (or availability) is guaranteed by the Service Level Agreement.
- (9) Has the NXTBUS experienced any further technical issues since January 2017.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The total cost of designing, installing and implementing the NXTBUS System is \$12.5 million.
- (2) Included in the above budget allocation.
- (3) The annual operating costs of the NXTBUS system are \$683,000 and include NXTBUS server charges, NXTBUS contracted monthly maintenance charges and data communication charges.
- (4) Figures for all customers using NXTBUS are not available.
- (5) The average uptime of NXTBUS is > 98%.

(6)

<b>Nxtbus System Outages</b>		
	<b>Scheduled</b>	<b>Unscheduled</b>
<b>2014-15</b>	12 (Once Monthly)	No records
<b>2015-16</b>	12 (Once Monthly)	No records
<b>2016-17</b>	12 (Once Monthly)	3

**Note: Scheduled outages occur outside operational hours**

- (7) NXTBUS experienced one server outage that did not affect the customer facing service. NXTBUS also experienced some minor technical issues affecting a small number of NXTBUS website route service updates in January 2017.
- (8) The supply agreement states the production Real Time Passenger Information System (RTPIS) shall have a total calculated availability of 99.95%. Also 98% of the RTPIS-equipped vehicles in the ACTION fleet shall have all Contractor-provided vehicle equipment fully operational.
- (9) The NXTBUS technical issues are being managed under manufacturer warranty arrangements. The system has experienced some minor technical issues affecting a small number of NXTBUS website route service updates. The vendor has responded by implementing an update to resolve future issues.

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## **Transport—communications strategy (Question No 336)**

**Mr Coe** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 9 June 2017:

- (1) What was the cost of commissioning the (a) Public Bus Transport Communications Strategy and (b) ACT Public Transport Communications Strategy.
- (2) Why were the strategies were commissioned.
- (3) Why was it necessary to commission a second communications strategy.
- (4) What was the name of the provider who developed the strategies in part (1) and outline the procurement processes undertaken as part of the engagement of that provider.
- (5) Were any of the recommendations of the two strategies in part (1) implemented; if so, briefly outline the recommendations which were implemented; if not, what were the reasons for not implementing the recommendations of the strategies.
- (6) Has the provider which developed the strategies in part (1) been engaged on any other projects for Transport Canberra or Capital Metro.
- (7) What communications strategies have been commissioned by Transport Canberra, Capital Metro and Territory and Municipal Services in the period since 1 January 2014, providing the (a) title, (b) purpose, (c) provider, (d) cost and (e) date the strategy was finalised.
- (8) Are there any plans to develop further communications strategies in 2017-18; if so, outline the purpose and proposed cost of those strategies.

**Ms Fitzharris:** The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Details are available on the ACT Contracts Register.
- (2) To inform Government on the delivery of the new public transport agency – Transport Canberra.
- (3) This will provide advice on the amalgamation of existing public transport options within the ACT.
- (4) Civic Group. Details of the procurement process undertaken are available on the ACT Contracts Register.
- (5) These strategies have not been released into the public domain. See recent Freedom of Information Request Decision:  
[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1053481/Decision.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1053481/Decision.pdf).
- (6) No.
- (7)
  - a) Communication and Consultation Plan – Light Rail Stage 2
  - b) The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for the proactive implementation of communications and engagement throughout the planning phases of the Light Rail Stage 2 project. It provides an overview of the direction and strategic approach to stakeholder and community engagement.

c) Elton Consulting.

d) \$53,823 (GST Inclusive).

e) The preparation of the plan and implementation of the strategy, and reporting, is due to be finalised by 30 June 2017.

(8) There are no plans to commission any further communication strategies in 2017-18.

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## Questions without notice taken on notice

### Public housing—community consultation

**Mr Barr** (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mrs Jones on Wednesday, 7 June 2017*):

The consultation process for Chapman part Block 1 Section 45, Holder part Block 2 Section 21, Wright part Block 1 Section 29, Mawson Block 29 Section 36, Monash Block 2 Section 20 and Monash Block 15 Section 56 commenced on 15 March 2017.

I am advised that the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development issued a media release on that day. The Public Housing Renewal Taskforce notified the heads of the Weston Creek Community Council, Tuggeranong Community Council and Woden Valley Community Council. Notices were also distributed to surrounding areas on that day advising of planned consultation sessions scheduled for early April 2017.

Procurement notices for construction on the above sites was entered into the Call Tender Schedule on 31 March 2017. The purpose of the Call Tender Schedule is to give the construction industry advance notice of anticipated forthcoming tenders, with the objective of assisting the industry in its planning. The Call Tender Schedule does not provide definitive dates or guarantee that tenders will be issued as per the forecast.

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

**Ms Fitzharris** (*in reply to a supplementary question by Ms Jones on Tuesday, 1 August 2017*):

1. The committee responsible for the Draft Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Strategy 2017-2021 has not met since December 2016. This is due to the decision to deliberately pause the work on the strategy, pending the finalisation of the National Drug Strategy, and the need to account for the work that is, and will continue to occur, on the establishment of a Drug and Alcohol court in the ACT.

### Government—heritage policy

**Mr Gentleman** (*in reply to a question by Ms Lawder on Tuesday, 1 August 2017*):

I can confirm that the ACT Government owns the 1210 Steam locomotive, in securing the asset the ACT Government assessed and identified all items of the locomotive. The liquidators acknowledge that the ACT Government has ownership of the locomotive. The 1210 Steam locomotive has been dis-assembled for restoration and is currently being stored within the Australian Historical Railway Society site.

### **Planning—Coombs shops**

**Ms Berry** (*in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Ms Le Couteur on Thursday, 3 August 2017*):

The Government has undertaken the following actions in relation to provision of local shops at Coombs and Wright:

- sold land in Coombs for a local shopping centre development in March 2015, construction of this site is currently underway;
- sold land on the Cotter Road (part block 1218) for a service station and fast food operations. Construction of this development has commenced; and
- sold section 41 in Coombs for a mixed-use development with the ability to include shopping facilities.

Additionally, the Government sold land in Denman Prospect to Capital Estate Developments, which is currently developing a local shopping centre facility. It is anticipated to open in 2018.

Commercial viability of local shops is a somewhat complex issue, coffee vans and alike are commercial decisions for private businesses and may not be an appropriate solution given the likelihood of shops operating in the near future. Ideally the property owner of the Coombs local shops will secure tenants shortly. It is not the intent to encourage temporary facilities that will significantly impede the viability of the Coombs shops.

The Indicative Land Release Program 2017-18 to 2020-21 forecasts the release of four mixed-use sites over the next four years adjacent to the Coombs shops, which will provide the opportunity for a vibrant local community and shopping precinct for the residents of Coombs and Wright.

### **Asbestos—treatment policy**

**Mr Gentleman** (*in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Mr Coe on Thursday, 3 August 2017*):

The Asbestos Response Taskforce has worked, and continues to work, to implement the Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme as provided for in the relevant policy and guidelines. Whilst the individual circumstances surrounding the vast majority of affected and impacted properties are catered for by the standard approach, there are a small number of cases which warrant an adjusted or tailored response.

As the work of the Taskforce is yet to be completed, and many of the more complex properties are yet to be resolved, the total number of cases that warrant a non-standard approach is not yet known.

Whilst there is no specific set of criteria that triggers non-standard treatment, individual circumstances are considered in keeping with the compassionate approach taken by the Taskforce when working with homeowners. The policy intent is considered along with the interests and rights of the homeowner, neighbours, the broader community and government when the particular complexities and risks associated with the acquisition and demolition of some affected properties.

### **Asbestos—treatment policy**

**Mr Gentleman** (*in reply to a question by Ms Lawder on Thursday, 3 August 2017*):

The presence of an affected unit in a multi-unit complex does not necessitate the demolition of all units in the complex.

However, there are instances where an affected property is structurally dependent upon another property. In these instances the safe and efficient demolition of the affected property may require the demolition of the associated property as well. Where this is the case the associated property or properties are deemed 'Eligible Impacted' and are managed under the Eligible Impacted Buyback Program.